

# PANTHER PRINTS

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May 20, 2022

ISSUE 4



***Activism Advancing, Technology Transitioning:  
Social Media's Role in Magnifying Advocacy***

***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.

Cover photo taken by Abby Nguyen  
 Cover models: Jasmin Soto, 11  
 Arhum Khan, 11

In our news article last issue, "Midterm Voting Opens," we incorrectly spelled senior Garrett Osborne's name as Garrott Osborne. We acknowledge our error and apologize to our readers as we strive to publish the best work possible.

All student polls were conducted through Google Forms and shared through social media.

Icons from Canva

### To submit letters to the editors of the Panther Prints:

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# Letters from the..

## Editor-in-Chief

I look back on this issue with intertwined feelings of both satisfaction and sadness in its finality. Over my past two years on the Panther Prints staff, I've learned so much about myself, my ambitions and my leadership. Ultimately though, this paper would have been nothing without the contributions of the amazing people that surrounded me each step of the way. Thank you to my creative director, Abby Nguyen, my first friend in this program and someone I know is talented and capable beyond measure. Thank you to Sydnie Grayson and Kayla Vu, who I pass this paper onto as your future co-editors in chief. Thank you to my dear friend Jonathan Diaz, who never fails to send me his thoughts and opinions over each published issue. Thank you to my favorite Hope Squad member Kevin Cao, whose ceaseless positivity seeped its way into the newsroom. Thank you to my teachers Mrs. Bower and Mr. South for their support over the past two years. Most importantly, thank you to Mrs. Cole, the greatest adviser this program has seen and one we will miss infinitely. I am immensely grateful to everyone that has helped in the creation of this newspaper and so proud of what we have accomplished. Goodbye Plano East, thanks for a wild ride.

*Claire Tweedie*

## Creative Director

As this school year draws to a close, I would like to thank all the talented and hardworking people I've met throughout my past two years in newspaper that have taught me to never underestimate myself and have helped me rediscover my love for writing. Thank you to Mrs. Cole, our newspaper advisor, who has given us her endless support and has never failed to greet the staff with a bright smile every single day. Thank you to Claire Tweedie, our editor-in-chief, who has always believed in me even when I don't believe in myself and has served as an amazing role model for the staff. I can honestly say that joining newspaper has been one of the greatest decisions of my life and has changed my life for the better. Even through all the late nights, stressful closet talks and emotional podium lectures, I have never once regretted joining newspaper. Years from now, I will look back on the journalism program at Plano East and remember all the life lessons it has taught me. Last but not least, thank you to our readers. Without you, we would not have had the motivation to continue doing what we did every quarter. We hope the newspaper has provided you as much joy as it has for us. Have a good rest of the school year, we all deserve it.

*Abby Nguyen*

# Letters to the Editors

Dear Editor,

Once again the Panther Prints didn't disappoint me. It had very much information and detail put into it. It had so much interesting info and stuff I actually didn't think about; the info about the prom was interesting. Something else I liked, personally, was the "Nearby Recreational Parks Recommendations" because I love nature and around here there's not much but flat land, cows and houses. The updates around what's going around on campus and outside of campus are very helpful to understand what has been going on.

- Marina Henricks, 11

Dear Editor,

I really liked the front cover. It's a nice touch to blend modern and old movies on the big screen to represent how media and pop culture has changed over the years. I also liked the article about Daniela G. I think a lot of people can relate to her on the topic of anxiety and depression, and how to express emotions. Another article I enjoyed reading was the article about Mr. Oropeza. It sheds light on him and he deserves the credit for what he does. I also like how there were quotes about him that really show his character. The article about the College Application Process was very true. I found that I related to it as I continued reading. I struggled with the process due to pressure from outside factors and plus Collegeboard sucks to use.

- Paul Pham, 12

# Puzzled Panthers

By Abby Nguyen

**"What are all the things I need to know about graduation?"**

Graduation for the class of 2022 will be held June 4 at 9:30 a.m. at the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco. Each student will receive eight tickets, which will be distributed May 27 at 1 p.m. All graduation tickets not picked up will be redistributed on a first come, first serve basis June 2 at 2 p.m. Graduation rehearsal will be May 26 in the auditorium at 2 p.m. Diplomas will not be given during the ceremony and will instead be picked up by students June 6. All additional graduation information is available on the PISD website.

