

PANTHER PRINTS

PANTHER PRINTS

March 4, 2021

ISSUE 3



***Pop Culture Progression:
Cinema's Cause, Effect on American Culture***

pg. 12

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Mission Statement

At Panther Prints, our mission is to serve as a connection between the Plano East student body and surrounding communities. Through inspiration and high-quality content, Panther Prints offers diverse coverage, passionate writing, relatable stories and a unique point of view. Our credible sources allow an in-depth experience that appeals to both the public and the individual. Our publication offers an informative and distinctive outlook on current interests.

Digital Media Policy

We at the Panther Prints commit to responsibly utilize all of our media platforms to unite and inform the student body. We strive to create original content and attribute credit to all sources. We require our staff to uphold these values and to accurately report the news to the student body and community.

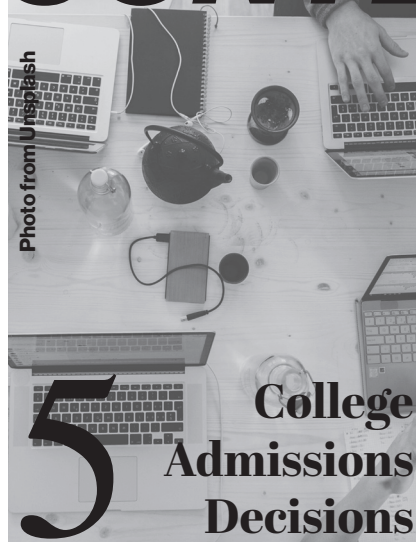
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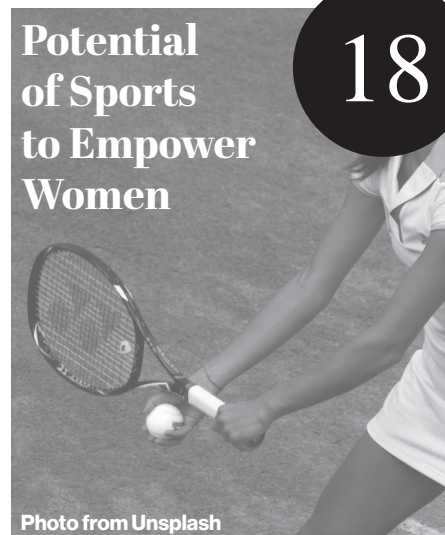


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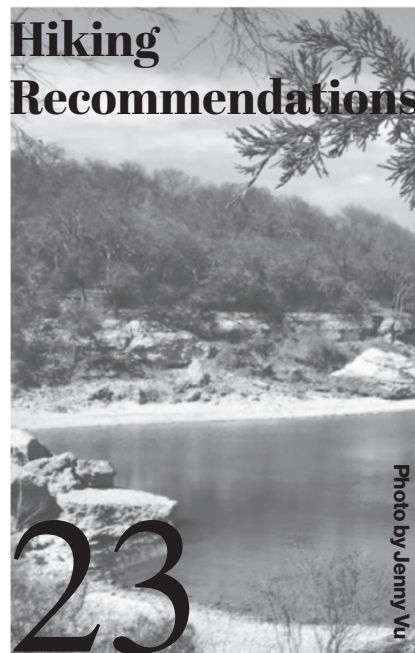


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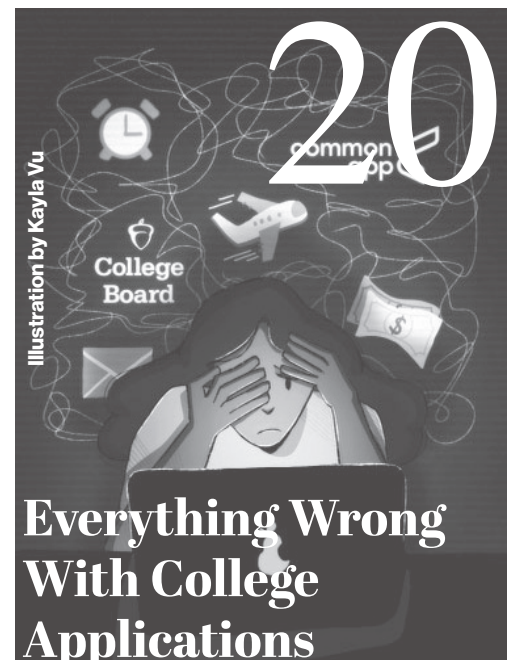


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Editor-in-Chief

This issue has been hard, with college responsibilities looming over seniors' heads, the continual effect of COVID-19 on even the most subtle aspects of education, and an ever-evolving political and social sphere to look out for in the months ahead. With these challenges though came new learning opportunities for both myself and everyone else involved in the production of this newspaper. Our rhythm and routine have faltered, but it's up to us to do what we've done best the past two years: adapt. The newspaper staff has been working diligently to ensure the student body is provided with the most relevant information, both locally and domestically. I only hope our readers get out of this issue what we've put in: a sense of pride toward our school's accomplishments and an urge for the change and reform we deserve. For our seniors, let's push through one more nine-week period, and for the underclassmen, your motivation during tumultuous times are a testament to your abilities and strength. We can do this.

Claire Tweedie

Creative Director

As students enter the next nine-week period feeling burnt out from a long school year, completely in-person for the first time since the start of the pandemic, and seniors feeling the weight of college decisions on their shoulders, the newspaper staff wants to remind you that simply getting through the year is already an accomplishment in itself. Nevertheless, we hope you are proud of your achievements as much as we are proud of this newspaper issue. Throughout the process of creating this issue, the newspaper staff has encountered a new set of challenges, which only strengthened our ability to problem-solve in the face of adversity and come together as a team. With the release of the third newspaper issue, we hope you start the last quarter of this school year on a good note.

Abby Hannon

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editor,

I like how organized and well put together the newspaper is. The topics in it are real eye openers and point attention toward real issues currently going on that need to change. I'm not a big reader myself, but these newspapers never fail. They really make you want to keep reading about what's going on. It's really sad to see how there are rules, not good politics, laws and such that are still allowed and how just unfair it is toward people. The article really points out things that have been issues for a long time that needs to be changed such as gun laws, which causes the amount of school shootings that have been going around, and the transgender rights.

- Marina Henricks, 11

Dear Editor,

Going through the pages of the newspaper, I was impressed by how much information was provided. It allowed me to look into things that I have never heard of. It gave a good description on what was presented, even adding in facts and statistics to back up their claims. The newspaper also did well with the way they organized the pages. Although there was a lot of information presented, it still shows that they are eager to get more information out to the students. They try to cover as much as possible adding more and more new information on what goes on in the school. Keeping students up to date and presenting them things that could possibly get someone into something they would've never thought they'd get into.

- Kamryn Sims, 12

Puzzled Panthers

By Jackie Theiur

"Are AP tests going to be in-person this year?"

A P College Board has not announced a final decision on the options that will be provided to students regarding AP exams. What they decide on will be executed by the school.

"If College Board is going to provide a virtual option, since they provide and administer the test, we will honor that," King said.

"What is the consequence for going into the pond?"

Although the story regarding a student being denied the ability to participate in graduation as a result of going into the pond is likely true based on stories passed down by staff over time, there is currently no set punishment for entering the pond. Principal King believes the intentions behind the decision to go into the pond plays a role in the resulting consequences. Premeditated misconduct may derive a more serious outcome.

"It all depends on the situation, every potential disciplinary situation has its own unique story behind it," King said. "That governs our decision as to what takes place."

"Does Plano East have annual traditions?"

The only set annual traditions are homecoming and prom, along with the recently revived homecoming parade. Homecoming took place Oct. 2, 2021 and prom will take place March 26. Most extracurricular clubs and programs have their own unique traditions that take place throughout the year, and there are also three pep rallies set in place for every school year.

Senior Class Officers 'Plant' Perfect Prom

By Claire Tweedie

After months of speculation and planning, senior class officers announced prom will be held March 26 at the Plano Event Center from 8 to 11 p.m. With the alterations to last year's dance and the cancellation of the event two years prior, recent details regarding prom continue to grow student's excitement, with many hoping for a traditional senior send out.

"The entire persona of prom is slightly altered," senior class vice president Vani Shah said. "We're really lucky to have prom this year and we really hope everyone can come. We're trying our best to make it memorable."

Even with this eagerness, the planning process hasn't been without challenges. Between date speculation, which had to factor in venue availability and religious holidays, and the inability for students to meet in-person with everyone involved in the creation of the event, the senior class officers have been working hard to plan the perfect prom.

"We couldn't meet with the decorator and we couldn't go to the actual venue," senior class president Megan Trieu said. "The rest of us could all meet in person though, so we would meet with Eppler and talk it all out. He was really supportive of all our ideas."

This year's prom will have an "Enchanted Garden" theme, complete with plenty of greenery and floral accents decorating the place. The officers worked closely with the decorator by word of mouth to create their vision of a more whimsical and wild venue, incorporating lanterns, string lights and a grand entryway, rather than a typical English garden.

"This was more of the vibes we wanted to go for in regards to how to decorate," Shah said. "I know with trends

recently, the whole fairy-esque fashion statements and neutral or earth tones are very much in, so we thought this could bring in everyone's preferences."

While COVID-19 may still affect the classroom, the officers are working hard to ensure the event is safe and follows proper guidelines. Trieu believes the event will have the same COVID-19 implementations as homecoming, while Shah states that most people she knows will likely be wearing masks. Associate principal of student activities Robert Eppler believes this won't be a problem though, as he hopes the event will be an opportunity for seniors to spend time together and enjoy themselves.

"Currently, there will not be any COVID-19 restrictions put in place," Eppler said. "As we've seen it's a very fluid situation so if we get another variant that comes in then we might have to do something, but I'm not foreseeing that at this time right now."

Despite the remaining uncertainty some students may have, the officers simply hope the event will be a memorable night for the graduating class.

"The whole idea of prom is to be one last big event for the seniors," Trieu said. "We want everyone to be able to come, show up in their nice prom outfits, and have fun. I have high hopes and that's what I want for the event."



Scan to purchase prom tickets.

