



Growing up female comes with lots of expectations — being a woman always means something more

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Sneak Peak

3 What's new?

Get to know some of the campus rules added this semester

10 First crushes

Is it true love? For some, first crushes don't always work out

16 Girls' soccer

See how the Lady Hawks have changed practice since the World Cup

BIRDS EYE VIEW

a look at the events and activities at the Grove this month

4 Things to Know

● Test Taking

Study up! On March 28, an ACT test will be held for juniors, but seniors are allowed to take it as long as they opt in and pay. As for the upcoming SAT test, it'll be held at the high school on March 11.

● Finale and Bravo Performances

The Finale and Bravo companies of Curtain Call Productions will perform their spring plays on March 26: "Queens" by Theater 1, and "The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)" The shows begin at 3 p.m.

● Art Show

On March 24 the art department will begin installing their work made throughout the year. The art show will be held on March 28, giving art students the chance to display, and be awarded, for their work.

● Winter Guard

Winter Guard is hosting another community performance. Swing by and show your support. The performance will be held on Feb. 24, at 7 p.m. in the old gym.



[GKennedy]

"I was really scared of flying for the first time. It took me a while to trust the guys to catch me, but I ended up having a lot of fun."
- Peyton LeGrand (12)

UIL Debate Team Competes at State

Senior Rayleigh Derrick competed at the UIL State Debate Competition in January, along with alternate Elliot White.

"I was in Chamber 19, and got ninth place," Rayleigh said. "I gave two speeches over cancer research funding and mental health days for teenagers without penalty to attendance."

Rayleigh competed in Lincoln-Douglas debate,

a one-on-one contest.

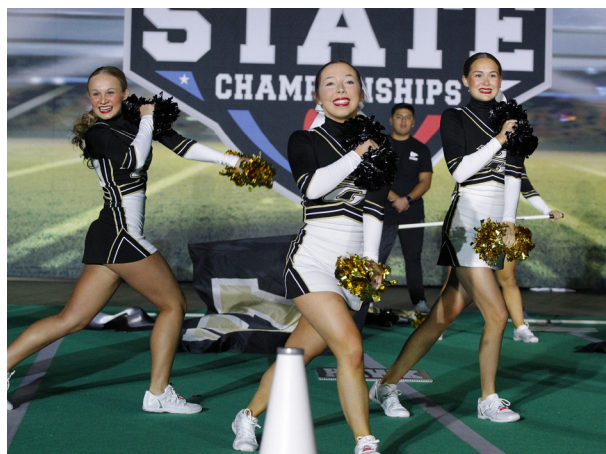
Freshman Caurie Beck and junior Caleb Price will debate in the other format, Cross-X, in the next month.

The work that goes into debate takes plenty of research, time, and practice.

"It's a lot of work, I spent two months on those speeches, but I really do like it," Rayleigh said. "It was a lot of fun, and I hope that more people do this in the future."



Rayleigh Derrick (12) and Elliot White (11) stand in front of the Texas State Capitol. [submitted]



Lenzi Carr (10), Katelyn Perish (10), and Kinsey Harris (10) perform a cheer routine at the UIL State Championships. [submitted]

Cheer Takes Second Place

PG competed in the UIL State Cheer Competition and took home second place overall.

"The prelims qualified us for the finals," senior Camille Harrelson said. "After we competed and were waiting for the results, I looked back at SHERA and she kind of shook her head like we didn't

make it. Nobody thought that we did better than third place, everyone was already crying, but there was still a little hope. When we figured out that we got second place, we went crazy. It was so chaotic we all ran to get our medals and fell on top of each other crying. It was awesome."

Sadie Hawkins Dance

What to know before you go...

- Date/Time: Mar 18, 7 p.m.
- Where: HS
- If you bring someone from another school, pick up a form in the office.

OTHER PLACES TO LOOK FOR THE EDGE:



Keep up with Pleasant Grove news by following @pgstudentmedia on Instagram



Follow the theater department Instagram @pg_ccp for information about upcoming shows



Stay up to date with dress up days, student section themes, updates, and more by following @stucopghs on Instagram

the edge

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Edge is produced by the newspaper students in the publications department of Pleasant Grove High School who are responsible for its production and content. The newspaper serves as an open forum for student expression and the discussion of issues of concern to students.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinions of the student staffers and do not necessarily reflect those of the administration. Signed columns and reviews reflect the opinion of the author only.

Edge encourages and accepts letters to the editors. Letters must be signed and will be edited to eliminate obscenity and inappropriate content. Letters may be submitted to the editors in room 603.

Edge is a member of the Interscholastic League Press Conference, National Scholastic Press Association and Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

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Boy's district soccer match at home, 5:30 pm

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Spring Forward

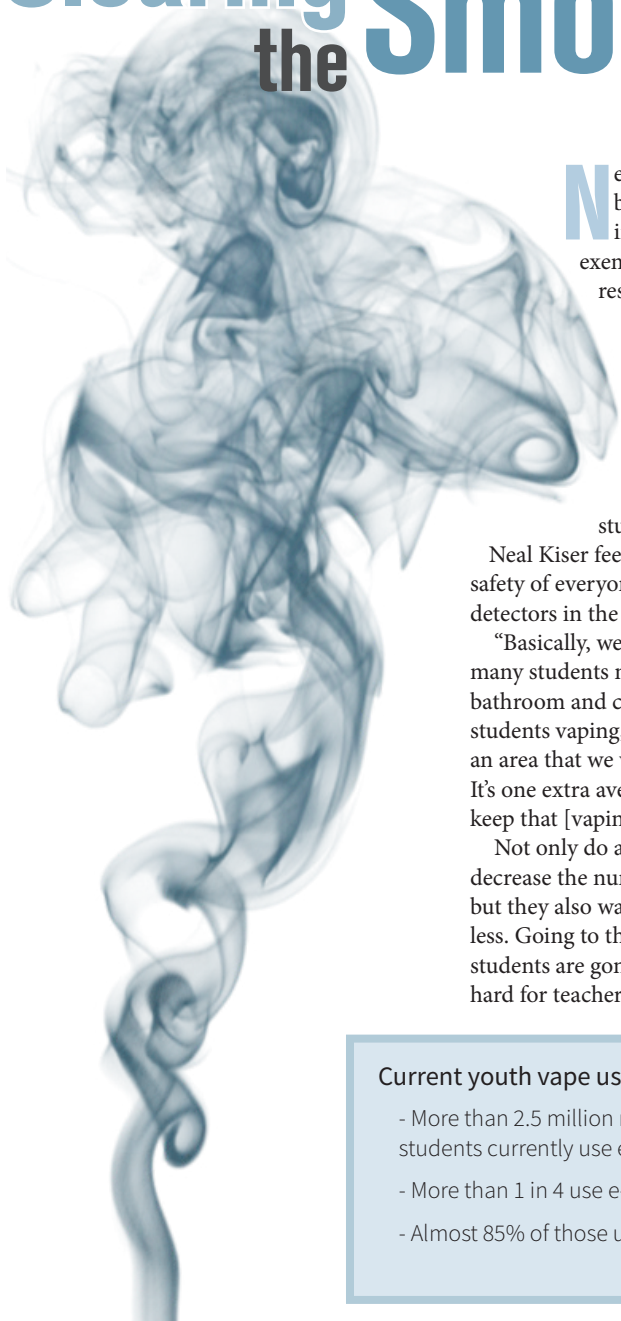
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Drill team tryouts in March

Clearing the Smoke

New semester brings improvements, decreasing vaping the primary focus

Abigail Thrash
reporter



New detectors in the bathrooms, more cameras installed, pre-COVID exemption rules, and three new resource officers.

Updates and changes in the second semester are impacting the students and faculty.

While all these upgrades might seem overwhelming or even pointless to some students, Assistant Principal

Neal Kiser feels they were necessary for the safety of everyone, especially the new vape detectors in the bathrooms.

“Basically, we saw a need — there were too many students not being able to get into the bathroom and complaining about too many students vaping,” Mr. Kiser said. “So it’s just an area that we want to try to improve on. It’s one extra avenue that we can do to try to keep that [vaping] out of school.”

Not only do administrators hope to decrease the number of students vaping, but they also want students to miss class less. Going to the bathroom to vape means students are gone from class often, making it hard for teachers to get their lesson to those

Current youth vape users:

- More than 2.5 million middle and high school students currently use e-cigarettes
- More than 1 in 4 use e-cigarettes daily
- Almost 85% of those use flavored e-cigarettes

[Statistics provided by the FDA]

students who are late.

“A lot of times students intentionally leave class just to make time go by,” Mr. Kiser said. “And once they realize there’s a greater chance that they’ll be caught, maybe that’ll cut back on vaping, which will hopefully keep students in class more.”

But this new technology came with quite the price tag. It cost thousands of dollars to install the detectors.

“I think the detectors will definitely help the issue of people vaping, however, I don’t think that it is worth thousands to spend on all of them,” senior Molly Black said. “I do think that it’s good reasoning and I understand it, but I think people should have understood what it would cost to have them put in.”

The new detectors have more than just one feature. They can pick up loud noises such as yelling or banging and they include a masking sensor, which means if someone were to alter it or cover it up, administrators would be notified.

But the detectors were not the only items added to the school. As of Dec. 1, three new resource officers joined the PGISD staff. There is one officer per campus — Officer Pete Mann is now Chief Mann, while officer Clint Akin is the high school resource officer.

“Pleasant Grove made the decision at probably the beginning of 2021 to build their own police department,” Officer Clint Akin said. “That’s when Chief Mann retired from the Texarkana Police Department to come here and work full time to build the police department.”

The four resource officers are strictly

associated with the district because Pleasant Grove now has an official police department.

Having a full-time resource officer for the high school has proven to be helpful already. With the recent influx of dab pens, teachers are more prepared to handle the risks and side effects of these new e-cigarettes.

“The substances in the vapes are being modified to increase the percentage of THC, (the chemical that makes you high) which when consumed in high levels, can be life threatening,” Officer Akin said.

“It comes with some serious side effects such as projectile vomiting, passing out, uncontrollable body shakes, you name it. It’s bad,” Akin said.

Resource officers, like Officer Akin, are vital in keeping the teachers aware of what is happening in school, so that they can know what to expect and how to respond. Officer Akin sent an email to inform teachers that if any students are experiencing these types of symptoms, the cause is most likely because of dab pens.

“With all that being said,” Officer Akin said. “Just don’t do drugs.”

“Basically, we saw a need - there were too many students not being able to get into the bathroom and complaining about too many students vaping.”
- Assistant Principal Neal Kiser

1 Exemption Rules

Pre-pandemic, the rules for exemptions were not as lenient as they have been the past three years.

Here are the new rules:

- No more than five unexcused absences
- No ISS or DAEP
- An average an 85 or above

To some students, the new rule is not a concern, but for others it is.

“I get all my work and I make good grades, so it really shouldn’t matter,” Jill Blair (10) said.

2 Food drop-off

While this rule is not new, the administration is becoming much more adamant about it in recent years.

Information you should know:

- This rule is in place to limit the number of people coming in out of the school
- As for the safety side, it limits traffic wherever possible, which means less chance of danger in the school

“I think that it’s a valid rule because I understand looking out for our safety because they do have all these kids they have to keep count of,” Molly Black (12) said.

3 Pajama Pants

Another rule that is not new, but is being more heavily enforced, is no pajama pants at school.

Why it’s a rule:

- Part of the school’s job is to help prepare you for the real world
- Helps students promote pride in themselves and the way they dress

“I’m just saying, having pajama pants at school is stupid,” Mark Bryan (9) said. “This is stuff you would have been doing in kindergarten,” he said.

the CHASE for rank

Competition for high school rank impacts students' experiences

Stephanie Nguyen
reporter

Aiming for the top 25%, 10%, or top 10 is not an easy climb for most students. They must strategically choose what classes to take for the next four years — as an eighth grader.

They then pull all-nighters to perfect their grade point average (GPA).