**"Are seniors required to get their graduation cap and gown from Jostens?"**

"Students must have a black cap and gown in order to participate in graduation," Principal George King said. "Some students use their older sibling's cap and gown. While there may be other vendors students could use to acquire a black cap and gown, Jostens provides a good price and is easy to access."

**"Any advice on how to deal with burnout or senioritis?"**

While learning in a new environment of in-person school during the pandemic has taken a toll on students' mental health, it doesn't have to interfere with students' abilities to prioritize self-care. Taking things day by day and finding small things to do such as enjoying nature, watching a favorite show, or even simply relaxing at home after school can remind students that happiness can be found even in the smallest of things.

# Seniors Celebrate Success School Resumes Traditional Graduation Ceremony

By Jackie Theur

After a year of getting students back on their feet and guiding them through the process of going back to in-person schooling, the 2022 graduating class will be officially commemorated June 4 in the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco.

"Over the past two years, we were a little more relaxed with our requirements on what you could wear on top of the regalia, but with us going back to school, we're going back to our guidelines of what you can and can't wear," associate principal Robert Eppler said. "We're going back to how strict we always were with graduation rules."

With this comeback, traditional graduation rules will be enforced this year in comparison to the leniency provided in recent years. Each graduate is given a maximum of eight tickets for whomever they choose, as long as they are cleared of all items and must present identification when purchasing. Decorations to the issued caps and gowns will not be allowed, although certain additions will be allowed as recognition to a student's accomplishments, and dress attire is business casual.

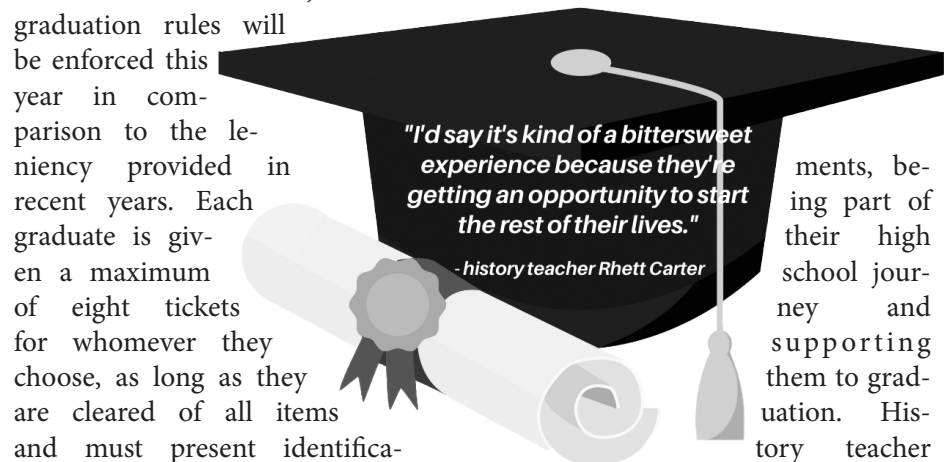
"I understand that it's graduation and the school wants us to look professional, but all of the school pictures are in our zipped up gowns; people won't see underneath," senior Lauren Nix said. "I think that there is a line between representing our school in a positive way, but also expressing ourselves."

As a contribution to graduation,

a video will be put together to showcase seniors and their experience at the school. Senior class historian Ara McKinzie is contributing to the creation of the graduation video and is ready to celebrate her fellow graduates.

"It's kind of crazy just realizing how soon it is and it's really nice that I get to be part of making graduation special," McKinzie said. "I'm super excited to get to showcase everybody from the school and all the different aspects and diversity of our campus."

Graduation holds its significance not only to the students, but to teachers as well. Teachers play a certain role in their students' achieve-



ments, being part of their high school journey and supporting them to graduation. History teacher

Rhett Carter will announce graduating students' names during the ceremony, taking on a perspective on graduation as a teacher, announcer and alumni.

"It's a good experience since I've taught many of the students and it's nice to see them finish high school," Carter said. "I'd say it's kind of a bittersweet experience because they're getting an opportunity to start the rest of their lives. I'm a very proud alumnus and this always provides a sense of nostalgia for me."