Rejecting, Accepting Regular Decision Admissions

By Rishi Mallela

As March admissions roll out in the coming weeks, preparing for what factors to consider for making a final decision on a college and major is encouraged for high school seniors as soon as possible. Students from now until commitment day May 1 will be taking the steps to consider local school deadlines, influencing decision factors- such as campus life and tuition cost- and what resources are available for information on scholarships and financial aid.

A major consideration is what deadlines local schools have. For seniors across North Texas, it's important to know what deadlines colleges like University of North Texas, University of Texas at Dallas, and University of Texas at Austin (UT) have to make finalized decisions upon admittance. Sub-school counselor Jinnetter Dixon encourages students to reach out to admissions officers to access accurate information, advising to keep in touch with them for any extra information.

"Reach out to the admissions officers to find out where they are in the process, as well as making sure if you have the information they need," Dixon said.

Throughout the year, schools offer virtual or in-person campus visits. This way, visiting helps foster a connection with the culture of their favored college's environments. Accord-

ing to UT, roughly 70,000 students visit the campus every year. Of those students, the 2021 school year saw the enrollment of nearly 9,000 students. Future Texas Tech student senior Lauren Devary notes that going on a campus tour to all 10 of the schools she got into helped her make a more informed decision, especially after she fell in love with the Texas Tech campus.

ages students to do this by keeping in touch with the admissions office, accessing the financial aid section of their application portal for further opportunities for more funds, or even looking at external opportunities to apply for scholarships outside of the funds the school itself offers.

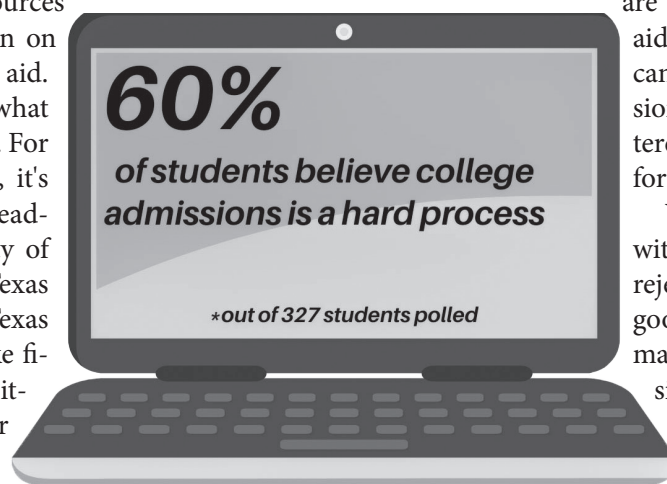
"When deciding what school you want to go to after admission, there are many ways to access financial aid information," Dixon said, "This can be from talking to the admissions office, conveying your interest in the program or looking for scholarships you qualify for."

When students are struggling with how to approach accepting and rejecting admissions into schools, it's good to keep in mind that there are many ways to make a confident decision, be it from school counselors, admission officers or scholarship sponsors. Senior Akhil Tummala looks to make his decision with this in mind, stating his anticipation as the commitment date nears.

"I feel confident that I'll be able to consider all the right factors and make a fateful decision I won't look back on," Tummala said, "I'll definitely still have anxious anticipation thinking about what that commitment will mean for the next four years and beyond."

"I felt most at home, and the city was where I could picture myself living the most," Devary said. "Their tour was the most informational, helping set up what my courses would look like and what time frame I would graduate."

Following admission, many students look to what scholarships or financial aid they have received, or wait accordingly for any personal distinctions granting them money for their education. Dixon encour-



Shortage of Staff Affects Learning

By Kayla Vu

With COVID-19 cases now in a slow decline, teachers and students finish off the third nine-weeks for the upcoming spring break. However, at the start of the semester, an influx in absences of staff members created difficulties for learning. By Jan. 10, after the first three days back, 19 staff members reported positive for COVID-19. During the first-week period, there were six to 12 classrooms each day without a teacher or substitute. Other staff members were forced to give up their conference periods to cover these classes.

“There was a lot of confusion,” calculus teacher Doris Kottwitz said. “Students lost a lot of learning time and that built on top of what we lost last year and the other half a year before that. It caused some anxiety and there were inconsistencies because

teachers were retiring or quitting, so the students didn’t know what to expect.”

Principal George King expressed concern at teachers needing to sacrifice their conference periods to look over uncovered classrooms.

“It creates a sense of being overwhelmed and overworked,” King said. “It puts a strain on teachers [and the] balance in their lives. They must add hours to their work day to grade student work, plan and tutor because they must supervise classrooms not covered by substitute teachers.”

At a meeting Jan. 11, the district approved a staff retention bonus and increasing pay for substitutes to aid the issue of a lack of substitute teachers. Certified substitute teachers can now make \$130 per day, substitutes with only a degree will receive \$120 per

day and those with only a high school diploma will be able to earn \$100 per day. Substitutes that work 10 to 14 days also receive a \$300 bonus while those who work 15 days or more receive \$350. After the bonus went into effect, substitute coverage rate rose from 47% on Jan. 18 to 74% on Jan. 25. For teachers, a retention incentive of \$750 would be paid out to all active and full-time teachers employed as of Jan. 5. Part-timers employed at the same date would also receive a \$350 incentive.

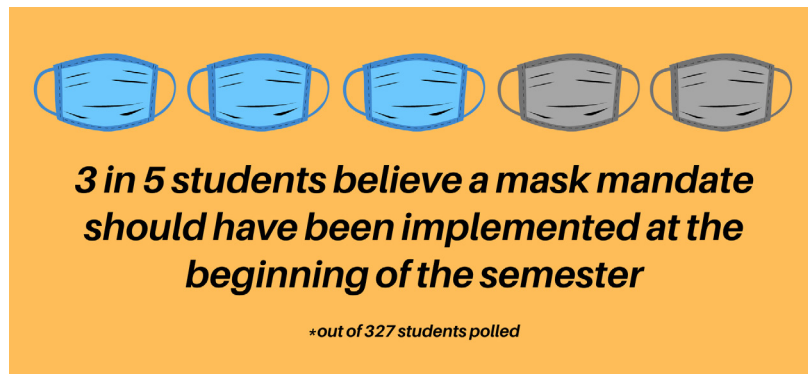
“It was a good move on the part of the district to do [the incentive];”

post assignments on Google Classroom it’s not very helpful [because] the assignments aren’t very detailed, so it’s hard to know what to do exactly. There’s no instruction and no one there to answer our questions if we have any.”

Other students have advocated for the idea of mask mandates, remote learning or hybrid schedules. For Kottwitz, she continues to keep up an updated Google Classroom with daily notes, homework examples and older video lessons along with maintaining communication with her students through email and Remind.

“Last year when we were required to do the Google Classroom, I kept that up and I know a lot of other [teachers] have as well,” Kottwitz said. “Of course, it’s better if [students] are here in-person and they know that I’m available for the most part for them. I

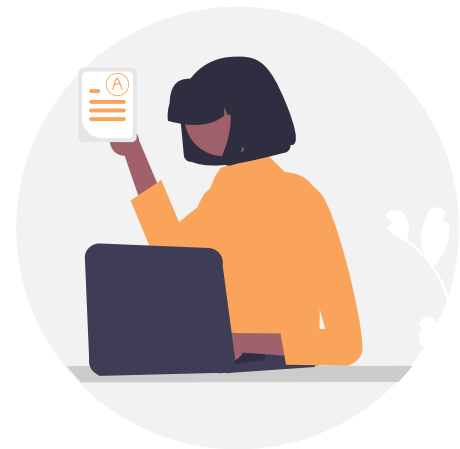
try to keep up with that communication and have it [as] open as possible to keep students up to date.”



English Department Head Dr. LaRell Bissett said. “Part of the reason we were grateful to get [the incentive] was because with teaching remotely, it’s extremely difficult to engage students in learning. I feel like the district personnel recognized how difficult [teaching] was and was trying to encourage [teachers] to continue on like we are [doing] now.”

Along with the initiatives to increase availability of substitutes, several teachers have also implemented active Google Classrooms where assignments are posted daily. However, some students still felt concerned by the absences of teachers at the start of the year.

“When teachers are gone it’s hard to understand what we’re learning,” senior Anisha Reddy said. “If they just



College Board Announces SAT Moves Online

By Sydnie Grayson

Students will take the upcoming SAT March 23 in-person with a hard copy version of the test. However, a major change will take place in the fall of 2024, when the standardized test will be digital.

Since 1926, the SAT has been in-person with students using a test booklet and a No. 2 pencil. In 2024, the new medium for the SAT will be a personal device, whether that be a laptop or a tablet, while still being in-person. After a digital trial run in November 2021, according to College Board, 80% of students found it less stressful and 100% of teachers found it to be a positive experience overall.

“I would say my [PSAT] experience was different since I haven’t really taken one before,” freshman Pritika Sandhu said. “Personally, whenever I do things online, I feel less stressed because I’m in an environment that I’m comfortable with rather than in an area that you don’t know with other people taking the same test.”

While the test scale will not change, staying at the highest score of a 1600, the test differs in three ways. Along with the main change of going digital, the test length will be an hour shorter than in previous years. In addition, the math section will be done with the use of a calculator throughout. The reading section will include shorter passages with one question per passage.

“The time pressure, which I personally don’t like, is just the way it has to be; students have to think quickly on their toes,” senior Andrew Nguyen said. “I would think that the scores will go down because if it goes online, there’s no prep that can really [be done] unless there’s a better understanding of what the online test is going to be.”

Along with these changes, College Board believes that this switch to digital formatting will decrease the amount of cheating. According to Campus Explorer, about 2,000 people out of two million cheat on this test. Due to the unique forms each stu-



dent will receive with the online test, sharing answers will be almost impossible according to College Board.

“I feel like it has its pros and cons,” junior Kartik Kaoundal said. “I would prefer in-person or on paper instead of online, but I feel like it also makes it more fair. It’s unfair to the people who’ve taken it on paper before, and if they do go on [with] this, they should do it for a longer period of time.”