And of course, cram as many AP and honors classes as they can in their schedule—which, however, limits the class options for those wanting to be in the top 10% or 25%.

Senior Elaina Shellogg remembers not taking first-year debate because it wasn't offered at an honors level, and she knew taking it would hurt her class rank.

"I really wanted to take debate because I wanted to be a lawyer. But first-year debate wasn't honors level, so I decided not to take it," Elaina said.

“

I think that rank adds stress for most students. They become obsessed with their GPA and will start to develop resentment towards their peers and get encouraged to become competitive.

- Ella Crouch (10)

”

Class rank is a ranking of all students from highest to lowest GPA. It may be based on an unweighted GPA, which calculates a student's average grade out of a 4.0 scale, or a weighted GPA, which uses a 5.0 scale to take coursework difficulty into account.

Some students experience stress in carefully selecting their next classes. Sometimes there's conflict in choosing electives

that students want to take but aren't weighted.

"Since I play sports, I hope to get a scholarship with it, but some colleges aren't likely to offer me more money unless I was in the top 10%," freshman Cade McLeod said.

But maybe it's not the rank system itself. Some students believe it's the hectic 9-block schedule and the major difference in rigor between classes that's causing the stress.

"It's not rank that stresses us," junior Lily Buck said. "It's the schedule and inconsistent grading. Some classes might have easy teachers and assignments, while some don't. I feel like we are just memorizing and not learning."

And then there are the students who don't stress about class rank. They believe a number doesn't define their future success and ambitions, and other students shouldn't focus on it either.

"When you're focusing on a number, you stress yourself out a lot, and then you'll stress with everything else too," senior Chloe Rojas said. "I think once high school is over and you stressed over a number for four years, you'll lose track of what you want to do."

Rank is still important in college admissions, but so are other factors

But what do colleges actually think about class rank? Many colleges now practice "holistic admissions" meaning that college admission officers will look at the student and their experiences, not just test scores or GPA. This means being the top in your class doesn't guarantee automatic acceptance, unless it's a state school that auto-admits the top 10% of the class — then class rank actually matters.

For example, the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) used to auto-accept the top 10% of the graduating senior class, but due to more applications each year, they dropped that number to the top 6% of the graduating class. Those who aren't in the top 6% will still go under "holistic admissions."

UT Austin and many other colleges will consider the student's strength of academic background, record of honors, special accomplishments in and out of school, essays, special circumstances, teacher recommendations, and the competitiveness of the student's intended major.

Over the years, having a high GPA is the norm in many college applications, especially in higher-ranked universities.

That's the issue — there's nothing that's contrasting each

student's unique qualities and experiences.

Many colleges, especially Texas colleges, are continuing their test-optional policies until 2025. Many students, however, believe that the ACT and SAT show a different aspect of a student on their application.

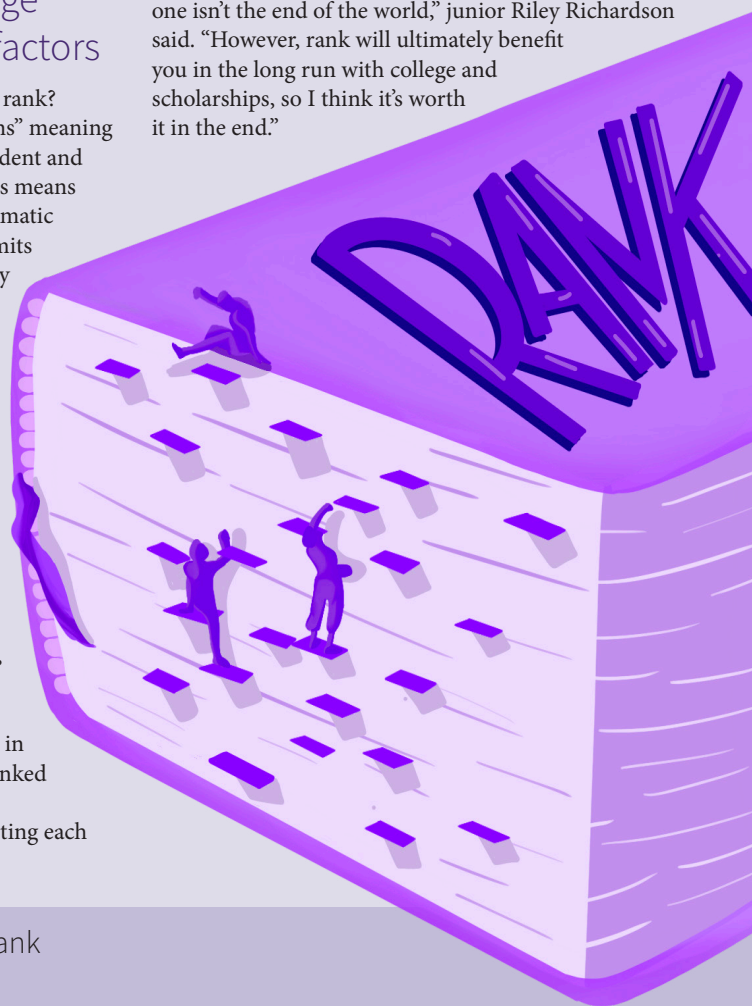
"I think the ACT and SAT can help you find out where you are with yourself and not just with your classmates," Chloe said.

However, other higher-ranked colleges are removing the test-optional policy. For example, last year in March, Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced reinstating the ACT and SAT policy.

The MIT admissions website states, "Our research shows standardized tests help us better assess the academic preparedness of all applicants, and also help us identify socioeconomically disadvantaged students who lack access to advanced coursework or other enrichment opportunities..."

Class rank is just another part of a student's application. One number can't define a student's future academic abilities and potential.

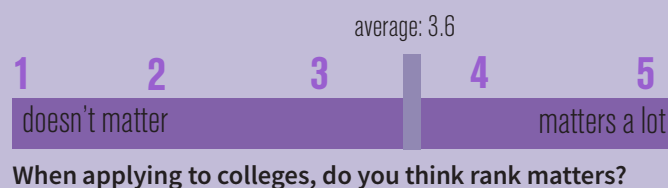
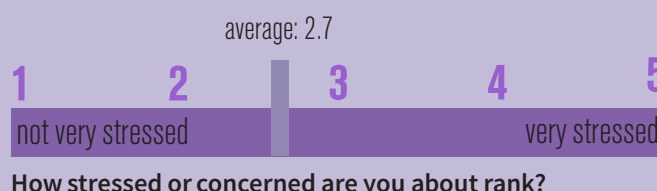
"Rank motivates me to do my best in difficult classes, but sometimes I let my rank define my worth. Not being number one isn't the end of the world," junior Riley Richardson said. "However, rank will ultimately benefit you in the long run with college and scholarships, so I think it's worth it in the end."



[Illustration by Stephanie Nguyen]

a class ASSESSMENT

Student opinions vary over the effect of rank on their class choices and mental health



Do you know what grade inflation and deflation is?

26 do know

28 do not know

[56 students surveyed]

BUZZ IN A CAN

content of energy drinks per serving



STARBUCKS DOUBLE SHOT ESPRESSO

- 6.5 fl oz (192 ml)
- 125 mg of caffeine



ROCKSTAR ENERGY DRINK

- 16 fl oz (473 ml)
- 160 mg of caffeine



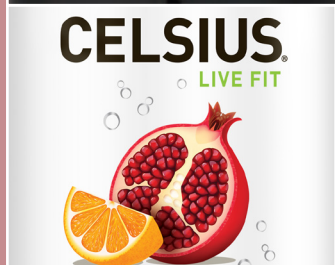
RED BULL

- 20 fl oz (590 ml)
- 189 mg of caffeine



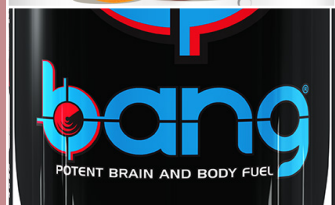
ZOA

- 12 fl oz (354 ml)
- 160 mg of caffeine



CELSIUS

- 12 fl oz (354 ml)
- 200 mg of caffeine



BANG

- 16 fl oz (473 ml)
- 300 mg of caffeine



MONSTER ENERGY

- 16 fl oz (473 ml)
- 160 mg of caffeine

CAFFEINE CRAZE

Mikaela Emphasis
reporter

It's not just coffee — students get their energy in a variety of forms

The drive through line in front of the local Starbucks is packed at 7 a.m.

Junior Rachel Davidson is in her car — waiting for her coffee to be made.

It's her daily routine to stop by at Starbucks before going to school.

When the waiter hands her the order, she doesn't wait for it to cool down to take a sip — her first sip of caffeine of the day.

"It's been my routine since I started high school," Rachel said. "And I feel so empty or wrong when I don't get my caffeine for the day."

Other than breakfast and protein bars, caffeine has become a source of energy in an adolescent's everyday life.

The Mayo Clinic suggests a maximum of 100 mg a day for adolescents (ages 12-18) and none for younger children.

But teens nowadays take way more than the recommended amount — their caffeine intake ranges from 200-400 mg a day especially when they are "tired" and "stressed."

Sophomore Ella Crouch started drinking caffeinated drinks when she was in seventh grade, but it progressed over time.

"I can't go on with my day without a little coffee in the morning to stay awake and some energy drinks," Ella said. "Especially with school and stress, it definitely helps."

Teenagers require between eight and ten hours of sleep per night to perform at their best and maintain good health according to the National Sleep Foundation.

"I had band over the summer, and when school started — the schedule is difficult to work with, so I had less sleep than I usually had," sophomore Ciara Miley said. "During summer, I had to wake up early at 5:30 a.m. to get to a long practice and drinking energy drinks with heavy caffeine helped me. It's just easier for me to get through the day with it."

Regardless of teens' positive opinions on caffeine, statistics shows it does more harm than good.

While caffeine can be helpful for brain fuel, it has negative effects on people especially if their body is more sensitive to it.

Too much caffeine intake can cause shakiness, insomnia, headaches and anxiety, MedlinePlus reported.

"I started drinking coffee and energy drinks like a year ago, one to three drinks, give or take," sophomore Alia Seares said. "I end up feeling a little on edge and anxious if I drink too much in a short amount of time."

Although most think that caffeine is worth the occasional jitters, junior Abbigayle Thomas thinks it's not worth it.

"I would rather stick to a healthy lifestyle and get energy naturally than drinking caffeine everyday," Abbigayle said. "Caffeine isn't good for your body. I would rather stick with my water."

Recommendations:

The brand I use for my pre-workout is called Total War. The taste isn't the best, but the energy it gives you before lifting helps a lot for performance and muscle recovery. If you go to the gym and are interested in pre-workouts, and can look past the taste, I'd definitely recommend it.

Brett Ledford (12)

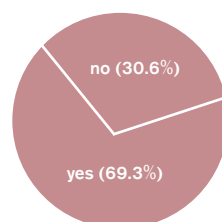
Celsius has variety of flavors so you're bound to find one you like. It also comes in carbonated and non-carbonated. I do wish it had a little less caffeine but it's the perfect pick me up to drink on the way to school, especially when I don't want the bitter taste of coffee.

Chloe Sanders (11)

Redbull is the best energy drink. They have the best flavors out of every other brand, but my personal favorite is the coconut berry. The drink gives me the boost I need in the morning and really helps me throughout my morning classes.

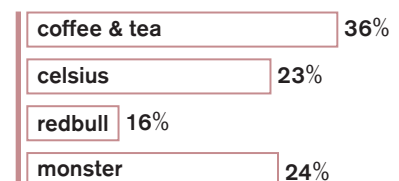
Maddie McDuffie (11)

Do you drink caffeinated drinks?



98 people surveyed

What's your preferred caffeinated drink?