# UT Becomes Increasingly Competitive

By Abigail Cardenas

Over the years, the college admissions process has undergone numerous alterations. Both private universities and state schools saw an increase in applicants and notable student statistics, making the entire process more demanding. Considering automatic admissions and limited space, many acceptance rates decline annually. One state school which observed drastic admission cuts is the University of Texas (UT).

Since 2013, UT Austin observed a major increase in applicants, causing the school to become more competitive each year. In 2020, 8% of students were admitted to UT Austin through the holistic admissions process while 24% were automatically admitted, and 68% of students were rejected.

“Every year schools seem to get more and more competitive, both in high school and college,” senior Keven Diaz said. “I feel like it was only a few years ago that it was impressive to have above a 4.0 GPA and now it’s just not cutting it.”

In order to apply to UT, students must fill out an online application on either ApplyTexas or Coalition for College. Along with the general application, prospective students submit at least one essay, short answer responses, an official high school transcript, their class rank and the \$75 application fee. UT does not consider AP test scores or GPA for admission purposes, and merely considers class rank for automatic admission.

“The UT application process was pretty straightforward,” senior Siddarth Turaga said. “It had to be done early on since it has one of the earlier deadlines.”

Each year, students at the top 6% of their high school graduating class are

automatically admitted to UT Austin. This number dropped throughout the years, as prior to 2017, the top 7% were admitted. Automatic admissions make up roughly 75% of accepted students, making UT Austin very selective if a student does not fall within the top 6% of their class. Turaga was one of the thousands of students automatically admitted this year.

“Personally, I don’t agree with the top 6% system, especially for classes of 2022 and before,” Turaga said.

UT Austin for their sophomore year.

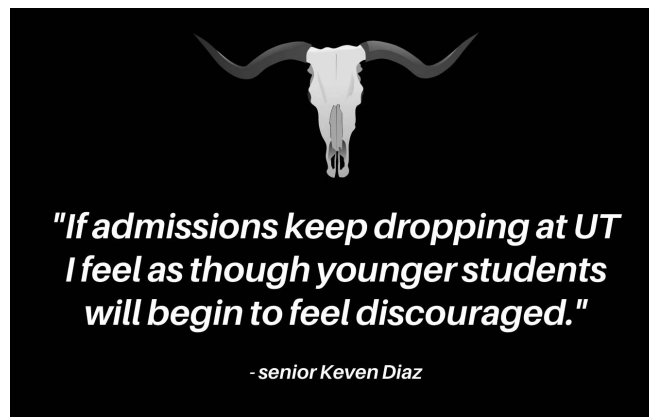
“I like the CAP program because it gives kids the opportunity to explore another campus and city,” UT Austin alumni and statistics teacher Justin Kinugawa-Bailey said. “Students stay focused because they still have to meet certain criteria to go to Austin, or if they end up liking the campus they can stay.”

This trend has not only been observed in Texas state schools, but other out-of-state universities. The University of California Berkeley was prompted to cut their admissions by thousands after a state court ruled that their acceptance numbers should remain the same as they were in the 2020-2021 admission season, limiting them to COVID-19 numbers. Additionally, with numerous schools enabling a pass/fail system in 2020, many student GPAs are higher than anticipated, creating an even more competitive environment throughout all nationwide universities.

“It’s unfair to kids that go to more competitive high schools, especially with the IB program,” Bailey said. “It’s much harder to be admitted automatically here, so it’s a much more rigorous process for average students.”

College admissions have altered throughout the years, not only through students gaining more impressive resumes, but also through universities such as UT having to accept less admits each year.

“If admissions keep dropping at UT I feel as though younger students will begin to feel discouraged,” Diaz said. “College applications take a lot of time and cost money so students may begin to feel as though applying to the school would just be a waste of time considering the low admissions rate.”



***"If admissions keep dropping at UT I feel as though younger students will begin to feel discouraged."***

***-senior Keven Diaz***

“People who took extracurriculars in school and explored their interests within school were punished in terms of the GPA because most extracurriculars were 4.0’s in a 5.0 system.”