In recent years, the timing of releasing the scores took two to four weeks. With this change, this timing will shrink, giving students their scores in days rather than weeks.

“I think this is a positive because students will have feedback more quickly,” Director of Guidance Jennifer Spring said. “If I need to take a test for a scholarship, I’ll be able to get my results much quicker to know whether I need to sign up for another one.”

This alteration applies to not only the Fall 2024 SAT, but the international Spring 2023 SAT, the PSAT 8/9 and the Fall 2023 PSAT/NMSQT as well. For the high school classes of 2022, 2023 and 2024, they will have to take their SAT in the regular format of paper and pencil.

“They’ve got all kinds of things in place to make it a very smooth process,” Spring said. “Hopefully by the time we get it here, any kind of negatives will be worked out through those testing places they’re going to use, prior to us getting it.”

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Biden's First Year in Office Examined

By Aziz Syed

The distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as well as the creation and attempted passing of large scale bills are key events that marked President Joe Biden's first year in office. These affairs were combated with the aftermath of an insurrection on Capitol Hill that took place Jan. 6 of last year, just two weeks before Biden's inauguration. Circumstances like these determined the historic start of Biden's term as president.

Before the current administration could address vaccine distribution or infrastructure bills, they had to manage the aftermath of the Capitol Hill riot. Reportedly around 2,500 supporters of former President Donald Trump protested the 2020 election results on Capitol Hill. Biden's administration was determined to charge and prosecute the people responsible for the attack. Over 700 of the rioters have been identified, 71 of which have been charged with criminal sentences. On the one-year anniversary of the insurrection, Biden gave a speech addressing both the event and those responsible. Senior Burit Boonpirom noted that this speech differed from previous ones given by Biden in the past, as he believes Biden was speaking more directly to the previous administration.

"I think it provided him with a platform to run on by blasting the Republicans or Trump's allies and making the Republican Party look bad," Boonpirom said. "During his recent speech, he had strong things to say about the insurrection and Republicans."

Trump's administration was largely responsible for the formation of COVID-19 vaccines in 2020, working with companies such as Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson. They also enacted the beginning stages of

distribution, leaving office with 16.5 million vaccines distributed. The current administration continued the distribution of said vaccines, announcing a plan to distribute 100 million vaccines within the first 100 days of the new term. This goal was met within the first 58 days. On March 3, 2021, Biden issued a statement that by the end of May, there would be a vaccine available for every adult in America.

"We're incredibly partisan and divided in America right now but for the most part I think it was well handled by both administrations," American Studies teacher Joseph Rus-

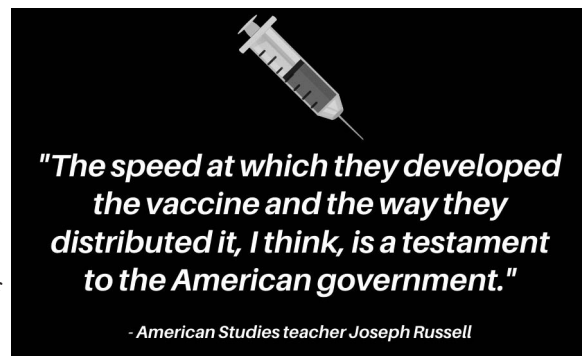
sell said. "The speed at which they developed this administration is trying to combat with this bill are non-partisan issues that most Americans agree on.

"It's one of these examples where you have a political divide in Washington that's not as pronounced as it is in the rest of the country," Russell said. "I think the will of the people doesn't seem to translate through the turmoil of Washington politics very well."

Biden saw much more success in passing a non-partisan infrastructure bill in November 2021, gaining the support of 215 House Democrats as well as 13 House Republicans. The majority of House Democrats voted to pass this bill while the majority of House Republicans refused to approve it. Biden's administration aimed to increase the president's historically low approval rating with the passing of this bill. This generation defining bill is the largest of its kind passed in the U.S. since the 1950s. It would ensure the construction and improvement of roads, railroads and

bridges as well as guarantee access to high speed internet for all Americans. This bill received support from both Democrats and Republicans because of its focus on large non-partisan problems. President of the High School Democrats Club Tanaz Muhamed believes that the passing of this bill proves that progress can be made when approaching issues from a non-partisan standpoint.

"I think legislation is so much more of a political issue than an issue meant to better the way of life for all Americans," Muhamed said. "We see it as something that needs to be polarized and politicized. These are issues that people are capable of agreeing on if we stop making it a Democrat versus Republican debate, I think depoliticizing these issues is incredibly important."



sell said. "The speed at which they developed the vaccine and the way they distributed it I think is a testament to the American government."

Biden's administration made a point to remember and pursue the promises he assured his supporters during his run for president in 2020. He pushed for the Build Back Better plan, a bill that would fund COVID-19 vaccinations, social and welfare services and climate change control plans. However, this bill failed to pass in December, lacking the support of Republicans and Democrats alike making it certain that Biden couldn't ensure the support of his own political party. Biden's administration, still wanting to see this bill enacted, broke it up into smaller sections, tackling individual problems. Russell believes that the sub-

Midterm Voting Opens

By Abigail Cardenas

Midterm elections began March 1 with the primary election, which determines each party's candidates for the general election in November. The state does not require voters to register with the party that they will be voting with in advance, and every registered voter is eligible. State elections are based on county, and this will be Texans' first election voting in recently drawn political districts, which are currently being challenged in court.

"For the midterm elections, it's really important that the people who are representing us are continually cycled through," AP United States history teacher Giselle Devillier said. "A lot of times it's been seen traditionally as a mandate on how the current administration is doing, and whether they are fair or unfair."

There are 14 state executive offices up for election in the 2022 midterm elections, including governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller, agriculture commissioner, public lands commissioner, railroad commissioner and the State Board of Education. Along with these, as of the latest U.S. census, Texas will gain two congressional seats which will be up for election in the midterms. With this gain, Texas will hold 38 house seats for the next decade.

"I would say in the state, the most important positions are governor and lieutenant governor," Devillier said. "Lieutenant governors wield a decent amount of power as well because they set the legislative agenda, so those two are the most impactful."

Currently, there are eight major candidates running for governor in the Republican party, and five remain-

ing candidates in the Democratic party. The candidate expected to win for the Republican party is currently Gov. Greg Abbott, who during his term, advocated for stronger border control, opposition to mask and vaccine mandates, and stricter abortion laws. The top candidate in the Democratic party is currently Beto O'Rourke, who previously served as the former El Paso congressman. While Abbott holds the power of incumbency, the race is predicted to be close.

"I feel that Abbott has done a fantastic job this term," senior Garratt Osborne said. "Many governors tried to force everybody to all do the same thing but Abbott stayed strong and gave us the choice to leave places open, close them, go out, or stay in. He let us do as we please."

Students who are United States citizens, a state resident and are at least 17 years and 10 months old are eligible to vote in these midterm elections. Voter registration must be completed at least 30 days prior to the election. On Election Day, voters registered in Collin County may vote at any location in the county. Upon arriving at the polling site, eligible voters must present an acceptable voter ID in order to place their ballots. For most students, this will include either a valid driver's license or an official United States passport.

"I am currently registered to vote, [and] it was a relatively easy process that everybody can complete," Osborne said. "When I turned 18, the government sent me a form that I filled out and gave to the county office. I've learned since then I could have also done it online."

There are three voting systems used in state elections, which include optimal scan, direct recording electronic (DRE) and paper ballots. Paper ballots are one of the most historically traditional forms of voting, where voters get ballots from poll workers, mark boxes next to their selected candidates, and then drop the completed ballot into a sealed box. Optimal scans are similar, where voters receive cards or papers from poll workers and manually select their options. After, they are either directed by the poll workers where to turn the cards in, or the ballots are scanned and confirmed through a computer system at a few locations. The most recent and popular system of voting is DRE. Typically, poll workers will hand voters cards upon signing in, and these cards are used to swipe and log in to an electronic device.

"Before the election, do your research," Devillier said. "If you think you're interested in a candidate, look at their website and see if they are what you stand for. Just make sure you pay attention and check out a sample ballot beforehand."

Texas voting turnout in primary midterm elections is traditionally very low, as typically only a quarter of registered voters participate. This is why politicians and political activists have urged citizens to vote in their primary elections and ensure that the results are representative of the people's true desires.

"The importance of voting is having a say in what goes on in your area," senior Naomi Prabhu said. "It's important to make sure that your future and the future of the people around you is something desirable and safe."

Impacting Lives Every Moment

Oropeza Wins Teacher of the Year

By Samantha Heath

Anticipation and excitement heightens and spreads across the auditorium Dec. 7 as the staff wait patiently to hear who was chosen amongst the three candidates. Suddenly, with an ecstatic announcement, the name Octavio Oropeza is followed, as the digital media and audio production teacher is titled Teacher of the Year.

“Mr. Oropeza was selected as East’s Teacher of the Year because of his innovation in the audio-visual program at East as well as his tireless work ethic,” Principal George King said.

Oropeza’s love for videography started when he was in high school, but was professionally explored when he was in college. He was able to work with the Dallas Cowboys in a part-time internship, helping both the coaches and players film practices, and helping the editor throughout the editing and distribution process. Although he got to experience the profession firsthand and learned how it worked from a production angle, it wasn’t the broadcast-type material he was hoping to pursue. In 2001, his teaching career started. After four years of teaching Spanish in Dallas ISD, he transferred over to this school in 2017 when he heard there wasn’t anyone who was teaching audio production, which he’s currently been doing for the past four years.

“I love doing video production, so I still do it myself on the side,” Oropeza said. “Getting a chance to pass on some of that knowledge has been really fun and trying to get students out into the real world and getting them work has been fun.”

His teaching methods evolved a lot over the years. When he first started out, he took his students through the process of an assignment as much as

he could. As he started gaining more experience, he learned that students needed to know how to problem solve on their own. He believes that, because there are a lot of times when someone is presented with a project that requires them to do things that they’ve never done before, they should teach themselves so that they can do it in the future without someone helping them. He believes that self-sufficiency with a little bit of support goes a long way.