111 people surveyed

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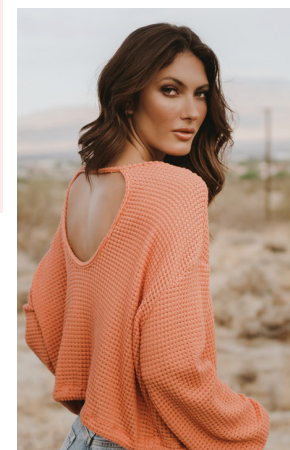
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Emma Boehmke
co-editor

7 Questions with Coach C

1 What soccer experience did you have growing up that got you to where you are today?

My soccer experience includes club, high school, college, and semi-pro. I have attended, recruited, and worked several camps including Texas A&M, SMU, SFA, Birmingham Southern, the Olympic Development Program, TJC, ETBU, and William Carey University. I have had the opportunity to work alongside several great coaches, but my club coach, Jermaine McCarthy, definitely had the greatest impact on my life.

2 What soccer player have you looked up to the most while growing up?

I always loved watching Zlatan Ibrahimovic play, who plays for A.C. Milan and the Sweden National Team. His size, athleticism, ability, and confidence always gave him an edge over his opponents. Also, he makes for some good memes.

3 Why did you decide to coach boys and what is the difference between coaching boys and girls?

I've been coaching on the boys and girls side since I graduated college in 2015. I was the assistant men's and women's soccer coach at ETBU, followed by a stint at SFA as a strength and conditioning coach for football, soccer and basketball. There are several differences between coaching boys and girls, but it is more specific to the individual rather than gender. I enjoy coaching both boys and girls — both present their own challenges, but the reward is still the same.

4 Why do you tattoo half of your body while leaving the other half tattoo less?

I got my first tattoo when I was 18, and my parents were not a fan. I told my mom after I got it that I would keep them all on one side of my body. I am sure she knew by the end of me getting tattoos that they'd be all over the place.

5 What is your personal style and how have you become so comfortable in your own skin?

My personal style is very "street style," if you will. You will rarely catch me in a pair of jeans — it's all sweats, tee shirts, and kicks. My main focus is comfort with a little bit of drip. I've become comfortable in my own skin because I have a Father in heaven who sent his son to die on the cross for me — that sacrifice alone reminds just how seen and loved I am everyday, even in my shortcomings. Also, I have a great community around me that you don't find very often.

6 What is your favorite part about coaching boys soccer?

My favorite part about coaching boys soccer are the guys. The team has worked extremely hard to build relationships, culture, and a style of play that a lot of high school athletes don't get to experience. I am truly honored and blessed the guys, Coach Gibson and Coach Collvins, and PG have allowed and trusted me with this opportunity.

7 What is it like to plan workouts and do workouts with your staff members?

I love providing any avenue I can to support those around me in their pursuit for overall health and wellness. I thoroughly enjoy working out with the staff, and I hope it leads to more staff members joining eventually. Commitment and community are two HUGE factors that can impact someone's consistency and discipline to chase their health and fitness goals, so I look to and pray for the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience with anyone who desires to grow.

Boys' soccer coach and girls' strength coach, Coach Christa Henry, shares how she got into her passions of health and fitness through soccer and strength training

Coach
Christa Henry



Doing their Part

Robotics team looks to win a state title

Mark Bultemeier
reporter

Senior Chase Bolton and the robotics team arrive at school for their tournament.

He is excited to showcase one of the many robots he and his team have worked on over the past several months.

The team has big shoes to fill this year after sweeping the first four places at last year's state competition — they're hoping to add another state title to the robotics program.

"Last year we went all the way to Worlds and got third in the state," senior Matthew Thomas said. "We want to try to be better than the team before us and win state."

By the first competition, Mr. Mullins had multiple teams full of upperclassmen already qualify for the state and regional meet.

"We have two, potentially three teams of mostly seniors and juniors that have a very good shot of winning a back-to-back state title and making it back to Worlds," he said.

But this season the robotics team has more than just a state title on the line. Lone Star points can also be earned for the school starting this year.

"This year is the first year that actually counts towards Lone Star points, and we're going to try to win [a state title] again," Mr. Mullins said. "It's just a matter of 'can they do it the day of' as well as do it in class."

UIL Lone Star Points are awarded to schools based on different UIL teams' performances in district and state

competitions. The UIL Lone Star Cup trophy and a \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to the overall winning school to honor the athletic and academic programs. The robotics team hopes to secure the points earned for winning the state title and go straight to the world tournament in Dallas.

"So we do have a good shot [of making it to World's], which is impressive," Mr. Mullins said. "There are more than 24,000 teams in the world, so you're one of the top one or two percent if you can make it to World's. Last year, we had two teams go, and we're going to try and do it again."

It won't be as simple as that, however. The whole structure of the game changes yearly, so new preparations have to be made in designing robots to stay ahead of the competition.

"It changes every year," Mr. Mullins said. "The way you score points this year is different from what it was last year and it'll be different again next year."

With these yearly changes, the robotics team learns to gradually adapt and compete efficiently with their improved robots.

"They build, refine, troubleshoot, and try to make the most efficient robot they possibly can," Mr. Mullins said. "So throughout the year, they can actually change robots, and they have yet to take the same robot to a tournament or revamp. And typically your

robot starts big and bulky and then by the end of it you have to figure out how to streamline and make it a lot smaller and faster."

While the game structure changes, rules and regulations are always consistent and have to be followed to ensure fair competition.

"The sportsmanship definitely has to be good, for sure," Chase said. "If you go outside the playing field, you're disqualified, and the whole team likewise."

When it comes to designing and preparing robots for the year and competing, Mr. Mullins expresses his detachment from the team and respects their self-reliance.

"I do the managerial part of it all — I'll

work out the buses and have the money lined up and order parts," Mr. Mullins said. "But as far as me actually sitting there and teaching them what

"We won state last year... and as a team, this year, we're leaps and bounds above that."

- Joseph Ethridge (12)

they need to know, they have to research and do it all on their own. They enjoy it."

The team has won four out of their five competitions and aim to pursue more titles, having one more competition left until state.

The rules of the game

Where?

Each match is played on an area consisting of a 12' x 12' square field where the robots are able to drive around.

Who plays?

Two "Alliances" — one red and one blue — composed of two teams each and compete in matches.

How long is each game?

Each match consists of a 15 second Autonomous Period followed by a one minute and forty-five second Driver Controlled Period.

What's the point?

The object of the game is to attain a higher score than the opposing Alliance by scoring discs in goals, owning rollers, and covering field tiles at the end of the match.

What else should you know?

- There are 60 discs and four rollers on the field during the match.

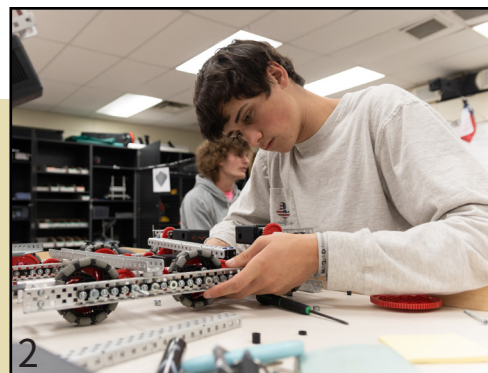
- Discs are scored in the two high goals, one per Alliance, at opposite corners of the field. Each disc scored in a high goal is worth 5 points, but underneath each high goal is a 1-point low goal for the opposing Alliance.

- Robots can spin four rollers mounted to the field perimeter. If the roller only shows one color, that is considered "owned" by that Alliance of the same color. Each owned roller is worth 10 points.

- At the end of the match, Alliances receive a 3 point bonus for each tile their robots are covering. There are no horizontal expansion limits.

- The Alliance that scores more points in the Autonomous Period is awarded with 10 bonus points, added to the final score.

1. Chase Bolton (12) tests out his improved robot design and mechanics as he prepares for the upcoming meet. "I just practice driving to be ready for any situation I can control," he said. [CSanders] 2. Joseph Ethridge (12) assembles a new robot for his team to use at their next competition. "Attention to detail is really important when making a robot. If one thing isn't symmetrical, the whole alignment can be offset," he said. [CSanders] 3. Andrew Hutcheson (11) changes the license plate on his robot at the PGHS invitational on Jan 28. "It's always interesting to see how other teams are looking at competitions, and to compare their robots to ours after weeks of hard work," he said. [CSanders]



AUTHENTIC or ARTIFICIAL

Effects of growing artificial intelligence results in controversies in the art and journalism world

Mikaela Emphasis
reporter

"AI art is not real art. They take a bunch of other artists art, put it in an AI, and it replicates their art style into the AI artwork. They don't use the artists' permission to use their art, and it's stealing," senior Zöe Sturgeon said.

"I think AI will impact our world significantly in the next few years. However, these commercially available AI art generators and AI writers are primitive compared to what is currently possible and what will be possible with AI," junior Zach Harris said.

WRITTEN BY STAFF:

After trailing the Gilmer Buckeyes for three quarters, the Hawks came back in the fourth quarter, winning a hard-fought game 28-14.

And at 10:30 last Friday night, the Hawk fans let out the cheer they'd been holding in since the start of the game. From the kickoff to the final buzzer, the atmosphere was electric, with the stands packed with fans on their feet the entire game.

Finally, they thought.

The last time the two teams met, the Hawks were smashed by the Buckeyes — but last night, PG got their revenge.

The Hawks now move on to the playoffs where they hope to return to state.

It was a night full of excitement. A night full of camaraderie. A night for the Hawks.



Illustrated by Ellie Coker

As freshman Caurie Beck opens her Chromebook, she thinks about her current debate topic: artificial intelligence.

She's interested to learn more about artificial intelligence now that it's becoming "normalized," not just in the nation, but worldwide.

"People might not realize it, but we're living with AI [artificial intelligence]," Caurie said. "It's in security, biotechnology, and even NATO is piloting AI in areas such as climate change."

Artificial intelligence has had breakthroughs that have changed our lives. It's in the cars we drive to the Google Search we use on our phone. And now, it's coming to classrooms.

AI is a computer or a robot that completes tasks — tasks usually done by humans. It's a tool that helps everyone, however they choose to use it.

As AI becomes a tool in the classroom, it's also growing in the journalism and especially in art world.

On the English side of AI, English teacher Holly Dickeson thinks AI is "scary" because plagiarism checkers can't detect if it's written by a human or by AI.

With the AP tests nearing, College Board sent an email to teachers across the country addressing the use of AI art in AP Art exams. The email stated that students in the AP Art program are not permitted to use AI art in "any shape or form."

"Plagiarism has always been taken very seriously in the art world," art teacher Nicole Brisco said. "In AI art, there is some degree of plagiarism because they are taking multiple artists' art and embedding it digitally to make one artwork."

Creativity-wise, Mrs. Brisco sees AI art generators as a resource for students as a brainstorming tool.

"It [AI] can be a good tool for students to help them push to their creativity," Mrs. Brisco said. "But it should not be used as a finished product because it would be dishonest to call it your own work."

She also believes AI art is never going to be "real art."

"I don't think that AI art necessarily shows a skill set from students," Mrs. Brisco said. "You're kind of cutting their degree of learning by using it because the intellect of a human operates differently than the intellect of a computer."

"Art is incredibly difficult to make and many people view it as 'not a real job' which is an insult to every person who has ever actually put time into creating instead of taking advantage of what's already been created. I want AI art gone," junior Erica Zofcin said.

"I think AI is important for the future but we shouldn't depend heavily on it," sophomore Trae Raymond said.

GENERATED FROM WRITERSONIC:

On Friday night, Pleasant Grove High School beat Gilmer High in an exciting football match.

The game was a hard fought one, and the atmosphere was electric. The Pleasant Grove team played with determination, and their fans cheered them on from the stands. The team's hard work paid off as they emerged victorious, with a final score of 28-14.

The victory was sweet for Pleasant Grove, who had lost to Gilmer in the last three matches. This time, however, the team and their fans celebrated their success with joy and enthusiasm.

The Pleasant Grove team is now looking forward to the playoffs, where they hope to extend their winning streak.