The University of Texas System also developed the Coordinated Admission Program (CAP) to expand the admission options available to students interested in enrolling at the main Austin campus. CAP makes it possible for freshman applicants to UT Austin to begin their studies at another UT System university such as UT Arlington, UT San Antonio or other participating UT locations before being able to transfer to UT Austin to complete their undergraduate studies. Each year, roughly a thousand students participate in the CAP program yet only about a third of them complete the CAP requirements and return to

Photo from Unsplash

# Anti-LGBTQ Acts Developing Into Society

By Samantha Heath

In a letter addressed to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Feb. 22, Gov. Greg Abbott stated that he believes gender-affirming treatments for transgender adolescents should be classified as child abuse under the existing state law. It was only until after a lawsuit filed March 1 that state officials began putting his sentiment into action by investigating parents of transgender adolescents for possible child abuse.

“[The law] could out someone to their parents, which could be an unsafe situation,” junior Storm Ward said. “Even if the parents are supportive, it could just cause a lot of turmoil for the kid, which would make more people scared to come out as themselves.”

In response to the directive, District Judge Amy Clark Meachum granted a temporary restraining order that would stop state abuse investigations and other potential prosecutions until the courts fully resolved the legal aspects of the situation. Meachum ensured that the orders from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services were unconstitutional, exceeded their authority and improperly intruded the state legislature’s authority. The last trial to determine the result of the situation is scheduled to occur in July.

“I think [Abbott’s viewpoint is] more of a conservative mindset, and the way that they’re like ‘Oh, this isn’t normal’ when in reality it’s people’s gender identity; it’s how they view themselves,” junior Cassandra Liang said.

Due to Abbott’s pledge to take action against gender-affirming care, giving puberty suppressing drugs and hormone therapy to trans youth was also deemed as child abuse. This led to the GENDER Education and Care,

Interdisciplinary Support (GENECIS) program formally dissolving Nov. 11, 2021 when they came under the scrutiny of both political and governmental judgment. Originally founded by Dr. Ximena Lopez, GENECIS is considered one of the first treatment clinics in the Southwest for children with gender dysphoria. Although officials involved with the joint program stated that patients receiving care before the program ended would still continue their hormones and mental health treatments, future patients will not be able to get help outside of evaluation for gender dysphoria.

“I don’t think it’s enough,” Ward said. “I think providing counseling for gender dysphoria is obviously a great thing and it can really help, but I also think providing health care specifically for trans people [is important]. At the end of the day, some people are going to need those hormones or surgery in order to feel better.”

Through the third special legislative session that ended Oct. 19, Abbott explained that while GENECIS would not be completely eliminated as hypothesized in the worst-case scenario, he doubts that they will not be allowed to continue without some modifications.

“I think it is [the children’s] life; it might be a better idea for them to wait until they’re 18, but maybe also to help them out because this is a hard time for them and confusing and transitioning,” senior Noelle Simons said. “Maybe hold off on the surgeries and taking pills, but still address them by their preferred name, their preferred pronouns, and parents can just keep on supporting with their clothing [and] how they address them.”

Similar instances involving LGBTQ

issues spread toward other Republican-lead governments. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill nicknamed the “Don’t Say Gay” into law March 28. As stated in its original House Bill 1557 text, the new law prohibits school districts from encouraging class discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity. It specifically pertains to primary grade levels such as kindergarten through third.

“Knowledge is power and if you restrict that knowledge, then it might have a harmful effect later on,” Simons said. “I think at least in education, they should at least let kids still explore and find out on their own.”

The “Don’t Say Gay” bill will officially take effect July 1, with a deadline of June 30, 2023 set for the state to come up with updated standards that could decide what age-appropriate instruction is determined by. Other aspects will include the requiring of schools to notify parents of any health care services being offered to their children so they can choose to opt out of them, requiring of schools to get permission from a parent before administering health screening to a child in kindergarten through third grade, and allowing parents to sue if they believe the school violates the new law. Liang believes this legislation will influence Texas’ government eventually due to the conservative nature of both states.

“I think especially for younger kids that are learning in Florida, it’s going to be really detrimental for them, especially if they have queer parents or they are queer themselves,” Liang said. “It’ll be more difficult if they don’t know about the queer community to then be able to learn about themselves and know about that aspect about themselves.”