Photo by Samantha Heath

Oropeza helps student Christen Brown with a technical problem while his class continues their video production project.

“I appreciate that he lets you be creative as much as possible,” senior Michelle Rangel said. “I think he deserves a lot because he’s just a really nice teacher who just goes along with your ideas and lets you have a little bit of feedback.”

Oropeza has kept in contact with many of his former students, even working with those who pursued video production afterwards for various

projects. One such example is Elena Hamlin, who is now a student at the University of North Texas and someone who works with Oropeza frequently for freelance events and broadcasts.

“He put full support into me when I was learning about myself and my interests in high school,” Hamlin said. “I feel extremely lucky to have had Mr. O as a teacher and mentor because I would not have found my passion without him.”

His dedication to the students is one of the factors about him that doesn’t go unnoticed by both the teachers around him and his own students. His classroom neighbor and business teacher Malia Hudson hears a lot of the teaching that occurs in Oropeza’s classroom and praises him highly.

“I’ve been teaching 27 years and I’ve never seen another teacher that is as dedicated to the students as he is,” Hudson said. “He’s here late at night on the weekends, and when you ask him why- because he doesn’t get extra pay for it- he [says] ‘I want the kids to learn it, they’re interested, so I want them to know about it.’ He can be hired out from a company that does this and make a lot more money, but that’s how much he likes being around the students and teaching them.”



Panther Profile

Beat by Beat

Junior's Passion for Producing Music

By Abby Nguyen

With the bright light from her phone illuminating her face, junior Daniela Guevara opens a digital audio software and experiments with different beats and instrumentals. As music blares through her earbuds, Daniela taps the screen to add new audios and noises she created from household objects. One beat at a time, she makes great efforts to fulfill her dream of becoming a music producer. Even as a little girl, Daniela's love for music has always been prevalent. Whether it was listening to music in



"Music means a lot to me because during my middle school years, I struggled with a lot of anxiety and depression."

- junior Daniela Guevara



the car with her older sister, Alma Guevara, or listening to music alone in her room, Daniela made numerous efforts to explore all genres of music.

"When I took [Daniela] out, I always had my music really loud in my car, and I had different tastes of music ranging from Hispanic music to country music to instrumental," Alma said. "I would see [Daniela] dancing in the back and see the joy in her eyes."

Growing up, Daniela was not always as expressive in her music taste as she is now. Throughout her childhood, she struggled with self-expression and constantly felt pressure to listen to certain types of music.

"My parents are more on the conservative side and they wouldn't really let me listen to certain types of music because it was taboo," Daniela said. "Because I had to listen to music in secret, it was very frustrating for me since I couldn't express [myself to them]."

Struggling with the inability to express her emotions, Daniela turned to music as both an emotional and creative outlet in which she could comfortably be her genuine self. Through music, Daniela has not only grown in her music taste but in her ability to express her genuine self as well.

"Music means a lot to me because

during my middle school years, I struggled with a lot of anxiety and depression, and I'd just cope in my room and listen to music," Daniela said. "Music helped me mentally because I could relate to a lot of artists out there and what they've been through."

While Daniela does not want to become a famous artist, she still hopes to make a meaningful impact on others through the music she produces. After experiencing her own struggles with mental health, Daniela wants to uplift others through the power of music, the same way other artists did for her.

"A lot of people are struggling with mental [health], and since I've been through that, I just want them to not feel alone and I want them to have something to cope with," Daniela said.

While Daniela is aware of the obstacles of pursuing a career, especially one in the arts, she has learned to become well-equipped to handle the setbacks

that come with being a music producer.

"[Daniela] doesn't take critique to heart, so if anybody tells her that it doesn't work out, it might hurt her a little bit, but she doesn't care," Alma said. "It's good because there's a lot of people that you might not make happy [while] producing music, but there will always be another group of people that will like the music."

While Daniela has faced criticism from others for her desire to produce music, she believes that her genuine love for it will take her far and allow her to succeed. "In a stereotypical way, some people will say to not follow an artistic route [as a career] since it's not the best, but I personally think that it depends on the person," Daniela said. "If they really have a passion for it, they can go [far]."



Photo by Daniela Guevara

Junior Daniela Guevara opens a digital audio software on her laptop to produce music.

Photo from Unsplash

Pop Culture Progression: Cinema's Cause, Effect on American Culture

By Claire Tweedie, Sydnie Grayson and Jackie Theiur

As the clock reads 2 a.m, junior Jonathan Diaz is wide awake in his room. Aimlessly scrolling through a streaming platform, he's stopped in his tracks by a captivating movie poster. With its neon purple and pink hues, swirling font and intriguing image, he's entranced by one of his now favorite movies, "Brazil." Throughout the two-hour runtime, Diaz is sucked into a masterpiece of practical effects, set design and music, engrossed into the narrative the movie established. Diaz becomes more passionate about film in 2019 and while the emotional impact of cinema influenced nearly every aspect of Diaz's life, he was not alone in that sentiment.

"The characters and humor of the world that is not unlike ours is masterful," Diaz said. "Seeing the imagination of Sam take flight with these beautiful spectacles had my heart pounding with wonder. It's one of the first movies I ever loved."

Golden Age on Silver Screens

The Golden Age of Hollywood from 1930 to 1945 was a glittering time in America's movie industry, characterized by "classics" such as "Casablanca,"

"I hope that as we move forward into the 21st century, we continue to have artists that are socially conscious and have a message."

- psychology teacher Kip Sanders

"Gone With the Wind" and "Citizen Kane." These films weren't just simple forms of entertainment, but rather reflections of their respective societal beliefs. Cinema through-

out history has been impactful for its ability to portray human nature and a culture's deepest, most ingrained values, subconsciously or not.

"Film, cinema, any form of art always reflects the time in which it was made and I think it should be judged according to that time," psychology teacher Kip Sanders said. "I don't think that we should look at films like that because they don't reflect our modern day sensibilities."

"Gone With the Wind," the historical drama adapted from the 1936 novel, focuses on the daughter of a plantation owner in the Antebellum South during the tumultuous time of the Civil War and Reconstruction. While the film is criticized with a modern lens for its glorification of the Antebellum South as an idealistic version of the American dream, the film it-

self was made during its own era of social chaos. Only two short decades after World War I and the beginnings of World War II created a time of uncertainty and confusion, causing film-

makers and writers to look back on the past with rose-tinted glasses, romanticizing an era they could reshape as “simple” in their stories. The movie made history in more ways than one. Actress Hattie McDaniel became the first African American woman to win an Academy Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her portrayal of Mammy. The character itself received backlash as a negative and harmful stereotype, but McDaniel’s achievements opened the door for actors and actresses of color for generations to come.

“We can watch something and be really moved by it and recognize that maybe the way we think about something is inherently flawed, but it’s not enough to change us,” senior Tosin Fagbami said. “Film is a fantastic medium to explore complex ideas and universal themes that all human beings deal with and have to reconcile within themselves, but I question the extent to which film by itself can be a social

move-
ment.”

Films like “Gone With the Wind” had the ability to focus on older traditional values that were once part of society, while others progressed forward, using their cinematic platform to integrate ideas of where they wanted to be. “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes” from 1953 was a musical comedy that consisted of two prominent female leads supporting one another, even with its ditzy plotlines and running gags. These movies represent a time of change, specifically centered around the Women’s Rights movement, which advocated for gen-

der equality and increased opportunities for women. The formation of the suffragettes preceded this movie, reflecting the desires for change that women had throughout history.

“The best movies and films are a reflection of who we are as people,” American studies teacher Kristy Alexander said. “When a movie resonates with you, it’s because there’s some sort of a mirror there that’s been held up where you see yourself grappling with one of those same fundamental questions, issues or complexities and trying to manage how to navigate that same territory.”

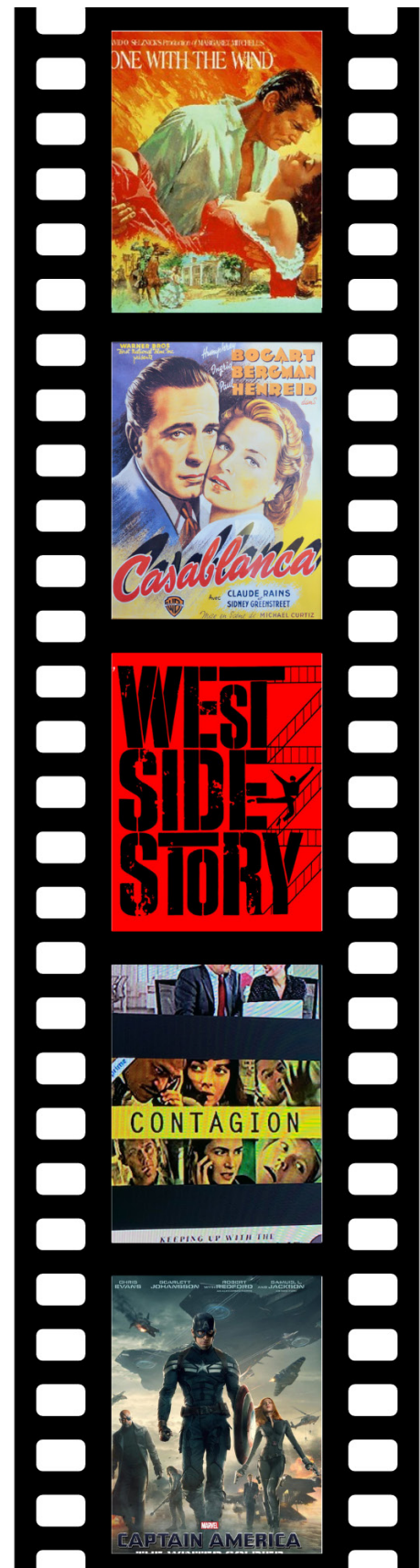
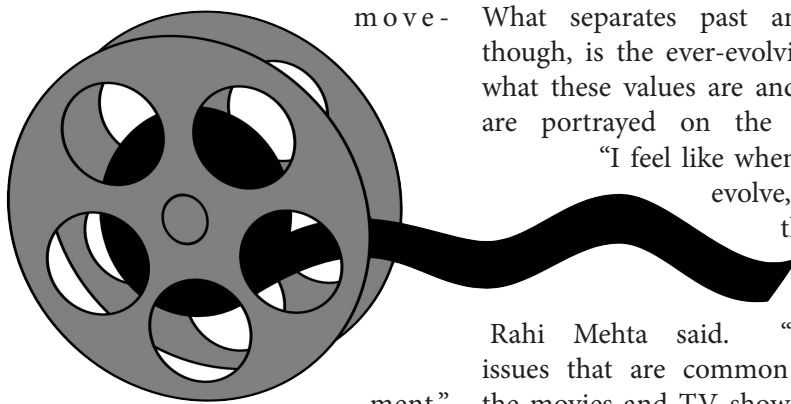
Progression of Modern Day Film

Modern day movies, while packed with slightly more realistic computer-generated imagery and technical effects, still have the same ability to cast spotlights on pressing issues and uphold wide-held beliefs. What separates past and present though, is the ever-evolving shift in what these values are and how they are portrayed on the big-screen.