Generated by Wonder

to Crush or be

Heartbreak or happiness — first crush stories lead to different outcomes

Riley Richardson
reporter

Crushed...

Your palms are sweating. You're laughing too much. You desperately try to calm your racing heart.

But it's no use. You can't help it. You have a crush.

For most students, crushes begin in elementary school. They can begin on the playground, the lunchroom, or classroom. But regardless of the setting, first crushes can be very unforgettable.

It can be hard to forget the first time you feel it — the way the world revolves around that singular person. Suddenly, you become overly aware just how awkward you are. You become fixated on how that one strand of hair won't lay flat or how your mascara is clumping on your eyelashes.

Then you have one of the best or possibly worse ideas you've ever had. You are going to tell them. Tell them you like them. Tell them you want to date them.

Rejected or accepted.

It could go both ways...

need advice?

Been Dumped?

"It's not your fault and it's not theirs (the one who dumped you). If you get rejected, don't think so low of yourself."

- xoxo, Chloe Rojas (12)

Gotta Crush?

"Shooting your shot is a good idea. It's worth getting an answer and either knowing to pursue it or move on. It's not worth the anxiety of keeping it in."

- xoxo, Kaylynn Sharp (10)

rejected



Rejection is a part of life. Whether it be from a job interview or a college, rejection is something most people deal with... especially in the love department.

'You're not my type.'

'I see you more as a brother.'

Or the classic, 'I just got out of a serious relationship.'

Rejection in love comes in all shapes and sizes, and senior Chloe Rojas is not the exception.

"He was really nice and sweet and stuff," Chloe said. "And also he looked like Jack Frost, so that was part of it, but mostly because he was

really nice to me. We were friends."

Friendships can often result in one side wanting more. This is how we got the term 'friend-zone' — a classic form of rejection.

"We were friends... until I tried to hold his hand. And well you know in elementary, cooties are the biggest disease ever," Chloe said. "He didn't say anything, but he was a germaphobe, so he grabbed his Germ-X from his backpack and just put it all over his hands."

The sting of rejection can hurt people's egos. And when you're in elementary school, it may feel like life is over.

"It hurt a lot; it was like the end of the world," Chloe said. "I regretted it because it definitely changed our friendship. He was my best friend and the best part of my life."

The initial feeling of rejection isn't the only problem you have to deal with. It's also the aftermath — the awkwardness of seeing them everyday at school.

"We used to sit by each other in the cafeteria. He would share his lunch, and I would share mine. We did art together too," Chloe said. "But after that he stopped sharing his crayons."

accepted



Fear of rejection keeps most students from pursuing their feelings. And in some cases, like Chloe's, those feelings can be justified.

But for sophomore Kaylynn Sharp, it paid off.

"My first crush was Joshua. We have been friends since we were toddlers," Kaylynn said. "We were together constantly, our families were friends and went to the same church, and he called me pretty."

Transitioning from a crush to a boyfriend or girlfriend is the hard part — it means you have to confess your feelings.

"I think I told him I liked him or

his parents told him I did," Kaylynn said. "So one night while he was over and we were on pool floaties, he said 'I think that we should date,' so he shot the final shot."

For little kids, having a crush like you back can mean the world; they view dating as getting married and living happily ever after.

"I thought we were going to be together forever," Kaylynn said. "I felt like a princess when he was around; I had everything I needed to be Cinderella."

Kaylynn's relationship with Joshua lasted from first grade until fourth grade.

"I don't regret anything," Kaylynn

said. "We are still friends, and he's like a cousin to me now. Like we're very close still, but not like that anymore. We just got older and grew out of each other."

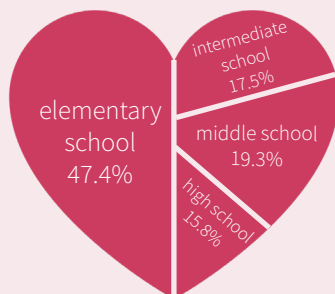
For Kaylynn, nerves never got in the way of her first crush. But now that she's older, she too feels the stress of liking someone.

"When I told Tate [her boyfriend] that I liked him, I was very anxious," Kaylynn said. "I had a lot going on that week, and I just needed to know; I just needed the answer to this one question. And now we are dating, so for me, I think, shooting your shot is always a good idea."

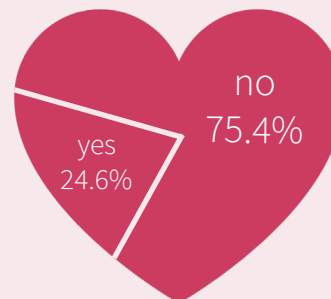
head over heels

Students think back to when they had their first crush

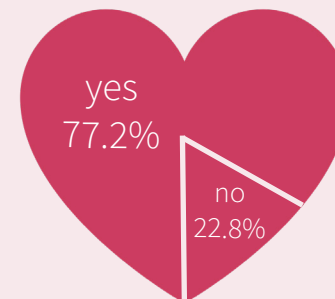
When was your first crush?



Did your crush work out?



Has your type in guys/girls changed since?





Anna Guan
co-editor

Going to the gym can come with a larger price tag than expected

= \$176.50

[pricing from Amazon and Walmart]

RACKING UP

The gym community is seemingly ever-growing, with more and more of our student body becoming avid gym-goers.

“What are you hitting today?”

“Gym later?”

“I’m cutting right now. I’m bulking right now.”

While these things are frequently being heard, going to the gym isn’t just about lifting.

“More than 50% of going to the gym is focused on nutrition,” junior Tyler Prinsen said. “If you don’t have the right nutrition, then you’re not going to get anywhere.”

Workout nutrition can be pretty simple, with food staples and a focus on macros (protein, carbohydrates, and fats).

“I worry a lot about protein and carbs and make sure I eat a lot. That’s the main thing, I make sure I eat a lot,” senior Kaylee Gann said. “My food staples are like chicken, rice, protein bars, peanut butter and apples. Bread because that’s a lot of carbs, and also protein shakes.”

However, it doesn’t always come cheap. Supplements like protein powder, creatine, and pre-workout can add up.

“Creatine is like \$50 and it only has like 30 or 40 scoops, and then pre-workout is about the same, so that’s a little bit expensive,” senior Evan Damron said.

Money isn’t the only consideration for gym nutrition; time can be too.

“The gym itself takes up an hour or two per day, and then having to eat as much as I do, like four or five meals, takes up a big chunk of the day,” Evan said.

While the gym and the eating habits surrounding it can be an investment, going to the gym can still be largely attainable, and advisable according to Tyler.

“But for adding all that, it’s really not expensive and no problem if you’re getting bare bones. If you really don’t have the budget to do anything expensive, then just have chicken and rice over and over. That’s really cheap,” he said. “If you stick it out at the gym and go for a month, you’ll start seeing a lot of progress in just a month.”

“It’s definitely not a cheap expense because protein foods are kind of really expensive, and healthier foods in general are just expensive. So I wouldn’t say it’s an expensive lifestyle to live, but you have to budget your money to fit it in.”

Kaylee Gann (12)

Equal To

Being a woman means extra considerations and expectations. Being a woman is equal to...

Emma Boehmke
co-editor

Anna Guan
co-editor

“It’s a girl!”

From the moment it’s announced, being a girl isn’t just, being a girl.

It’s shirts that say “I’m not allowed to date, ever!” instead of “I’m super!”

It’s certain toys: kitchen sets and baby dolls instead of Legos and action figures.

It’s your body being distracting.

It’s being expected to be empathetic,

agreeable,

and never assertive,

or else you’ll be bossy.

For most girls, these things aren’t just gender roles and stereotypes. They aren’t just harmless. They morph into being viewed as lesser, fearing for your safety, paying more to be alive.

Being a woman equals something more.

♀ = dealing with a menstrual cycle

28 days.

It takes an average of 28 days to start a new menstrual cycle.

While this time doesn’t account for irregularities and all the hormonal changes throughout the entire cycle, a period cycle doesn’t just result in minor inconveniences.

For females, having their period can get expensive with all the products and medications necessary to take care of themselves.

“Some people don’t have as much pain as other people — they can go the first day (of their cycle) and don’t have any pain. Then some girls have really bad pain, or they have to be on like birth control or Midol that will cost more for it,” sophomore Addisyn Gildon said. “It (prices while having your period) can vary from like \$20 to \$100 per month. Unless you have medication, then you can buy it and it’ll last you maybe three or four months.”

Not only is it expensive to have a period, but it also affects girls physically and mentally.

“Having a period is physically draining in several ways besides just being hormonal changes,” senior Rayleigh Derrick said. “You cramp (the red devil tap dancing), have to go through the effort of changing products, you are dehydrated, and I personally get really bad back pain.”

Along with physical pain, it also takes a toll on a girl’s emotional well-being.

“When you’re on your period you’ll get more irritated and you don’t want to do something because of what you’re going through (having your period).” Addisyn said. “You’ll get emotional because you’re sitting there in pain, and then you have to deal with everything else.”

For some, their period can sometimes even hold them back from the activities and events they want to partake in.

“Sometimes periods can be pretty overwhelming to the point that it’s hard to do the things you usually do when you’re not on them,” senior Ava Welch said.

♀ = the effects of birth control

Birth control is often prescribed beyond its use as a contraceptive.

It’s commonly used to help with anything from irregular periods, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), acne, and more.

However, it can and does affect everyone differently.

It’s common to experience headaches and nausea, but for Rayleigh, she has experienced that and so much more.

“My birth control is hormonal, so I am much more emotional, and I have lost a good amount of weight so far (one of the side effects is weight change),” she said. “It has also been affecting the other medications I’m on as well.”

Oftentimes, girls are not fully aware of the side effects and changes that birth control can cause.

“I do not believe that girls are fully aware of the side effects of birth control,” Ava said. “Lots of girls get on the pill for a multitude of reasons and stand on a belief that it is safe solely from what they are told and without doing their own research.”

These more severe effects can include blood clots, high blood pressure, liver tumors, and an increased risk of breast and cervical cancer.

However, birth control can come in many shapes and forms, as well as hormonal and non-hormonal options. Avoiding hormonal effects isn’t easy or possible for everyone.

“There are many forms of birth control such as the pill, IUDs, and the shot,” junior Catherine Joyce said. “I’ve heard that an IUD is the most effective kind of birth control, but it definitely isn’t the easiest for multiple reasons — it’s painful to get, uncomfortable at times, and it’s very expensive.”

The pain, cost, side effects, and burden of birth control are often placed on women, as male birth control options are currently minimal.

Rayleigh feels like the responsibility should lie on both the male and female while preventing an unwanted pregnancy.

“Personally, if making a child is a two-person act, the man should be taking initiative like the woman is,” Rayleigh said. “Men are selfish when it comes to anything beyond wearing a condom (which is still “uncomfortable” for some men).”

♀ = issues with medicine and healthcare

Ill-sized jeans, pink Venus razors, less-effective deodorant: all for a marked-up price. “Pink tax” isn’t an actual tax, but the occurrence of gendered pricing, where products and services marketed towards women cost more.

“I’ve for sure noticed it with soaps and stuff,” sophomore Morgan Formes said. “With my brother, he probably pays like five bucks or something for his big thing of three in one, but I have to buy this 12-dollar, expensive, shampoo and then buy another thing of conditioner.”

This practice is technically still legal in most states, with New York being the only state that has placed a ban on the pink tax.

“I’ve noticed that the deodorant is smaller,” sophomore Libby Burrow said. “A lot of people I know use Old Spice because it actually works versus women’s deodorant that sucks.”

According to investment bank JPMorgan Chase, the pink tax costs women an average of \$1,300 per year. Where does all this money go? All additional revenue goes to the companies that up charge.

“It makes us feel like we are not being treated equally. I think it’s

definitely unfair,” Morgan said. “I don’t think we should have to be paying more than guys to look presentable.”

Pink Tax isn’t the only extra price women have to pay. Tampon tax (or period tax) is a value-added tax or sales tax that is charged on menstrual products. While some states have exempted menstrual products from being taxed, many still consider menstrual products “luxury items” and non-essential.