# Record-Breaking Rates

## High Gas Prices Affect American Drivers

By Abby Nguyen

As gas prices rose over the past two months, it brought with it a surge of controversy and debates over who or what was to blame. After the average national price of gas for a gallon of regular gasoline hit \$4.17, which broke the previous record high of \$4.11 in 2008 according to the American Automobile Association, the U.S. started to combat inflation and high gas prices by releasing one million barrels of oil per day from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

During the start of the pandemic in 2020, demand for oil decreased and gas prices dropped as a result. However, as the country adjusted to the pandemic and restrictions loosened nationwide, demand started to outpace supply, ultimately causing the sharp rise in gas prices.

“Think about how much we use gas for,” economics teacher Julie Meek said. “We put it in our cars, we use it for energy production, [and] we use it to heat homes. In the very short term, because we don’t have a lot we can replace [gas] with yet, we’re not very responsive to a price change.”

The basic economic laws of supply and demand dictate that if a decrease in supply occurs and demand remains the same, then prices will rise to a higher equilibrium price.

“Supply and demand is the lens through which you can figure out what’s going on; it’s an analysis tool,” Meek said. “You’re using economics as a way to say ‘This is what’s happening and this is why it’s happening.’”

While the pandemic played a large role in the rise in gas prices, another

contributing factor is international conflict. As the Russian attack on Ukraine intensified, President Joe Biden signed an executive order with bipartisan support to ban the import of Russian oil to the United States to retaliate against the attack. With these new restrictions, prices at the pump increased as a result.

“It’s much more of an issue for the whole European continent be-

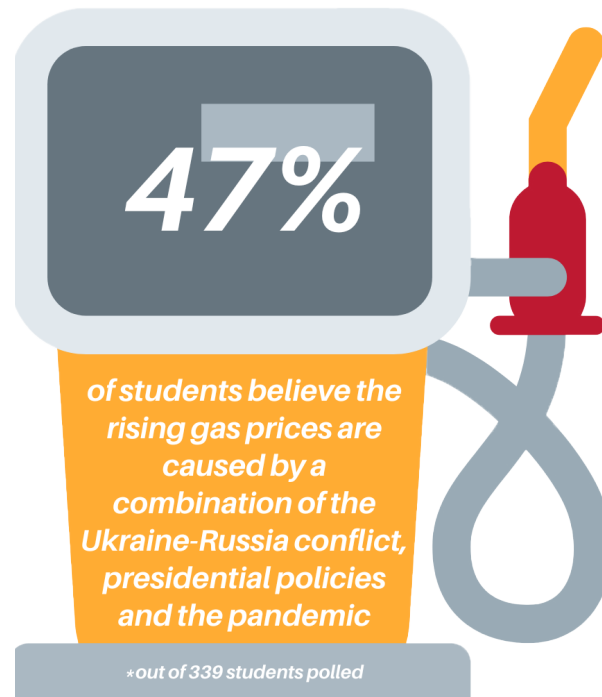
ed to wait for the gas prices to go down; I felt trapped,” Salinas said.

While all drivers experience the effects of high gas prices, Salinas believes that low-income drivers are the ones who face the most financial burden. On average, Americans spend around 3.3% of their budgets on gasoline, but those who earn an income between \$30,000 to \$40,000 spend a larger percentage, 4.1%, of their budgets on gasoline, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“Low-income individuals are having a hard time figuring out how to get a ride to work, to school or to anywhere,” Salinas said. “It’s really sad how gas, and even food and healthcare, keep getting more and more expensive, yet salaries stay the same.”

Rising gas prices have become a widely debated issue, especially in politics. According to a study done by Quinnipiac University, four in 10 Americans believe Biden Administration policies are the number one reason for high gas prices. After the cancellation of the Keystone Pipeline that delivers oil to the U.S. and the halt of drilling leases on federal lands, Americans started to turn to the presidency to blame.

“People like to place blame when something bad happens, and I think that the blame is misguided,” Salinas said. “It’s very political when gas prices increase. I think people just want to blame some higher power but just don’t know what that higher power is.”



cause Russia is a major exporter to the European Union and all the nations in Europe,” Meek said.

Rising gas prices bring an economic strain on drivers and limit the amount of travel. According to a survey by the American Automobile Association, 34% of drivers drive less often due to high gas prices. Senior Simon Salinas shares the same concerns regarding his inability to travel far distances by car.