“I feel like when the issues evolve, that’s when the movies change,” junior

Rahi Mehta said. “We see issues that are common for us in the movies and TV shows we watch and while they might not be a large part of that TV show, it helps us place it in history and understand.”

In the Marvel movies and Netflix originals of the entertainment world that are made to cater toward larger audiences for profitability, there has been a notable shift in the past decade alone for more representation on screen. 2021 alone gave audiences the first Asian-American superhero, the first Deaf character, and saw Chris Evans pass the shield to Anthony Mackie, becoming the first African-American Captain



Photos from Flickr

America in the history of MCU.

“Some of the films that I’ve seen recently are just now starting to really tackle the divisions that we see in our country, how we’ve been sort of torn apart into two sides,” Alexander said. “Even some of the Marvel movies do a nice job of opening up conversations about race and political division.”

Whether it be major events such as school shootings or smaller passing trends or fads, current events find a way to weasel their way into present films. The impact of COVID-19 has cemented itself into the world of both film and television shows as pop culture adjusts to the globe-stopping events that have defined the generation. Movies like “Contagion,” which followed the story of a deadly pandemic and its apocalyptic effects, surged in popularity after the emergence of the current pandemic as people turned to entertainment to cope. Newer media similarly brought up the event in a more timely and often casual manner, dedicating a few episodes to the matter rather than entire movies.

“I remember, in 2020, ‘Brooklyn Nine-Nine’ came out with its last season and in it, they discussed COVID-19,” Fagbami said. “They made a priority, starting in that last season, to make sure that they took into account what was happening in our larger society.”

With these more recent additions to the world of film, the medium has continually been a talking ground for issues of race and discrimination. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, first coined in 2013, utilized movies to emphasize the importance of their mission and broadcast it to a larger audience in a more broad manner, allowing African-American filmmakers to focus on issues from past and present. The film “BlackKkKlansman,” directed by Spike Lee in 2018 as a biographical crime film, tells the story of the

first African-American detective in the Colorado Springs police department. While the film casts the events in a slightly more comedic tone, it also works to emphasize the seriousness of African-American discrimination.

“Just even looking beyond [COVID-19], because that’s kind of at the forefront of a lot of our minds, the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement has really impacted how some

Americans see society and how it’s impacted the political conversations that we have,” Fagbami said. “Those political conversations shape how we view each other and our culture and the people we say are supposed to protect us.”

Looking Back, Moving Forward

The progression of values, both within past and present-day films, are an impactful display of pop culture’s influence regarding social issues. Films from the past express certain values that would be considered con-

troversial in today’s society, such as their portrayals of racism, sexism, mental health and homophobia, whereas present-day films continue to reflect ongoing issues, such as COVID-19 and the BLM movement. Actors of these confrontational and

impactful films continue to create a standard of pursuing progression.

“A lot of pop culture is a reflection of the audience’s needs and views,” theater teacher Brian Grunkowski said. “Even an older

story, such as ‘West Side Story,’ is just as relevant today as it was in the 50s when it was originally produced and that’s because we’re still fighting the same issues.”

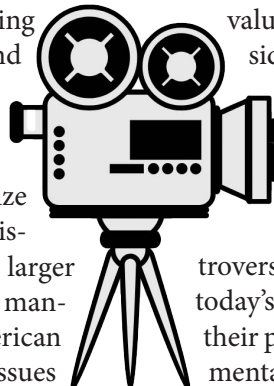
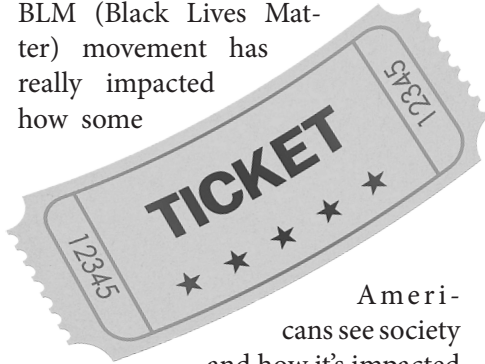
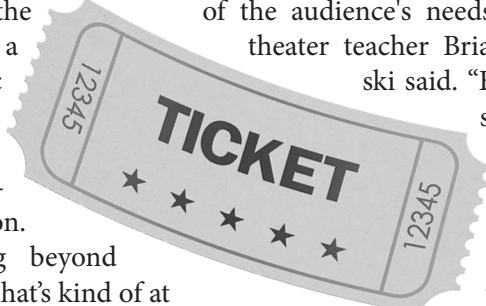
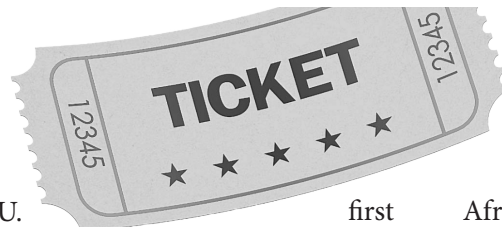
The stars and household names that have lined the silver screens continue to have a lasting impact even after their deaths. Betty White, for the majority of her life, was faced with an American public that often opposed her strong views for equality for all people regardless of race or sexual orientation. Sidney Poitier, the first Black actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor, shed a new light on what could be accomplished for actors of color through his awards and movies, and helped dismantle the idea that people of color could only represent a certain genre or stereotype.

“[Movies] have gotten a lot tighter in terms of the demographics they reach for, rather than being very broad,” Diaz said. “I think that

“Film is a fantastic medium to explore complex ideas and universal themes that all human beings deal with and have to reconcile within themselves.”

-senior Tosin Fagbami

they’ve developed beautifully; it’s almost poetic to see an art form producing something on film and seeing it evolve from some-



thing that's very, very basic. That's almost just filming a stage to something that becomes more tasteful in a sense. They've mainly given us higher expectations since movies back then were about slavery, racism and sexism."

Their accomplishments, and their legacies by proxy, set precedents that furthered modern ideologies on-screen, promoting these ideals of society that weren't always addressed through the media. These actors worked to represent a time of change in a society that was persistent against progressive ideas, in turn influencing the society that watched their works.

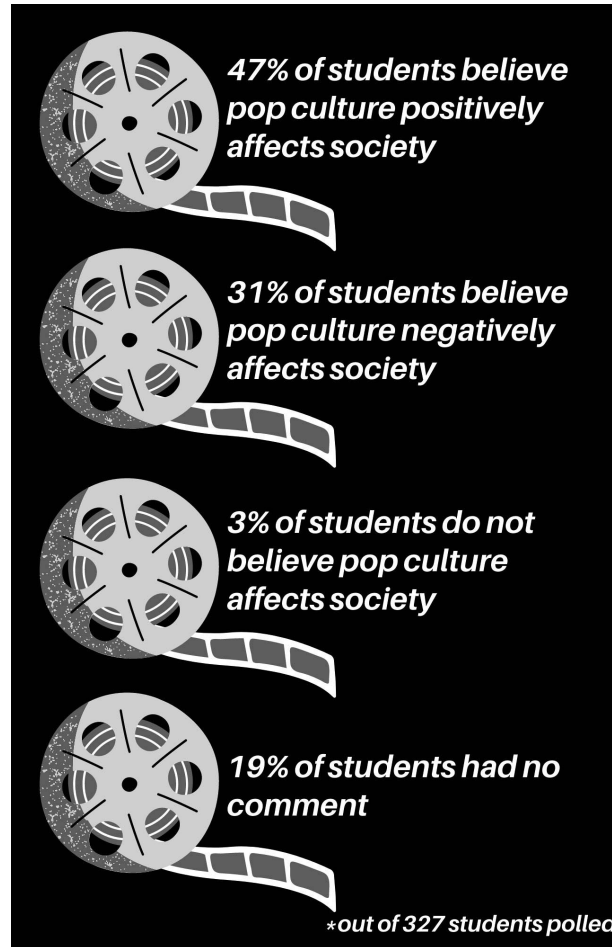
"We want to watch movies and TV shows that speak on issues going on," Grunkowski said. "Other people's stories are being told, I think there's a movement where we are embracing all different stories, and I think it's powerful when people can see themselves represented in film."

The impactful moments

of pop culture from the past continue to push the present into action as new ideals and beliefs are pushed

forward into the public eye byway of cinema. As film reflects both where society once was and where it strives to be, it falls upon younger generations to both learn and grow from the media they are exposed to, and to create their own stories for the big-screen.

"I hope that as we move forward into the 21st century, we continue to have artists that are socially conscious and have a message, even if it's a message that I don't agree with, pushing me to expand my horizons and think about my arguments and beliefs," Sanders said. "I hope that your generation, which will form pop culture for the next 20 to 30 years, continues to bring up issues and things that are important to them, just like filmmakers of the 1960s and 1970s did."



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Culture of Growing Talent in Soccer

By Rishi Mallela

Varsity senior soccer player Luke Mulkey's alarm clock rings across his room, the emerging light of dawn reminding him of the upcoming hours he will spend on the soccer field with his team. He leaves the house with his bag packed with his shin guards, socks, cleats and water jug en route to the field coated with morning dew. As he arrives, his fellow teammates walk on to the field as varsity boys' soccer coach Rick Woodard is seen setting up cones and pushing back goal posts for drills. The players put on their practice gear and lace up their cleats, and as they line up for stretches, the whistle is blown. It's time to work.