“Honestly, I feel like business-wise, they are just making an empire off of something that women can’t help,” sophomore Zuri Muldrow said. “They are just abusing it.”

Besides paying for marketed products and medical necessities, some consider healthcare and medicine for women’s issues to be lacking.

“Medicine and healthcare for women is embarrassing. There’s not lots of research that is specifically for women’s healthcare and nothing else,” Rayleigh said. “If men had to deal with what we do, we would have a multitude of accessible healthcare.”

Male research bias affects medical diagnosis and treatment for women. Women are seven times more likely than men to be misdiagnosed and discharged in the middle of having a heart attack according to a 2000 study published in The New England Journal of Medicine. Women also often deal with under-treatment and disbelief of their pain.

“I don’t think women should have to rely on men’s experiences (who will never understand the struggle of being a woman) for our treatments and conditions,” Rayleigh said.

♀ = extra safety measures and fear of sexual assault

Pepper spray, tasers, and checking under cars.

A few things women have become accustomed to carrying or doing in order to keep themselves safe.

“I’m very paranoid. Like I can’t even take out my trash I get so paranoid. Before I walk out of my house, I check every angle,” Zuri said. “I make sure the front door is unlocked, so I can sprint and chunk the trash in the trash can.”

According to the Edge survey, 71% of women have been advised to “not make themselves an easy target” compared to the 20% of men surveyed on their feelings on necessary safety measures.

“I definitely think women are more affected than men because we are more of a target,” junior Lauren Stewart said. “I make sure to lock my car, I really don’t go anywhere by myself — I refuse, and I just walk really fast when I’m going in and out of places to be safer.”

This continuous feeling of unsafety results in many girls partaking in extra precautions.

“I carry around a little jabber,” Catherine said. “I put it on my key ring in case someone tries to attack me, so I can hopefully hit them in the stomach with it and buy more time for me to get away from my attacker.”

According to a survey done by nydailynews.com, 53% of women are afraid of becoming a victim of sexual assault, compared to the 24% of men who are scared of becoming a victim.

“I do think it is probably a common fear for girls to be sexually assaulted or harassed,” Zuri said. “I know it is one of my fears.”

It is proven that 91% of women are affected by rape and

sexual assault compared to the 9% of men affected according to supportingsurvivors.humboldt.edu.

“I think sexual assault disproportionately affects women because men think they have control of any and everything,” freshman Ciara Fischer said. “I think they (men) think they can do what they want when they want it, and they see women as easy targets.”

♀ = double standards

Discrepancies in women and men’s lives aren’t always as obvious and physical. There are many different expectations and rules when it comes to behavior and appearance.

Many girls experience double standards in multiple ways, but are frequently scrutinized when it comes to dating.

“Absolutely there are double standards, especially when it comes to relationships,” Libby said. “For example, say a guy gets a girlfriend and they tell somebody about it, they’re gonna be hyped up for it. But, then a girl says that they’re in a relationship and then they are told they shouldn’t be having a boyfriend this young.”

Not only in relationships are double standards present, but they’re also evident in women’s versus men’s clothing.

“I’m in soccer and our outfits are shorter than the guys’ outfits and they fit differently than the boys too,” Addisyn said. “I want to wear something as comfortable as the guys get to wear, but the girls can’t.”

Along with different expectations for dress, women and men are held to different standards when it comes to their bodies themselves.

“I think things like body hair and physicality are perceived very differently between males and females. Those shouldn’t be perceived negatively because it’s human and it can result in lower self confidence,” freshman Caurie Beck said. “I think weight is an issue too because people will want bigger and stronger guys when they want smaller and more dainty females.”

Double standards go beyond outward appearance and presentation; they also affect the everyday interactions women have.

“I do think there are double standards between males and females and one of the most prevalent parts of this for me is when a guy speaks his mind or tells someone off they are seen as in control and powerful,” Ava said. “But when a woman does it they are seen as aggressive and ‘bossy’. I don’t see this being a fair representation of people as a whole.”

Home life is no different when it comes to double standards.

Although some houses try to stray away from society’s expectations, sometimes it’s still apparent.

“Even though our family strays away from that, it’s still seen more as my mom’s job to cook and vacuum, and it’s always been more of a pressure for my mom even though she enjoys it,” Caurie said. “When mom is out of town, we are often on our own because it’s not really expected for my dad to pitch in because it’s not usually his job.”

It’s not just these.

Being a woman can mean even more.

It can mean getting denied bodily autonomy, getting denied the authenticity of your experiences, getting denied respect in the smallest, and most demeaning of ways.

It equals extra fears, experiences, expectations, and pain.

Being a woman deserves to equal more.

By the numbers

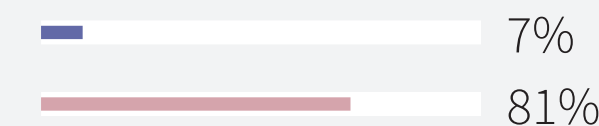
Male versus female perspectives on advice they’ve been given to stay safe

Male VS Female

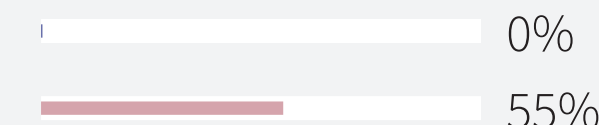
Travel in groups



Park your car in a well lit area of the parking lot



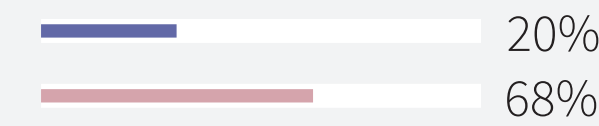
Don’t get into an elevator or go in a stairwell alone



Check the back seat of your car



Leave DNA on attackers or in cars



Watch your drink while it’s being poured





GET STARTED

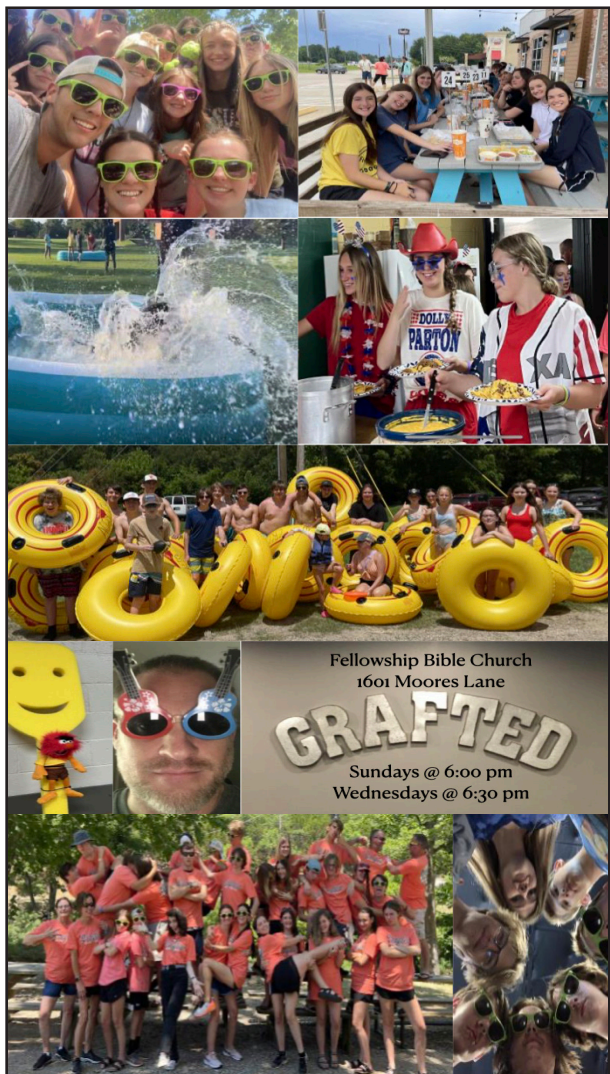
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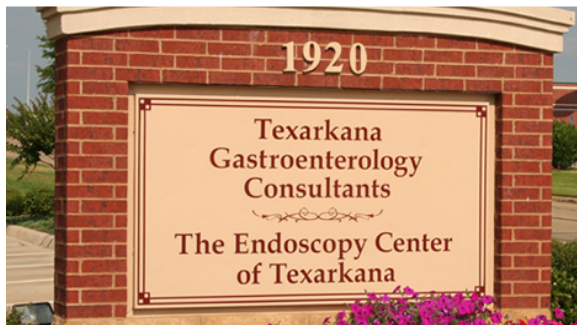
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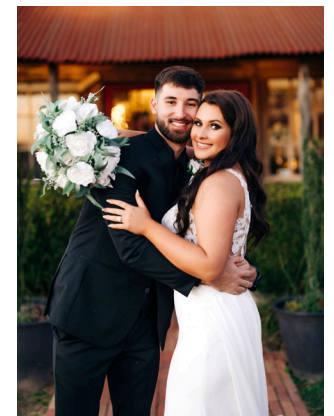
GROWING IN GOD'S HANDS



EVERY *step* COUNTS

Rawya Hazin
reporter

Girls' basketball coach navigates the worlds of coaching and mothering



[submitted]

Coaching partners

When first year Coach McKenzie Harmon talks about school at home, her husband knows exactly what she's talking about. She married Coach Aaron Harmon in the winter, and the two of them coach on the high school and middle school campuses

How did you and Coach Harmon meet?

"We knew of each other in high school through both of us playing sports against each other's schools, but we officially started knowing and talking to each other during college. My cousin's boyfriend also knew him, so they played a part in it as well."

Do you think that he is a good coach?

"Coach Harmon, my husband, is one of the best coaches I know. He is responsible, respectful, hard working, and so much more. Every time I see him coach I can see the love he has for each and every player and the passion he has for each game."

Do you talk about coaching at home?

"We try to understand each other — I'm on the girls side and he's on the guys, but sometimes it's just he talks about his coaching and I talk about my coaching. He does basketball too so we talk a lot about basketball but when it comes to softball he just agrees and said, 'Oh that's good.'"

Cracker

crumbs all over the basketball floor. Bench chairs aligned by the basketball team to create a baby fence around nine-month-old Madilyn, a chair fence to keep her from getting on the court and under the feet of players.

And Madilyn sits inside that chair fence — clapping, cheering, trying to crawl everywhere.

Because when the babysitter's out sick, girls' basketball coach, Codi Davidson brings Madilyn to the Lady Hawks basketball practice.

"We were all happy to see her because she's really playful and cute. We all laughed with her, played Disney songs, and she was just clapping and dancing. It was adorable," senior Autumn Crouch said.

As second year coach at Pleasant Grove, Coach Davidson can describe her experiences and challenges.

"My biggest challenge as a coach is being so young right now. I'm doing everything I can to learn," Coach Davidson said. "I think I'm pretty knowledgeable about basketball, but the game is always changing."

Aside from basketball, Coach Davidson says she prepares her players to take on life as well.

"Be tough and be together. I tell the kids

you've got to be physically tough, you've got to be mentally tough, and you have to play together," Coach Davidson said. "If you're mentally tough in basketball, then you can be mentally tough anywhere and take on anything. I think the 'be tough and be together' aspect does relate to other aspects of your life."

As well as being a newer coach, Coach Davidson is an even newer mother. She learns important qualities from mentoring that can help her in being a mother.

Coach Davidson describes her strong emotional understanding as a powerful virtue in both coaching and parenting.

"I think I can learn to be more understanding and more caring. I care about her [Madilyn], obviously, but I understand her feelings more emotionally," Coach Davidson said. "I would know not to push her too hard on one thing. I can let her make mistakes and learn from them. I can let her make her own choices."

Coach Davidson learns from being a coach and incorporates those skills for her daughter.

And parenting shows Coach Davidson ways she can be a better coach and a better leader in general. One of the things she learns from being a mother is the importance of patience.