“I wanted to go visit my grandparents, but my mom said we need-

# Tourism Taking Flight

## Commercial Space Travel's Big Boom

By Claire Tweedie

Pete Davidson's departure from the flight crew set for space in late March through Blue Origin, an American aerospace company owned by Jeff Bezos focused on commercial space travel, made headlines for his celebrity status in relation to the experience. Commercial space travel has seen a staggering increase in popularity since tourist flights in 2021, with notable public figures such as Bezos and actor William Shatner having seen the stars from beyond the atmosphere.

"Space isn't just looking up at the night sky or looking through a telescope," Earth and space science teacher Sophia Walsh said. "Even the earliest philosophers asked questions, it's where science was pretty much born. A lot of the things they wondered then about space, we use it to give us grounding and structure here on Earth."

Space tourism first came into existence with American millionaire Dennis Tito, who made history by traveling to the International Space Station aboard a Russian Soyuz rocket for eight days for \$20 million. From Tito's flight in 2001 until 2021, only six other civilians took the opportunity to pay for their own space travel.

"People are going to have to trust space flight and the companies that are trying to take us there and they need to understand that space is a new frontier for us," STARS club founder

and president senior Prisha Singh said. "It can open up to so many different people and so many different doors of

research, ingenuity and innovation."

Even NASA capitalized on the opportunity presented. The independent agency of the U.S. federal government signed Space Act Agreements with other U.S. companies to develop both space stations and more commercial destinations for the emerging tourism industry. The intent is to create an American-led commercial economy in low-or-

bit Earth, using financial awards to build the stations for both government and private-sector customers. The agency also hopes to retire the International Space Station (ISS) in favor of these newer advancements.

"NASA is more based on research and finding ways to further our exploration into space which is very hard to fund, especially with taxpayer's dollars," Walsh said. "I'm all for NASA getting funding if they are capitalizing on the money for their research."

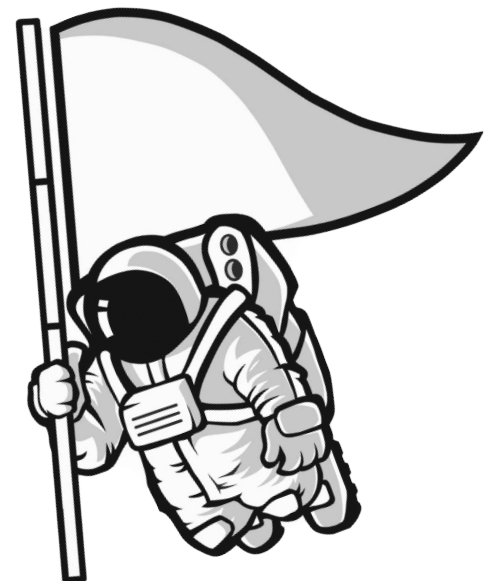
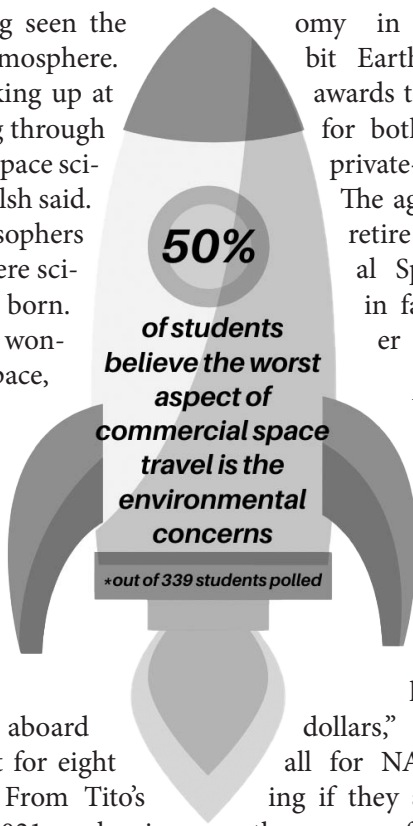
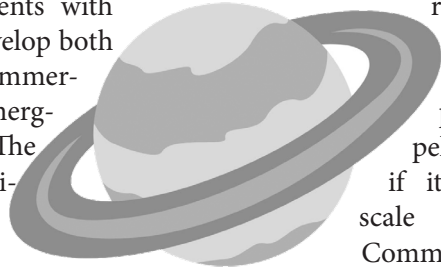
Current seat pricing for a trip range from \$250,000 to \$58 million depending on the company. As of September 2021, Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo and Blue Origin's New Shepard were estimated in the lower end of \$250,000 to \$500,000 while NASA astronauts estimated the \$58 million for an orbital trip.