"Everyone in the program has something to teach you, whether it be an upperclassman on varsity, there's always something to learn each day," Mulkey said.

While the soccer team has seen a cycle of new and old faces, for some players, their continued adherence to the team has cultivated a passion and commitment to the sport and team dynamic.

Playing since freshman year,

Mulkey has had a fruitful four years in the program and now commits his next four years at the center back position to Saint Mary's University,

taking his soccer talents to San Antonio. He believes his development in the team is a testament to the program itself and its culture of building successful players. For Mulkey, this dynamic of play is present across the performances of all of the varsity team this season, across the upperclassmen and underclassmen. He

his teammates fostered a strong connection with the team and the school, always having something to work towards through each year in the team.

"There's always something to work towards," Dennis said, "Making JV my sophomore year, junior year it was making varsity, and this coming year it's making varsity starter."



Photo by Kayleen Le

Junior Varsity boys' soccer team attack the ball to regain possession.

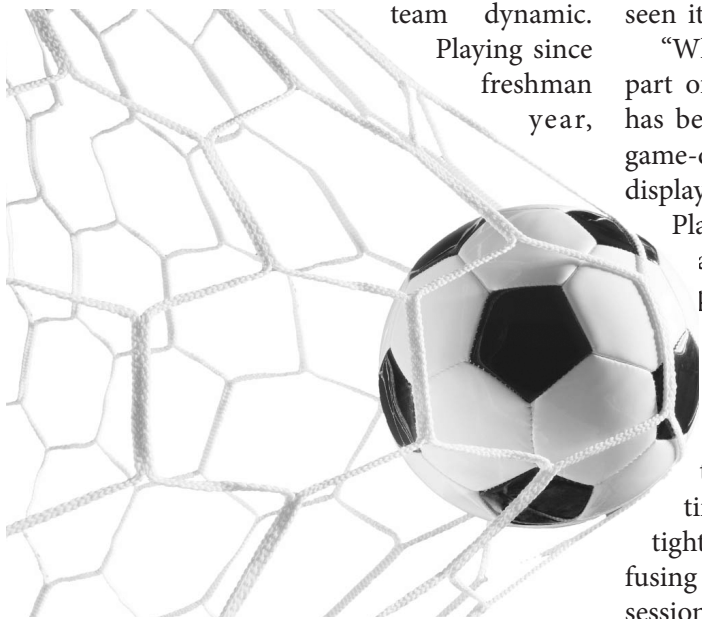
acknowledges that it's not only been a patient process for him and the team, but a process that has definitely seen its success through this season.

"What has really been a defining part of this team from past seasons has been the comradery and overall game-day attitude that the players display on the field," Woodard said.

Playing off-the-bench this season, varsity junior Wade Dennis has played since his freshman year, pushing back offenses from the right or left back positions. Over his time on the team, he developed to be a rotational threat in defense, cutting off opposing defenses with tight man-to-man coverage and defusing counter attacks by cutting possession. Wade looks back at tryouts as a start of continued development of his athletic talents- strategically and physically. Now, as he enters his fourth year on the team, his time with

As Woodard has seen freshman players develop into seasoned seniors, he noticed the close connection the players have with teammates they have played with in the program. He believes players that consistently come back to the team have the ability to cultivate their own skills and connections. As coach, having seen the same faces for the past four years, he noticed that it's not only a connection with the sport that has seen progress, but a continued commitment to the game that fostered a collective passion to success.

"My final advice I'd give to underclassmen is to just come in and work as hard as you can every single day, simple as that," Mulkey said. "You put 100% of your effort into every single practice and every game, you'll definitely see results."



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Cheer Team Tumbles to Success

By Abigail Cardenas

Trickles of infinity shoes run down the blue mats coating the gym as this year's cheer team practices their tumbling passes. Nearby, co-ed stunt groups extend their flyers into the air, carefully supporting them as they perform leg holds. The team spends two class periods each day working to perfect their tumbling, chants and stunts. After a demanding season of cheering at football games and other sports events, competition season begins. They start preparing in early August by working on their skills and stunts that they intend to use in their competition routines.

"We use those same stunts at the games and pep rally's in order to build confidence in them," head Coach Chy-Anne Rose said.

The team competes in two routines, a large game-day routine and game-day performance routine. Choreography is taught early in the year so that the team has plenty of time to practice and perfect each routine.

"From the moment we learned our choreography, it was game time and we practiced every week," senior Jessi Scott said. "We were able to work as a team and figure out how to make the routine special to us."

The first competition was the NCA Virtual Championship Competition in December, where teams can submit videos of their routines for judges to critique. On the day of filming, the team got to school early to practice and make final alterations, and then filmed each submission for the virtual competition. Over win-

ter break, the team received news that they had earned two first-place finishes in both of their routines.

"The most rewarding part was seeing all our hard work pay off," senior Macey Mangum said. "We worked and worked for months without a break. When we got first place, it was like all our hard work was worth it."

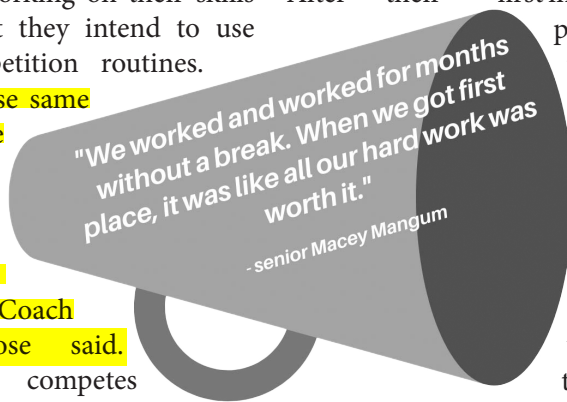
With this success, the team began to prepare for their next two competitions on a high note. Next up was the UIL Spirit State Competition Jan. 13. After their first in-person com-

petition, the team placed sixth overall for their chant. With positive attitudes and encouragement, they were ready to approach their last competition.

"The team's motivation usually stems from each other," Mangum said. "We all try to have positive attitudes and help each other out and it helps everyone stay motivated and happy."

The final and most heavily anticipated competition of the season was the NCA High School Nationals Jan. 22 and 23. This contest is a three-day event in Dallas, and the team prepared tirelessly for their routines to be more flawless than ever. After a difficult and lengthy weekend, the team finished second place out of eight competitive teams.

"Seeing the team come together as a family and feeling proud of themselves for all their hard work is the best part, and seeing them having fun doing it," Rose said.



Men's Basketball Season Highlights

By Rishi Mallela

The men's basketball team's season has been an unprecedented ride of exceptional performances, tournament wins, new records and remarkable individual contributions. A successful championship run at the Wichita Falls tournament, reaching the championship game at the Cedar Hills tournament, and a 72-36 blowout win against Plano West have been highlights in a season for current and future players to remember as time passes.

Varsity senior Brandon Hardison led the team in point average and steals, with nearly 10.9 points per game and 1.6 steals per game. Hardison's mid-range jumpers inside the free throw line and maneuvering to get open around the three point line has kept him a formidable opponent against any district or conference rival. Across the offense, the team has depth across the board with varsity senior Muizz Qazi and varsity junior Aiden Hayes averaging strong stats, working past opposing defenses and building the counter attack quickly.

Overall, the team's success can be attributed to the character of each of the players on the team, and a testament to this success is that the team achieved its best record since 2016 at 24-9. Each player has their own strengths, flair and ethic to push each other through every game.

This season showed how far the basketball team has come this year, but that the depth the team has in every position will set up the team going into the next.

"Character beats talent every time and our athletes have a lot of character," varsity men's coach Matt Wester said.

Potential of Sports to Empower Women

By Abby Nguyen

Serving as a vital tool to launch women into male-dominated fields, sports can play an important role in female empowerment and in challenging gender stereotypes. With women receiving only 4% of all sports media coverage according to the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport, it is important to recognize the achievements of women in sports, especially during gender equality month.

Living with the constant comparison people often make between men's and women's basketball, varsity basketball player senior Ada Anamekwe believes that female athletes don't need to be compared to male athletes in order to prove their worth.

"When women succeed, it's a success by a woman, and that does not make a man any less or more," Anamekwe said. "It just means women can be just as good."

According to varsity swimmer junior Gauri Mittal, while playing sports is generally expected of boys, it is more of an anomaly if girls participate, which contributes to the perpetuation of women receiving less attention in sports.

"In reality, no one cares as much about women's sports as men's sports because on TV, all you see is men's football, men's soccer, and men's swimming," Mittal said. "Girls are there but are not as publicized and are not really in the media."

According to NBC Sports, the highest-paid NBA player, Stephen Curry, made the equivalent of 350 WNBA salaries in 2020. Anamekwe believes that the gender pay gap highlights the disparity between men and women in sports and only discourages

girls from pursuing sports as a career.

"It shifts your mindset when you realize that the world isn't as equal as you think it is," Anamekwe said. "I know a lot of girls who have had broken dreams because they can't make enough money to sustain themselves even if they wanted to play basketball in the big leagues."

Female participation in sports not only boosts women's confidence in their athletic abilities but also pro-

women as being slower than men.