"Recently, I gave Madilyn a new toy. It's a toy where she puts the ball in the box. It took a while for her to figure out how to do that," Coach Davidson said. "It took multiple tries, several days,

and now she's figured it out.

"Going into basketball, I used to get frustrated with the girls because I would teach them a play, and then 10 minutes later I would expect them to run it correctly every time.

"And so now, I teach them a play, and they might run it correctly, but they might miss it too. So now I know that it takes time to learn things. I expect them to do it right eventually, but I know that's not something that's gonna happen right away."

As Davidson navigates and balances coaching and parenting, she hopes her basketball girls can learn from her as well. She hopes they can be inspired. Some of them are the next generation of mothers.

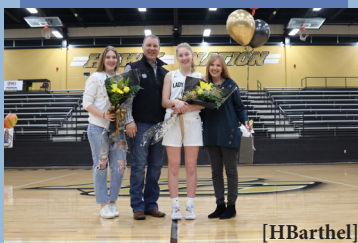
"The girls do really like Madilyn, but I do talk to them about how hard it is. I think if they see me able to balance it, then I feel like I've made a connection with these girls," Coach Davidson said. "I wouldn't say I'm their role model, but I want them to look at me as a good mother and as a good coach. As someone that is able to balance both. I think I did a pretty good job of that."



Basketball girls play around with Madilyn in the locker room. Madilyn dances with them to Disney music. [submitted]

senior szn...

With flowers, balloons, and smiles, seniors take photos with their families on senior night



Emma Henard [HBarthel]



Winter and Autumn Crouch [HBarthel]



Adi Koller [HBarthel]

THE SAME GOAL

Lady Hawks learn and add new drills to their practice to replicate the games of the 2022 Men's Fifa World Cup

Abigail Boehmke
reporter

“The number 10 has a very important meaning in the world of soccer, and getting to share that number with Messi is a cool experience.”
— Emma Boehmke (12)



Professional soccer player from Argentina who has been named the best player in the world six times. He recently just won the 2022 World Cup.

Lionel Messi

“My favorite soccer player has been Megan Rapinoe for the longest time. Not only is she an amazing soccer player, but she is a great role model for people from all walks of life. She speaks for the LGBTQ+ community and people struggling through racial injustices. She is such an inspiration for any young athlete who is finding themselves.”

Savannah Russ (12)

“I am very influenced by Alex Morgan because she is an inspiration — not just to me, but many young girl athletes. She has shown me that anything is possible with her two World Cup wins she secured for the USWNT. I love her because she takes what's normal then takes it to a higher standard. I try and take her resilience to soccer and apply it to how I play because she always keeps going.”

Maggie Clark (11)

One sport.
32 teams.
5.4 billion eyes watching.
The most watched event globally.
The WORLD CUP.

Senior Emma Boehmke sits tensely in her 7th period Government class and she tries to hide her squeals as the United States Men's National Team takes the lead against Iran. Her shoulders drop in relief when she eventually hears the final whistle.

Watching the game is more than just entertainment to her, through her eyes it is a learning experience. Emma is able to learn from one player in particular, Lionel Messi. Messi plays in the Midfield for Argentina's National team and just won his first World Cup. Emma, along with millions of others, keeps a watchful eye on this particular athlete.

“I feel like he and I have a very similar job. We both play the 10, which is an attacking midfielder, and we both wear the number 10,” she said. “I think that it's really cool for me to have a little piece of him even though we're still so different. Being able to look up to him, who plays the same position as me at a professional level, encourages me to be better and it really helps me see how soccer is supposed to be played.”

Some people look up to players, while others look up to the sport as a whole. While students were in school, US History teacher Ms. Abston tilted her

computer screen for the class to watch the games.

While junior Catherine Joyce was taking her quiz she had to multitask between her work and watching the game.

“Ms. Abston allowed one person to have the game on. We were all so engaged in the game and everyone started hollering and raging (during her quiz),” she said. “Since no one was concentrating on our quiz, she made us turn it off. It was super funny because we were supposed to be taking our quiz, but instead we were engaged in the game.”

Staying focused while such an eventful game was hard for Catherine, and she would have to take breaks throughout the game.

“I'd be trying to answer a question in class, but then I'd hear the crowd on the screen and have to look up again at the computer to watch the game,” she said.

Lady Hawks soccer players Emma and Catherine weren't the only ones glued to their screens. Girls Soccer Coach, Andy Allen, kept a watchful eye on the different scoring techniques displayed throughout games.

“I had the idea of an individual shooting drill (Indy Shooting). After watching the World Cup and seeing the players finish goals off situations that we had in practice that we weren't able to score on in the game,” he said. “I wanted a way for the girls to get more

reps in practice to perfect the different techniques for different situations.”

After the new introduction of the Indy Shooting, Emma sees the drill as game like and helpful for the team.

“The day Coach Allen introduced the drill to us in practice we all got twice the amount of reps we usually got in our previous shooting drill,” Emma said.

“With twice the reps and twice as many techniques of scoring, as a team, we began to make goals exactly like the ones we got to practice in the indoor using the Indy Shooting Drill.”

After the Men's World Cup, players on the team are patiently waiting for the Women's World Cup to begin this summer so that the learning can continue.

“I'm super excited for the Women's World Cup this summer because I feel like I will be able to relate to the women's game more so than the Men's,” Emma said. “While yes, it is practically the same game, there are still some differences. I can't wait to watch people with similar builds as me play on the field.”

“I love how you get to make up the game as you play, and you never know what someone's next move or pass will help create.”

- Catherine Joyce (11)

A WAY OF

Madison Herbert
reporter

LIFE

Boys' soccer team shoots for the district title

Junior Bennett Solomon ties his cleats and pulls his long socks over the rock-solid shin guards — he feels a rush of adrenaline.

He's getting ready to dominate the field with his co-captains, junior Hayes Lawrence and senior Peyton LeGrand, led by boys' soccer head coach, Christa Henry.

"We knew last year this year would be our growing season, so our effort would pay off," Bennett said. "We knew our achievements would skyrocket, so we had high expectations coming in."

One of these expectations includes becoming District Champions. "We are definitely on the road to success," Bennett said. "Everyone is locked in with the coach this year, and everyone now has some experience under their belt."

"Two main things: win district and win our first playoff game. And we're definitely on track to do that."

- Hayes Lawrence (11)

The team believes Coach C. has had a significant impact on the program's new direction — she has helped change the culture, work ethic, and chemistry.

"I think you could take 90% of the success that we're going to have these next two years and last season's success and give credit to her," Hayes said. "We went from fourth in district my freshman year to second last year, and then we're coming for the district title this year... And that's all thanks to her."

They have new drills and more intense conditioning, but there's something else making the boys' soccer team better, faster, and stronger this season.

"We've had a lot of time together," Coach C. said. "We've added more stuff into the culture, and started to focus on us, how we do what we do, and making sure we do it well."

The team spends time together outside of school to build

their relationships. Their bond is strong — they've started inviting Coach C. to their get-togethers, instead of her planning things.

"I don't think there's one person on the team who isn't friends with one another," Hayes said.

For the boys, soccer isn't just a sport or a game; it's a way of life, a chance to make life-long relationships. The bond they have off of the field also has an enormous impact on the way they play.

"Because we go out every weekend and we're a group of friends, it creates good energy for the team," freshman James Solomon said. "It's not like we go on the field and we're a group of strangers and we don't talk to each other — we're going out and playing for each other, and we're communicating."

Coach C. had new plans and tactics they started working on at the beginning of the year. According to Peyton, putting people in new positions and having some freshmen move up helped. They've also started doing new drills that have helped them prepare for this season.

"I think everybody has a much better connection with Coach," Bennett said. "And then obviously, she has to be a lot harder on us to keep us locked in. But she does a good job."

A female coaching a large group of teenage boys is an unusual thing to see, and results in different thoughts about having a female coach. Peyton said it's harder for Coach C. because referees don't respect her as much — sophomore Carter Beck said they treat her like "one of the dudes." And Hayes thinks it's harder to relate to her in the same way he could with a male coach.

Regardless, Coach C. is highly respected by her athletes and she knows how to push the team to their fullest potential.

"We worked harder and had more goals to work towards this year," Carter said. "We performed better. We just improved everywhere."

BOYS' SOCCER BY THE NUMBERS

01/05/23
vs. Athens
3-6 (L)

01/06/23
vs. Pine Tree
2-3 (L)

01/12/23
vs. Bullard
2-0 (W)

01/14/23
vs. Tatum
9-1 (W)

01/21/23
vs. Farmersville
1-0 (L)

01/06/23
vs. Hallsville
3-0 (W)

01/07/23
vs. Lindale
1-2 (L)

01/13/23
vs. Tatum
2-0 (W)

01/14/23
vs. Woskam
4-0 (W)

01/21/23
vs. Caddo Mills
2-0 (W)



Captains Peyton LeGrand (12), Bennett Solomon (11), and Hayes Lawrence (11) look after their teammates. [CSanders]



Hayes Lawrence (11) headbutts the ball in attempt to score a goal. Landon Beck (11) defends him. [CSanders]

CAPTAINS IN ACTION



Peyton LeGrand (12)

What do you love most about soccer?

"The people, friendships, and bus rides."

How long have you been playing soccer?

"9 years."

Favorite World-Cup team?

"USA and France."



Hayes Lawrence (11)

What do you love most about soccer?

"Winning."

How long have you been playing soccer?

"7 years."

Favorite World-Cup team?

"USA and Argentina."



Bennett Solomon (11)

What do you love most about soccer?

"The sport in general."

How long have you been playing soccer?

"13 years."

Favorite World-Cup team?

"France."

Music to my ears

Brooklyn Tirone
reporter

Our staff's opinions and reviews on their favorite concerts they've attended

Phoebe Bridgers

Where was the concert?

Toyota Stadium, Dallas TX.

How did you discover the artist?

The radio station my family and I listen played her song "Kyoto," and I really enjoyed it.

Where were your seats?

I was in the row right above the pit — I was thankful I wasn't directly in the pit because of how crazy it looked.

Favorite part?

Phoebe had these graphics that were almost like story-book drawings that related to her songs that were projected behind her while she was singing, and they were so cool to look at.

Who did you go with?

I went with my mom, and even though she had never heard of Phoebe before, she really enjoyed it. I had so much fun experiencing it with her.



- Brooklyn Tirone (10)

The Weeknd

Where was the concert?

AT&T Stadium, Dallas TX.

How did you discover the artist?

I started listening to him in middle school when his album "Starboy" came out, and I've been obsessed with him ever since.

Where were your seats?

We actually didn't get tickets until about 30 minutes before the concert, but we ended up getting seats directly in the pit and my view was so good.

Favorite part?

The whole experience was so cool. But I remember coming out of there and my ears were ringing from how loud it was.

Who did you go with?

I went with my dad, and he's really cool so it was fun. I sent him a playlist beforehand with the set-list, and he really enjoyed it.



- Anna Guan (12)

Mercy Me

Where was the concert?

The Perot, Texarkana TX.

How did you discover the artist?

My mom's all time favorite band is Mercy Me, so I grew up listening to them, and I've always really loved their music.

Where were your seats?

Our seats were in the middle — not quite the floor — it was such a great view of the stage.

Favorite part?

When the concert started they had lots of cool lights and effects, but I loved the whole experience in general.

Who did you go with?

I went with my mom and my twin brother, Jared. It was so much fun to be together because we all love the band.

- Abigail Thrash (10)



Harry Styles

Where was the concert?

AT&T Stadium, Dallas TX.

How did you discover the artist?

I was a huge fan of One Direction, otherwise known as a Directioner, so that's when I developed my love for Harry.

Where were your seats?

I sat in the upper bowl of the arena — my view wasn't the best, but he moved around the stage a lot so I could really see him.

Favorite part?

My favorite part of the concert was when he sang "What Makes You Beautiful," which is a classic One Direction song and one of my favorites.

Who did you go with?

I got to go with my mom, and we had so much fun watching him together.