"I think people are willing to spend so much money because it's new, it's the beginning of something really, re-

ally grand," Singh said. "In the past, we've gone to space then come back to Earth, but the whole idea is what if we were to become an interstellar space race? That's the big idea that people are propelled by, even if it's in small scale quantities."

Commercial space travel seems to be the newest fad in both the aerospace industry and the tourism front as people wait their turn for tickets to see the stars up close and personal. While these dreams may have once been other-worldly, these recent advancements in civilian space travel make it a possible reality in the near future.

"The best thing about space, the most interesting thing to me, is how much we don't know," Singh said. "There's so much left to understand. That idea, that everything about where we are, what we do, and the purpose of humanity on Earth is so unknown, so why not try to go and figure it out?"





# Those Who Shaped America AAPI Heritage Month

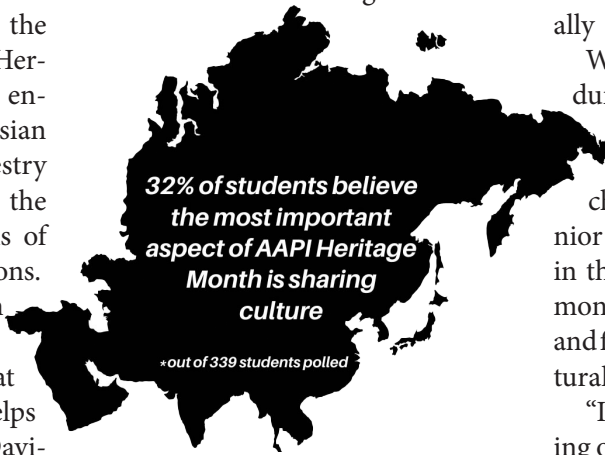
By Samantha Heath

Occurring across the entirety of May, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the contributions and influences of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans who impacted U.S. history. With the term being a bit broad, AAPI Heritage Month is considered to encompass all people of Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins back to the countries, states and jurisdictions of their respective geographic regions.

“It recognizes not just Asian American[s], it recognizes all the cultures, icons and traditions that are very important to us and [helps us] express [ourselves],” senior Davina Dinh said. “It can show others what our culture is and it creates diversity.”

Though it was first created by Congress in 1978, it was not until 1992 that the entire month was designated to AAPI heritage. The month of May was specifically chosen as it represents

the immigration of the first Japanese individual to the United States May 7, 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad May 10, 1869 where the majority of the workers were Chinese immigrants. Pacific



Islanders are considered to have started migrating to the U.S. when the Mormom church sent students to Hawaii for higher education to work on Mormon church construction projects, and when the military brought them after World War II.

“It’s a month that really helps me feel seen,” junior Lisa Lupeitu’u said. “Even though Pacific Islanders are grouped with Asian Americans, I think it really helps us get out there, because normally people don’t really think about Pacific Islanders.”

With Asian hate crimes rising 73% during the start of coronavirus according to 2020 FBI data, and with cases of anti-Asian crime charges emerging in the news, senior Emma Yu believes that people in the AAPI community will use this month to rise up against the negativity and find a way to cultivate it into the cultural month it was made to represent.

“I think people will be more outgoing or will speak more on the topic because of these issues and it gives them an opportunity to speak out against what is happening,” Yu said. “It makes it more meaningful because it’s more important to say something and for those who celebrate or just those who want to speak more about this month.”

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# Incoming Club Officers, Student Leadership for Next School Year

By Claire Tweedie

Focused on his homework, IB sophomore Ezyan Bhayani hears his phone chime, alerting him to a notification. Expecting to see the list of candidates for next school year's Student Organization Academic Refinement (SOAR) leadership, he opens the Google Classroom page and begins scrolling through the names. As Bhayani sets his phone down, it once again alerts him to a sudden barrage of texts, the notification sound's constant ringing causing his curiosity to get the best of him. Unlocking his phone once more, his texts are filled with classmates and friends asking why his name isn't on the list of presidential candidates. Uplifted by the outpour of support, Bhayani creates a plan and campaign that will earn him the title of SOAR president.