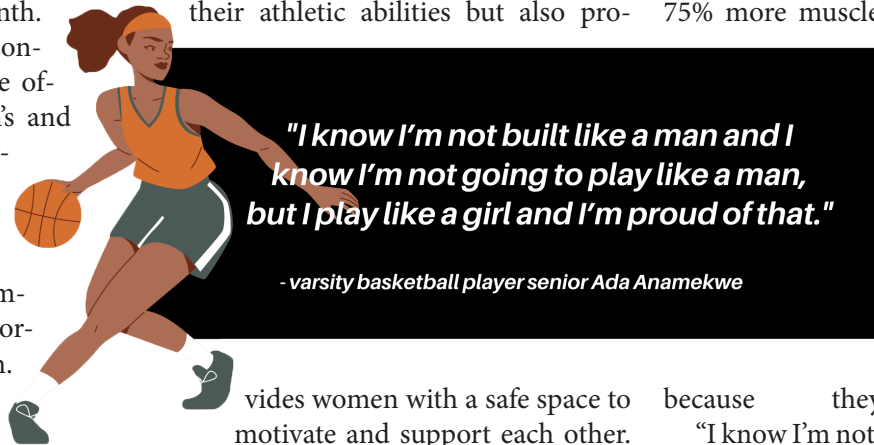
"When I was in club swimming, our coaches would care more about the boys and push the boys to do better, but the girls were paid less attention to and the coaches didn't really care if we got better," Mittal said.

According to biologist David Carrier at the University of Utah, on average, men have 90% more strength than females, and males' upper bodies have 75% more muscle mass. Despite the

scientific fact that men are physically stronger than women, Anamekwe says that women don't play sports in order to be compared to men; women play sports

because they love it.

"I know I'm not built like a man and I know I'm not going to play like a man, but I play like a girl and I'm proud of that," Anamekwe said. "There's no reason to have shame in the way you play just because it's played differently."



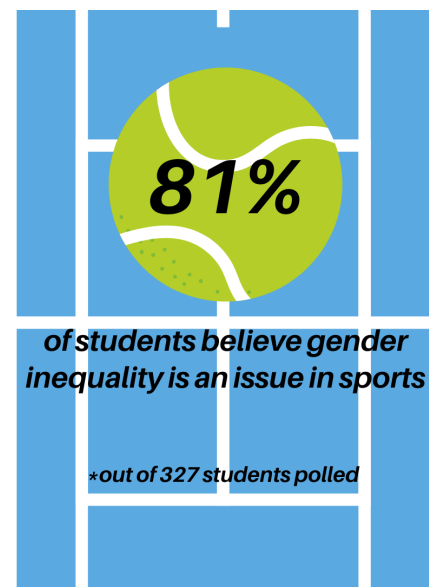
vides women with a safe space to motivate and support each other.

"Being a woman in a sport proves to me that I can do whatever I set my mind to," varsity tennis player junior Marguerite Odom said. "It's been really amazing for me to be around other women who all help to lift each other up."

Fortunately, Odom has never personally experienced discrimination based on her sex, and she attributes the growth in her athletic abilities to her coaches and teammates.

"The coaches make a big effort to make sure there's equality," Odom said. "Even within the team members, everyone plays with everyone and sometimes [the coaches will] put boys and girls together; it's based on skill, not necessarily gender."

However, Mittal has not always experienced the same fair treatment while swimming. She often deals with people belittling the achievements of women and generalizing all



Wrestling Team Brings Glory Back Victory Over Six-Year Reigning Champs

By Samantha Heath

The Battle of Plano, which started Jan. 4, is a dual meet created by the coaches in the district to compete with the other schools' wrestling teams. For the past six years, Plano West won and took home the title of champions, however, that changed recently with the boys' wrestling team taking first place at the Cougar Classic at The Colony Jan. 9. Winning against the 21 other teams, and racking up 21 pins and 181 points, the boys' wrestling team took home the newly-created championship belt, along with the pride and glory that came with the title of being champions.

"This has been a goal of our program since I took it over," head wrestling coach Bryan Kenney said. "We've got to be the best in Plano first, then we can worry about being the best in [the] district, then we can worry about being the best in [the] state. We can't have a goal of being state champions if we can't beat the teams down the street from us."

Not only did the boys' team finish the dual meet season 26-7 with

a placement in eight different tournaments, but they also took second place at district Feb. 3, with Kenney winning head coach of the year and assistant coach Noel Peterson winning the men's assistant coach of the

to the coaches and upperclassmen. "Winning is contagious," Habib said. "When you see your teammates start winning, you want to win too, and you start putting in the work your teammates are putting in."



Photo by Bryan Kenney

Coach Kenney shows off the championship belt after winning The Battle of Plano.

year. Eight of the players qualified for regionals, with senior Payton Madawi placing fifth at the state tourney Feb. 18 and 19. Captain junior Aariz Habib attributes the quality of the season

Kenney's goal for the team during the season was to win the Battle of Plano, win the 9/10 Plano and take second in district, which they achieved completely. However, with the season over, the team will take a few days to recover and start training for their freestyle and Greco season.

"This program has gotten significantly better every single year I've been part of the team, and it shows as we just got second at district, being the highest place we've gotten since Coach Kenney has been here," Habib said. "As long as we don't get complacent and continue to build upon the foundation we've laid, this program will continue to grow and get better."

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Out-of-State Obstacles

Everything Wrong With College Application Process

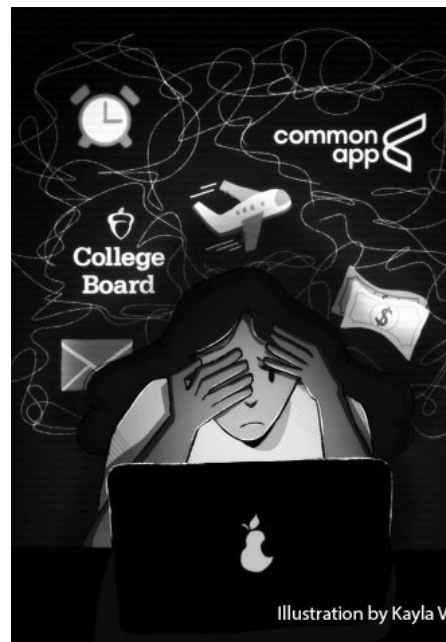
Staff Editorial

The college application process has slowly morphed into a complicated process caused by technological changes and new expectations for students. While the college decision notification date looms ever closer, the disparity in the college application process is highlighted by the varying struggles in-state students and out-of-state students face. The college application process students know today should theoretically create an easy route to a higher education, but instead, it only succeeds in limiting students from pursuing out-of-state schools.

With most issues regarding higher education, finances are a heavily influencing factor. The College Board recommends students visit college campuses prior to committing, even suggesting visiting more than once at different times to fully explore the area. College visits allow students to gain confidence in their application choices and garner a feel for the campus environment and culture. For those hoping to pursue out-of-state schools though, a one-day visit could require plane tickets, hotel stays and food expenses compared to a four-hour drive to Austin or 40-minute drive to Denton. These expenses add up, especially if there are multiple potential schools to visit and multiple visits for each. Meaning, it's more feasible for students to visit, and possibly apply to, in-state schools which offer more access and resources simply because of their proximity.

The shift to online applications is only another stressor to this issue. Application platforms, such as ApplyTexas and Common App, are far more familiar and popular tools for those interested in applying to Texas universities or universities in neigh-

boring states. In Fall 2021, ApplyTexas was used by 402,908 people in the state while Common App was used by over three million people throughout the country. ApplyTexas currently accepts applications for roughly 60 Texas schools while Coalition covers 150 schools, including



multiple Ivy Leagues or other highly selective schools. Common App on the other hand is the most widely used platform and hosts 774 colleges and universities. With these various platforms, not everyone utilizes the same applications, causing students submitting out-of-state applications to have a less versed support system.

The lack of support in the application process is further emphasized by the inability of counselors and parents alike to help. Many parents only have experience with the paper forms they used when they first applied to college, so when faced with newer application platforms, electronic document submission and Naviance difficulties,

it's likely that they'll be just as overwhelmed as their child. As for school counselors, with a school of 3,126 students and 1,352 seniors, it's unrealistic to expect the 10 counselors to be able to devote all their attention toward individual students. This remains a harmful fact for the many seniors who struggle with applications and only have access to school resources.

This disparity has been softened by the rising availability of virtual help during the pandemic. Video tutorials walking through intricacies of application platforms are easily accessible and virtual walking tours are an inexpensive alternative to see the campus. Even with these, they don't always equal the real thing. Video tutorials may be too broad for students with specific or uncommon problems and some prefer individualized in-person help to guide them. Photos or videos of universities allow the school to show what they want rather than everything the school encompasses and a computer screen is unable to replicate the feel of truly being at the campus.

The application process has been through major changes in recent decades, but many have only worsened student struggles. Rather than a convoluted maze of technicalities that only serve to frustrate students, the college application process needs to be reformed into a more open and user-friendly platform. With the emphasized importance of higher education students have heard since elementary school, it's on the universities to create a more accessible pathway to the student success that they claim to foster.

*The Panther Prints staff voted 8 - 1, with majority opinion believing the college application process inhibits students' ability to pursue out-of-state schools

Movie Theaters Reopen Across Country

By Aziz Syed

Movie theaters across the nation have been on a steady decline with the introduction of streaming services and more convenient ways of watching films. In 2020, this decrease was further impaired by the spread of COVID-19 as the pandemic led to a dramatic decrease in ticket sales and the subsequent closure of theaters in the U.S. In order to keep cinemas across the nation open, audiences need to visit theaters and view new films rather than use streaming services.

Most movie theaters closed temporarily March 2020, with at least a quarter of theaters in the U.S. shutting down in 2020. Many of these theaters reopened in mid-2021, however by December 2021, about 630 theaters still remained closed. According to Gower Street Analytics, a film production and technology analysis company, in April 2020, fewer than 1% of theaters in the U.S. remained open. In May 2020, 19% of theaters had reopened, although

attendance numbers were limited. COVID 19 was still in its infancy by this point, so audiences were hesitant to go out and watch films despite efforts made by theaters to create a safe and enjoyable experience. Even now, the movie theaters that have been able to reopen and show new releases still feel the lingering effects of the pandemic.

Many theaters now only see audiences when large blockbusters are released. Theater owners around the country count on movies released

by large franchises like Marvel and Warner Brothers to bring in audiences. Marvel's "Spider-Man: No Way Home" broke box office records on its opening weekend, which greatly benefited large and small theaters. Luckily for theaters, films like these seem to be coming out more rapidly as the pandemic appears to be coming to an end. Marvel Studios produced the four highest grossing films of 2021. People should continue visiting theaters for movies such as these and

theaters continue to see consistent revenues so that they will have a greater likelihood of staying open.