- Madeline Smallwood (10)

Worth it?

Does our student body think concerts are worth it?

54%

Of students have been to a concert in the past

35%

Of students haven't been to a concert but would like to

11%

Of students haven't been to a concert and don't want to

Where We've Been

The Weeknd
Bazzi
Cody Johnson
Big Time Rush
Taylor Swift
The Lumineers
Parker McCollum
Maroon 5
Selena Gomez
Reba McEntire
Koe Wetzel
Hillsong United
Why Don't We

Coming and Going

Glenn Moore
reporter

Netflix shows coming to the market at quicker rates as shows begin to leave the site

As senior Mollie Hemphill is in the middle of re-watching her favorite show, *Gossip Girl*, she sees that it will be taken off of Netflix within the next month.

Instead of taking her time to watch one of her favorite shows, she feels rushed.

"My favorite show was *Gossip Girl* on Netflix at the time. While I was watching it, I saw it was about to be taken off of Netflix, so I had to rush to watch it all," she said. "Having to rush to finish it made me not enjoy it as much as I could've, and I wish they wouldn't have taken it off in the first place."

Netflix has over gone a change by adding their original series and newer series while taking off the older shows they didn't produce. Their new shows have been coming onto the platform at a faster pace — therefore having to take off other shows to make room for their own.

"The shows that Netflix buys are way better than the originals," senior Jack Humphrey said. "But for some reason when they're on there they lose value. Once I watch the shows a bunch, it sometimes loses its touch."

Over 40 shows and movies were released on Jan. 1, 2023, while only taking off 14 shows and movies.

Netflix hopes to gain more viewers with the quick releases, however there have been lots of conflicting reviews from Netflix users.

"I don't understand where these shows are coming from," sophomore Tacarea Nash said. "They put them on randomly, then take them off within a month or two. It's kind of pointless."

Rocky is a series that was recently added to Netflix and it is about a local fighter dedicated to overcoming the obstacles in his way to be a professional boxer. All five movies of the movie series have been added to the

17,000 Netflix titles this year.

"I really like how the guy has a passion to fight," freshman Kevin Greer said. "He wanted to win, even when he was getting knocked down."

Friday Night Lights, a show added recently, is a story about a football team in high school and a coach willing to help his students' personal struggles. This show will be taken off Netflix after being put back on in 2021.

"I feel like it's gonna' be really downhill," Kevin said. "I like the show, it was a good plot and everything, but I'm also fine with it being taken off because they're making more space for other shows."

While some may like or dislike the quick cycle of shows, most people have mixed feelings.

"I like that they're speeding up the show cycle because we're getting more to watch, but they might want to slow it down a bit," sophomore Kaelan Couch said. "If they keep rushing shows, they won't be the best quality."

Along with people disliking the quick cycle of shows, some people are not happy about the possible commercials about to be added to Netflix's program.

Recently, Netflix has decided to make a plan called 'Basic,' where you get the Netflix plan with ads. The ads will come before, during, and after the movie. Length between the ads are expected to last from 15 to 30 seconds, and the basic plan will include watching ads for at least 4 to 5 minutes per hour.

"Netflix needs to take more time with their releases, but I also think it's good because we barely have any shows."
- Kandice Westbrook (10)



Netflix with ads has already launched in Australia, Brazil, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, and Mexico.

"They shouldn't bring ads, you're already paying for a subscription to watch the shows," sophomore Brody Watts said. "It kills the suspense, and you're not paying for that!"

Netflix is still the top streaming site in the U.S. and has been there since May 2011. Ever since, it has had competitors such as Amazon Prime, fuboTV, Disney+, and Paramount Plus. But some think that Netflix should no longer be at the top.

"I think that a lot of people use Netflix more compared to other streaming platforms," freshman Hunter Rose said. "But it's kind of overrated for a while now."

Streaming services are only around 26% of time on TV, with Netflix and YouTube taking the lead, both capturing about 6% of that time. However, new streaming services being made have been growing faster than Netflix, Hulu traveling behind at 3%, and Amazon Prime at 2%.

"I think Netflix probably does better just because of the pace and their category of films and stuff," senior Logan Knowles said. "But they do lack in some films which is why there's always competition in the market."

COMING TO NETFLIX

- *King Kong* (2005)
- *You* (2018) Season four
- *You People* (2023)
- *Minions: The Rise of Gru* (2022)
- *That 90's Show* (2023)
- *Top Gun* (1986)
- *Sky Rojo* (2021) Season three
- *Freeridge* (2021)

GOING FROM NETFLIX

- *Men in Black* (1997)
- *Megamind* (2010)
- *Rush Hour* (1998)
- *Scooby-Doo* (2010)
- *The Little Rascals* (1994)
- *Blair Witch* (2016)
- *Rambo* (2008)
- *Ratatouille* (2016)

TXK DOWNTOWN SIT-DOWNS

Abigail Boehmke
reporter

Tired of Richmond's restaurant offerings? Downtown Texarkana has plenty of places to try

TLC Burgers and Fries

201 E BROAD ST, TEXARKANA, AR 71854

If you are looking for a perfect burger with a serve-yourself portion of fries, TLC is the way to go. It's a town favorite for sure. Whenever I got there, the line was almost out the door with people waiting to order. You order your meal over the counter, and they prepare it right in front of you. I ordered a cheeseburger with veggies and mayo. It came out perfectly cooked with just enough flavor from the toppings. As you move down the line, you come upon a heated basket full of their very own seasoned fries. The seasoning is a *must*. You are able to decide your own amounts as you use tongs to pick up the fries and place them into a checkered cardboard boat. I got a soft drink with my meal which totaled out to \$14.40. I think I might be a little biased, but TLC has the best burgers in town.



Pecan Point

213 MAIN ST, TEXARKANA, TX 75503



This restaurant is the perfect stop after a long day. The dimmed lights and wooden features on the walls and tables give you a quiet and cozy atmosphere. The menu has a great variety of dishes. You can get anything from duck breast to crawfish dip. The waiters are dressed casually and are very friendly. They have tons of seating in two separate parts of the restaurant. One side has a bar and some tables while the other is strictly tables and booths. The environment is very family-oriented with it's nicer, casual feel, but can also serve as a great place to have a night out with friends. The food is amazing with it's diverse option of flavor and culture. It is a little pricer then your average dinner, but well worth the minimum extra charge.

Alley Cats Coffee Bar

305 E FRONT ST, TEXARKANA, AR 71854

This is not your average coffee shop. It's located in an old train car, and as you go in, you are greeted by very friendly baristas with great recommendations. It took me a while to decide what to order because of the many different combinations they had. I finally decided on a caramel, brown sugar, cinnamon cold brew with a splash of oat milk. After I ordered, I made my way out to their outdoor seating area which sat under some fun string lights. Even though we decided to go outside, the inside was just as appealing. It had a fun checkered floor with colored chairs placed in the order of the rainbow. We were waiting for maybe three minutes when the barista hand-delivered the coffee to me. My first sip was full of flavor. I was able to taste the sweetness of the caramel and the boldness of the cinnamon. Overall, I was very impressed with the presentation, preparation, and taste of their coffee.



A PRICIER OPTION

Verona not budget-friendly but a great place for a special occasion

Verona Restaurant

212 E BROAD ST, TEXARKANA, AR 71854

There are not many places in town that you get the chance to dress up and look your best, but when dining-in at Verona it's kind of an unwritten rule. If you are wanting to go out to eat on a budget, this restaurant probably isn't an ideal option for you. As you step into the restaurant, you will notice a very classy environment: lights dimmed, tables set with white tablecloths, and waiters and waitress dressed in ties and button-up shirts. The food came out timely, and the presentation was impressive. I ordered the Shrimp Scampi and could immediately taste the combination of lemon and garlic in the dish. The food was amazing, and I will be going back as soon as I can save enough money to splurge again.



THE PERFECT STORM

Discovering a passion in an unexpected way

Olivia Perry
reporter



Whenever something important happens in my life it rains.

And it's not your normal shower that lasts maybe four seconds.

The day I get my first phone? Severe flooding from rain.

The day I get my permit? Rain so bad people parked on the side of the road.

First time touring a college? Another flood from rain.

So, of course, the day I get my schedule for my first year of high school — a wet, dreary day.

But that isn't the reason it's raining

I spend my summer (really just a week since I do love to procrastinate) finishing my FPF and Speech classes — It helps open up a spot on my schedule for another required elective. A chance to get ahead in my high school life.

So, I pick up my schedule, get in the car with my mom, show her my fancy honors classes and... YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!!

Right in the beginning of my schedule there I see FPF and Speech as my second period class.

I roll my eyes, complaining to Mom about bothering Mrs. Carpenter (my counselor at that time) again. I already have some social anxiety and this situation is NOT helping.

I do my best I'm-totally-not-freaking-out walk from our warm, dry car through the rain, back across the parking lot, back up the long sidewalk (avoiding heaping puddles of water of course), through the side entrance to the cafeteria, and show Mrs. Carpenter

the problem.

Then she shows me a bigger problem — only one class fits the schedule already laid out for me.

Accounting I.

You know, the job only sad people take after giving up on their hopes and dreams. At least, it's going to be an easy A.

Back I go — out the side door, down the long (still puddle ridden) sidewalk, across the parking lot, and back in the car.

And that's when I show her the new schedule.

And that's when her eyes go wide.

And that's when her face goes white.

“YOU CANNOT DO ACCOUNTING!”

Now my eyes go wide.

“IT'S ONE OF THE HARDEST CLASSES YOU'LL EVER TAKE.”

Wait, what???

“YOU HAVE TO GO BACK AND CHANGE YOUR SCHEDULE.”

I had never seen her so terrified in my life. Surely, she's being dramatic, right? Besides, I don't want to bother Mrs. Carpenter for a third time.

I ignore Mom, and decide I have to push through.

“Just go. I'll be okay. I really don't want to go back.”

She looked at me with that all too familiar really-Olivia-you-have-got-to-be-kidding-me look and drove off.

First period band class — a blur.

Instead of listening to quarter notes, all I can hear... my mom's voice reminding me how awful accounting is.

And Accounting was my next class.

What if she's right? What if I don't understand accounting? What if I fail?

The bell rings. It's time. Time for second period. Time for accounting.

My chest tightens as I open the door to Coach P's accounting class.

Four tables filled with freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and — SENIORS???. Great. My first day and I already have to deal with upperclassmen.

I'm two minutes late coming from band, and, of course, no spots left at the tables.

I have to sit in the back by myself — could this day be anymore cliché!!!

I do the walk-of-shame past all the eyes burning into me and sit down.

Why did I take this class?

Coach P takes attendance. Class starts. And the first thing we learn is simple enough — what accounting is and when you use it.

First lesson's always easy. I'll give it a day or two and then it'll get hard.

The next day — debits and credits — simple, easy ... and fun? What is going on?

T-accounts, General Journals, General Ledgers? Straightforward. And my favorite lessons.

Filling out packets puts me at ease. Reading checks — soothing. Completing Trial Balances — EXCITING! Exciting?

I love accounting.

I know, I know — I'm nerdy and weird.

But I LOVE ACCOUNTING!

How could I love accounting? It's supposed

to be hard. The worst class in existence.

But I can't get enough of it.

I love it so much I take Accounting II sophomore year, even join the UIL accounting team.

I love it so much, I'm now on my way to be an accountant.

And I (peer pressuring like there's no tomorrow) tell everyone how amazing it is if they would just give it a try.

Okay, you're rolling your eyes like everyone else — saying I'm crazy, weird, slightly insane. But I don't care.

I've never been more excited about my future. My accounting situation even helped me learn to be open about new experiences, to not judge a book by its cover.

Your mom might tell you it's the most awful thing ever, but you have to try — now don't go home and tell your mom (or dad or whoever is in charge of you) that she doesn't know what she's talking about and you're going to do whatever you want. She is right about some things but not everything.

So put on your raincoat, slide on your rain boots.

It's time to find your stormy day.

NO MORE I-LOVE-YOU'S

Expressing true love and admiration should rare

Riley Richardson
reporter



I'm not a touchy-feely person — never have been.

Bear hugs from family? Hated them.

Constant clinginess of friends? Found it annoying.

I mean, what can I say? I love my personal space.

But the never-ending I-love-you's from everyone... now that made me uncomfortable.

My friends — even my parents — would tell me those three little words and I could never say them back. And when I tried, it was like gum was lodged in my throat — and the words, I-love-you, just couldn't come.

I-love-you's always felt fake coming out of my mouth, like the words had no meaning behind them like that phrase was as common as mentioning, “Good Morning, how are you?”

Eventually, my friends picked up that the constant I-love-you's was making me uncomfortable but still... it irritated me.

But not with my friends.

I was irritated with ME — I should be able to say those words. I should be able to hug people. I should be able to... but I just couldn't.

Frustrating. So unbelievably frustrating. Everyone around me showed affection so freely, but me? I was struggling to allow my best friend to put her hand on my shoulder and not karate-chop her.

It took me two years — Two. Whole. Years. —

before I realized “the why” behind my feelings — I

want I-love-you's to be special, to mean something more than a “Hi, I missed you” or a “Hope you have a good night.” Every time the words “I love you” are said, I feel like the value of them decreases.

To love someone, to show my mother, my boyfriend, my best friend physical affection? Even just to tell them, “I love you.” That touch, those words, should be cherished, protected, hoarded.

It shouldn't be easily thrown around.

Telling you “I love you” and sharing physical affection, is me saying, I trust you. So to me, expressing adoration is everything, loving someone is everything.

“I love you,” to me at least, isn't a casual act — not just a way to hang up a phone call or to say goodnight.

No, I shouldn't have to say “I love you” to my best friend to stay her best friend just like I shouldn't have to kiss my boyfriend to stay together.

And don't get me wrong either. I'm not saying to never tell someone you love them. I say it too. But I won't diminish I-love-you's value by saying it 50 times a day.

So here's what I hope you... what I hope we all will do ... when we feel ourselves about to say those three little words.

Ask yourself, “Do I seriously love this person, or am I just going through the motions? Is this even a good time to express my feelings?”

Asking myself those two questions helps me in all my relationships by making my words, my affection more meaningful.

Now here I am — after three years of working on my intimacy with people — and I can still only express love to my parents, aunt, boyfriend, and maybe one or two friends. And even though I found a balance in showing affection, I haven't abandoned my conviction that I-love-you's and affection should be used sparingly.

Not a million times a day.

So even though I've just bared my soul to you — fair warning — don't hug me in the hallway.

DREAMING AWAY FROM REALITY

Balancing the stress from reality and dreaming allows a staffer to reflect on herself

Stephanie Nguyen
reporter

I'm a very heavy sleeper.

I've slept through a fire alarm once during my eighth grade Washington D.C. trip. Let's just say I thought it was my friend's very loud and annoying alarm.

But I get my eight hours of sleep. Sometimes on the weekends, I get 12 to 15 hours.

But the thing is, I don't sleep because I like sleeping. I sleep because it reduces the chances of making careless mistakes, embarrassing myself in front of others, and sitting alone in front of my computer, wondering what assignment I need to do next.

But the deep-rooted reason why I sleep so long is because I can lucid dream. Lucid dreaming is like being in every role in the production of a documentary or movie. I have very frequent and vivid dreams, and it's a unique odyssey every single time I close my eyes. Except for the sleep paralysis I get when my mom wakes me up right when I'm near the end of my dream is not the best ending.

My dreams have taken me from flying across the globe like Superman to rescue children and abandoned animals, being lost in the woods and randomly being able to have wings to fly away, building a rocket-launching backpack in 10 seconds in the middle of a jungle, to missing ten assignments and my mom selling my car — only to wake up and realize that it was all a dream.

But when I'm not sleeping, I tend to daydream.

Every time I come home from school, I'm greeted with an emptiness. My mom works all day, so I'm left alone to do whatever I want for the next four hours. Many people might take this opportunity to hang out with friends, go out and eat, or spend money at Target or the mall.

But that's not me. I'm exhausted after a long day of socializing and putting up a very organized, sophisticated image of myself, and all I want to do is play on my Nintendo Switch. Every time I look at my phone to check the time, all I see is my phone background. I don't get notifications from people — it's usually multiple spam emails from a random college that I didn't apply to. I get exhausted from being a people pleaser and being known for not making any mistakes.

I'm exhausted from just existing.

A lot of my friends ask me how I seem to always be busy. I'm a very "work hard, play hard" person. I do everything I can to finish any assignments ahead of time so that when I come home, I don't have to do much.

But that's also my issue — I don't do much.

After I have finished my homework and after school routine, I'm sitting and staring at my computer. What could I be doing with this extra time? I play with my hands and look off to the side. I stand up and walk around my empty house in circles for the next two hours.

That's my daydreaming routine.

My dissociative behavior is a coping mechanism to distract myself from my loneliness and my problems with myself.

Now that I'm a senior in high school and going to college in several months, I've realized that all of the stress, worry, and embarrassment that I've gone through has built the person I am today. Of course, I don't hesitate to ask myself what I could have done better or differently, but I now take them as a moment of self-reflection and how I can improve and better myself for the future.

There's nothing wrong with taking your present journey realistically — one step at a time — but, at the same time, don't be afraid to dream big.



BILINGUAL PROBLEMS

Speaking two languages is a plus, but it can be frustrating

Mikaela Emphasis
reporter

Sit on the lunch table, surrounded by Chloe, Olivia and Riley, jabbering to them about the new gore movie I watched over the weekend. I say —

"And then, and then, and then..."

And I stop talking mid-sentence — I've just caught my brain and mouth about to let out the most incomprehensible words my American friends will ever hear.

"Why did you stop?" my friends ask, but I just shake my head — stopping is all I could do.

Just when I'm at the good part of my story, my brain decides to switch from speaking in English to speaking in my native language.

My brain switching languages happens so often that my friends leave me be when I suddenly stop talking during a very passionate discussion — they know what's going on.

And I just sit there with my brain malfunctioning — waiting for my brain to collect itself. Waiting for it to decide which language it wants to use. Waiting for it to let me speak.

So don't mind me! Just a normal day in the mind of a bilingual girl — a bilingual girl who gets in a language jam whenever she starts speaking English rapidly. A bilingual girl whose brain suddenly becomes uncooperative and starts speaking in Filipino.

Give my brain a break — it can only think and speak in English at a limited capacity so it switches to my native language.

Despite being a Filipino who wasn't born in or grew up in America, I'm speak English fluently because Filipinos who grew up in the Philippines are exposed to English from the time they're kids. Heck, we're even taught English at school.

Sometimes, when people learn I didn't grow up in the U.S., I get comments like "you speak really good English though!"

Well Karen, if you listened enough in geography, you would know that there are several countries with multiple national languages — like the Philippines consider both Filipino and English as the official languages of the country (due to colonization... awkward).

Studies show being bilingual is an advantage. It strengthens cognitive abilities, increases brain power, and makes multitasking easier. Yadda yadda yadda. Okay, I acknowledge those strengths — but what about the struggles that come with being bilingual?

Because nothing beats the frustration when a word in my native language doesn't have an adequate English word for it.

Or when one language tries to dominate the other — it's a whole jungle out here.

Oh, another frustration with being bilingual — when I'm confidently speaking a word in English only for my American friends to correct me. Why? Because the word is pronounced in a different way in the west.

Don't even get me started on my American friends completely butchering my proper English grammar — spicing it up with Southern slang (thanks, I guess, Texas). I went from saying "you guys" to "y'all." Instead of saying "preparing to do something" I say "fixin' to do something" — I mean, that's just how Texans say it.

People would also ask me to translate an English word or sentence in Filipino as if I'm Google Translate — my brain is already struggling as it is and you want me to translate a sentence that may not even make sense in Filipino?

On top of that, I get embarrassed because of the pressure that I suddenly forget my native language.

Ay, ambot sa inyo!

Pretty sure you don't understand that, but don't worry — "ay, ambot sa inyo" isn't a swear word or anything inappropriate — it's just me expressing my frustration. It doesn't really have a direct English equivalent but in simple terms, I'm just saying 'whatever' in Filipino.

My friends do get their fair share of embarrassment — when they try to say a Filipino sentence I taught them, they will butcher the pronunciation and apologize saying, "I'm sorry, I'm American!"

Bless them for trying.

Every day, it's a battle between me and my brain. So if you want to learn another language, welp, good luck with that.

I'm kidding.

But seriously, despite the struggles that come with being bilingual, language is beautiful — I think everyone should try and learn. Or not. You do you, I guess.

And if you're a bilingual who's struggling the same way I am — you're not alone. We'll struggle together, *fam*.



STAFF EDITORIAL

Double standards are a problem

To be a girl means being more responsible.
 To be a girl means being expected to look attractive without looking like you're trying.
 To be a girl means double standards.
 Double standards meaning that girls can't wear tight clothing without being "distracting", girls can't act out in class without being "disruptive", and girls can't have a little fat on their bodies without being "chubby".
 Growing up female comes with many perks, but it also comes with many expectations and responsibilities — different than the average boy has.
 Responsibilities that must be fulfilled, whether it's to keep up their grades or to "take care of business." To be a role model. To dress modestly. And none of those are bad things — for either sex. But there are also expectations about the way women look and dress, the way they act, and the domestic stereotype of society.
 Girls who wear leggings and a crop top to school are considered "inappropriate" and "distracting" to the boys who are trying to learn.
 Girls who speak out in class or who ask "too many questions" are considered annoying or opinionated.
 Girls who are confident or proud of who they are come off as cocky or are told they'll never find someone to put up with them because they're "too independent."
 This is wrong.
 Girls should not feel the need to cover up for the boys' sake. If administrators want girls to cover up to look more professional, so be it. But girls should not have to cover up because their shoulders and curves are distracting to the boys around them.
 Administrators should be dress coding boys who are not following the school's dress code as much as the girls are.
 But it's not just the double standards in appearance. Along with the dress code, teachers should stop expecting more out of the girls in the classroom than they expect of boys.
 The interruptions and speaking out that boys are often allowed to do without reprimand is frowned on for girls, who would be called annoying in class, scolded at quicker, or labeled a bad student.
 Boys need to be held to a higher standard and girls need an environment where it is okay for them to be more than meek, non-confrontational, and focused on their work.



-- Erica Zofcin

Girls should not be allowed to act out, and yes, they should be good students, but when boys are allowed to speak out with few consequences, that's where the issue lies.
 The double standards need to come to an end.
 Teachers are more than allowed to have favorite students, and maybe even a favorite gender, but all the girls are asking for is fairness.
 But that's not the only double standard.
 Some boys expect girls to look good 24/7.
 They expect their hair to be done, makeup to be applied, and their outfit to look put together.
 All are unrealistic expectations for females to look like all the time.
 Instead of holding girls to these unrealistic standards, society should rethink these expectations because not only are they unfair from a male versus female perspective, but they are unrealistic for anyone.

Do you think there are double standards between males and females?
 15 staffers answered yes to this question
 0 staffers answered no

now you're talking

Students like different forms of caffeinated drinks

What is your favorite caffeinated drink?



"I try not to drink coffee or anything like that because it can give you anxiety, but I do like chocolate frappuccinos because they taste like chocolate milk."

Emma Jones (12)



"I like green tea and just all teas in general. It tastes good, and you can have it hot or cold, but I like cold drinks. It makes it more refreshing."

Tate Bass (11)



"My go-to caffeine drink is an iced caramel latte from Starbucks. It is very sweet and has lots and lots of caramel in it, and I love caramel."

Kaylee Hunt (10)



"My favorite drink is Sprite; I mainly drink sodas. I like the lemon-lime flavor in it, and it's best when it's cold and refreshing."

Caleb Jackson (9)



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