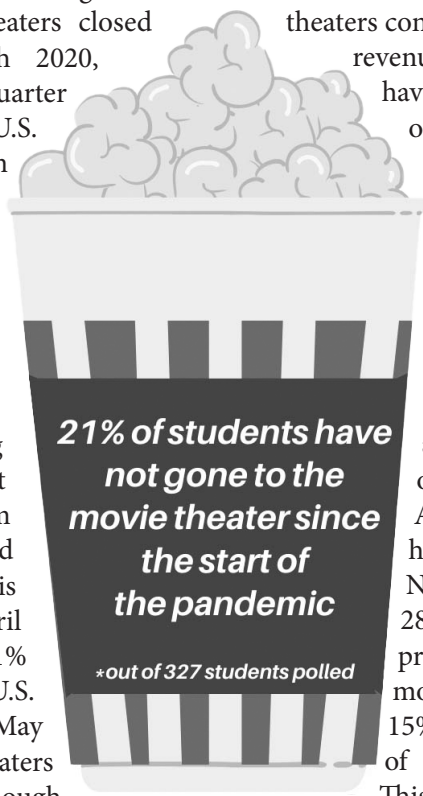
The rise of the streaming service industry has also largely impacted audience attendance in theaters. The pandemic greatly and negatively altered audience's perspective of movie theaters. According to a survey held by Statista, in November 2018, 28% of respondents preferred traditional movie theaters and 15% preferred the use of streaming services.

This same survey was conducted in June 2020, in the middle of the pandemic. This survey showed 36% of participants preferred streaming services, whereas only 14% of respondents still preferred the theatrical experience. Many view going to the theater as a social experience that couldn't be pursued during the pandemic, and even though most pandemic restrictions have been limited, independently owned theaters are still suffering as people continue to consume movies

through streaming services. However, streaming services cannot mimic the experience of a theater. Cinemas uniquely transport audiences to the world beyond the screen with speaker systems that immerse the audience, as well as large screens that display media at the size filmmakers intended.

Many argue that streaming services are the future of the film industry, and in many ways, this is true. Streaming services are more efficient and easier for consumers to access. The ability to watch any movie that a streaming service provides at will is something that theaters simply cannot provide. Audiences may think it unwise to see movies in the theaters if those movies are available to stream not long after they are released. However, the future of watching movies should be a combination of traditional theater experiences and more modern methods of viewing cinema. There is no experience quite like watching a movie in the theater, because large scale movies are made for large audiences to watch together.

Theater ticket sales have been in decline for some time now, the most pressing cause of this decline has been the pandemic. The use of streaming services has only furthered audiences from viewing new movies in theaters. Many theaters continue to survive, and it seems as though they can make a comeback if people start supporting their local movie theaters by viewing newly released films in theaters.



Self-Development Through Student Businesses

By Jackie Theiur

As the weekend approaches, the time comes for senior Olena Dudar to concoct new ideas for the next bath salt to be sold on “Salts By O.” As she mixes the epsom salt and essential oils, she blends in the mica powder to color it a luminous green. Dudar sets the salt into a container, attaches the sticker that labels the salt’s scent, and places it neatly into the decorated box she designed herself. While Dudar puts her fondness for bath salts into her work, other students explore their potential and find passion in their own creative pursuits, turning their hobbies into something more. These students often thrive when pursuing their own interests and work harder when it comes to things they care about. It’s not just the product that matters for these young business owners, but the impact that it has made and how it’s helped them develop as an individual.

From pastime to a profit, Dudar created her business “Salts By O,” as a result of her love for bath supplements. Dudar’s sentiment for bath accessories drove her to implement them into her work, but only with one type of product up for sale, which are

her various scented bath salts. She does this to execute her product with high quality rather than selling multiple types of products with less.

“I came up with bath salts because as a kid I loved bath bombs, bubble baths and all that fun stuff, so that’s kind of where the inspiration came from,” Dudar said. “Bath bombs are harder to make but bath salts are essentially a mix of bath salts and bath bombs. They can still provide relaxation while making the bath look pretty.”

Business can provide a platform for students to share their love and passions for certain values, such as “Losers x Lovers,” a business and community that revolves around selling small car accessories. “Losers x Lovers” is meant to create a community of people with a devotion and interest to cars and car meets. Founders and juniors Ryan Nguyen, Khoi Tran and Joseph Tran started their business in hopes to meet people that share the same passions as them.

“We’re trying to build a safe place for people who like cars and anime to come together and share our values,” Joseph said. “Our main goal is to build a community

and get our name out so that our community can grow. It’s like a team.”

Senior Dydy Chu developed a tutoring business specifically targeted toward underclassmen, teaching only math and English. Chu created a cycle of achievement for both herself and her mentees while spending her time pushing her students to work diligently and to the best of their ability. Her experience as a tutor has improved her own learning through teaching.

“I like to provide the necessary teaching that the kids need,” Chu said. “Watching them grow more and more successful within their schooling is very rewarding. I’ve been gifted with the opportunity to assist them with their learning and enhance my own.”

Senior Tatiana Jayne enjoys the independence of being her own boss and learning from her four-year experience as the owner of a business selling vintage fashion, specifically from the 1960s to 2000s on platforms such as Depop. The products sold are either in new condition, fixed if there are any flaws, and also repurposed to create a completely different clothing item. Jayne seeks the liberating feeling from succeeding autonomously, with no assistance and achieving her goals self-sufficiently.

“My favorite thing is definitely being able to make money by myself; it’s very independent and freeing,” Jayne said. “It taught me that I can make something successful by myself, I don’t need to depend on other people as much as I thought I did, and to take more risks. I failed a lot and made a lot of mistakes, but it’s always gotten better, so it’s taught me to just do my own thing.”

Losers x Lovers

Anime and car lovers
(including car meets)
www.losersxlovers.com
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@losersnotavailable
\$30 Losersxlovers banner
\$8-10 peekers
15% off discount code: PESH



Tatiana's Vintage Fashion

Depop: @nostalgiaSHOPPE
1960s-2000s
vintage clothing
Retro toys
All items in new condition
or repurposed



Salts By O

Bath salts of various
colors and scents
Instagram:
@salts.by.o
@saltsbyoambassadors
Facebook:
Olena Dudar
https://saltsbyo.com



Dydy's Tutoring Service

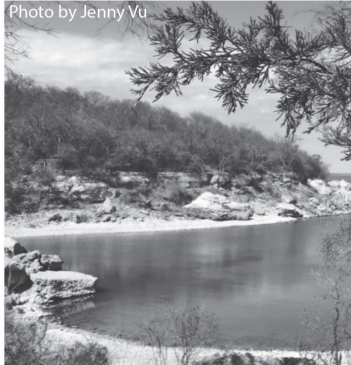
English and math
Freshmen and
sophomores only
Sessions held
through Zoom



Hiking Head-on

By Kayla Vu

Photo by Jenny Vu



Eisenhower State Park

With 3,282.5 acres of land and lake, the park opened itself to the public full of abundant wildlife and recreational activities like boating, fishing, hiking and rock climbing. The trailway runs over 20 miles long with gentle curves and slopes making the trail ideal for all people of all ages and abilities. Hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders may enjoy the trails with the possibility of seeing white-tailed deer, turkeys and a variety of avian species. The most notable times to hike are during the spring and fall seasons when the trees and flowers along the trails reach their peak in colors and growth.

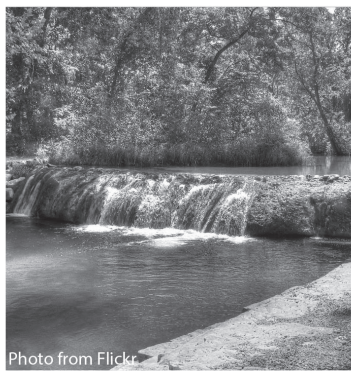


Photo from Flickr

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Although this state park has one of the shortest distances from the Dallas metroplex, the environment is full of diverse plants and unique viewpoints that provide an immersive experience away from the city. The Dallas Off Road Biking Association trail spans over 1,200 acres of fairly easy terrain with only slight elevation changes available for both bicyclists and hikers. Along the way, it's possible to see and tour the Penn Farm Agricultural History Center full of farming equipment from the early 19th century. Ideal times for hiking would be in the early morning when trails are empty and popular photo locations like the sunflower fields aren't as crowded. Other activities include kayaking, swimming and fishing in

Joe Pool Lake.

At the shores of Lake Texoma, this state park provides an array of entertainment to enjoy such as historic sites, fishing, hiking, swimming and even fossil hunting in the nearby bodies of water. The most popular trail, Armadillo Hill Nature Trail, spans through the park and around Lake Texoma with moderately rocky and steep paths. Although the trail may not be ideal for those with limited abilities, the higher cliffs offer optimal angles for photos. For those who wish to have a more casual stroll, the shore provides a quaint beach to walk on with nearby caves to explore. Ideal times are usually during March or the fall, however holiday weekends or breaks may be more crowded with popular photo locations being queued.

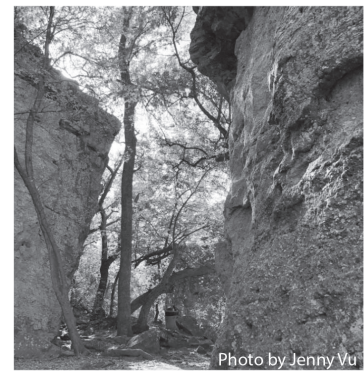


Photo by Jenny Vu

Mineral Wells State Park

Despite being out of state and further away, this national park is a great location for family or friend trips. The most ideal way to spend time in the park is by camping to be able to travel the several trails and bodies of water open throughout the day for hiking, swimming and fishing. Multiple paths like Springs Trail and Veterans Lake Trail run along streams and lead up to beautiful springs where small waterfalls may even be seen. Other trails may run past the Bison Pasture, flower fields, lakes or other springs. The park is usually very crowded during holidays and the summer so it may be more ideal to travel to this park during less busy seasons.



Photo from Flickr

Cedar Hill State Park

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