"I asked [SOAR founder and president junior Gautum Penna] if I could enter the election the night before the first speech," Bhayani said. "I had less than 12 hours to make a speech and say it the next day. It kind of set the tone for my campaign, to not wait for opportunity, but to take the opportunity when you can."

As the 2021-2022 school year comes to a close, student clubs and organizations begin searching for the next round of leaders up to the challenge. In the case of Bhayani, his journey was fast-tracked by his original intentions not to run, though cemented by his history of leadership in SOAR, orchestra and aspirations for a position on the school robotics team. National Honor Society (NHS) president elect junior Sukhran Chandrasekar has a similar background, being involved in the organization since middle school and currently acting as assistant coordinator of events. For se-

nior class president elect junior Madison Tran, her involvement in Senate, Peer Assistant Leadership (PALs) and volleyball are what she believes have set her up for her upcoming role.

"With Senate, I've already been involved with being a liaison between administration and the student body," Tran said. "I wanted to take it up a notch and be the senior class president. I thought it was important to me because I've already had experience planning homecoming, Stay Day and tailgate, so for

er events with people who are experts in technology and such, but I hope in the next year to have more events that are more applicable to people with topics like mental health or public safety."

Regarding the campaigns that won them their respective positions, each took a similar stance on advertising their name and ideas as much as possible. Bhayani centered his campaign on puns, decorating the IB commons with clever slogans to have his name known while Chandrasekar and Tran based their's on social media.

Chandrasekar advocated for a members-first approach in his promises while Tran relied on interaction, via reposts and views, with her posts for publicity.

"I think I'm just excited to take on the responsibility," Tran said. "I'm excited to serve our student body and to do something that gives back to the community as well. I'm even more thankful that you guys gave me the opportunity to be in this role and I promise I'll make your vote worth it."

With bright-eyed optimism and excitement for the upcoming school year, each of the future presidents is ready to take on the next big responsibility of their high school careers. With plenty of experience and ambition to back up their campaign goals, there's no guessing what they can achieve.

"As time has progressed so have I," Chandrasekar said. "Sometimes as a leader, you're not born with these characteristics but it's something that experiences have facilitated and have enabled in me. As a person now, I feel much more verbose and much more open, especially through NHS which has been a big part of my life."



my senior year I wanted to be able to help plan prom and graduation."

Tran's goals for the graduating class of 2023 include more senior-related activities, such as bonfires and tailgates, to make up for the high school experiences lost to COVID-19. Bhayani hopes to combine the IB and AP sections of the school into one collaborative group by way of member-created review sessions. Chandrasekar aims to incorporate more member suggestions into meetings, service projects and the NHS newsletter.

"I told people to please vote for me, please consider my goals, and believe in those rather than just vote for me because you're friends with me," Chandrasekar said. "We've had guest speak-

**Panther Profile**

# Emphasizing Career While Maintaining Academic Values

By Aziz Syed

As the lesson progresses in senior Armando Sanchez's English class, he can't help but think about the things he plans to do later in the day at his uncle's pool company. He jots down drawings of the pool he plans to work on, as well as illustrations for the car he's currently fixing at a car detailing shop he works at on the weekends. This constant obsession with his work is one of the reasons that Armando's teachers see great success in his future. He's driven by the things he wants to do outside of school but doesn't let that take away from his focus on his school work.

"What I really like to do is work on cars and mechanics," Sanchez said. "Right now I'm just trying to make my way through school."

To spend more time on his work while balancing school, Sanchez enrolled in the career prep course taught by Tommy Guynes. Guynes admires Sanchez's ability to never stray from the tasks at hand in his class, while at the same time thinking about his own endeavors outside of school. Oftentimes when his classmates aren't understanding a particular topic, they'll ask Armando because they know they can rely on him. Guynes notices how Sanchez is able to have fun and joke around with his peers while simultaneously getting his work done and paying particular attention to his grades.

"He's a great positive role model for the kids around him," Guynes said. "If someone ever needs someone to talk to about anything he's always there available in the back."

Sanchez expresses his goals and desires with his peers at school as well as with English teacher Beth Womack. He tells her about his aspirations to open a mechanic shop after college as well as his interest in cutting hair on the side. Sanchez started cutting hair in middle school and has been interested in learning more about the craft ever since. His love for autotech began when he was a child, fixing cars and

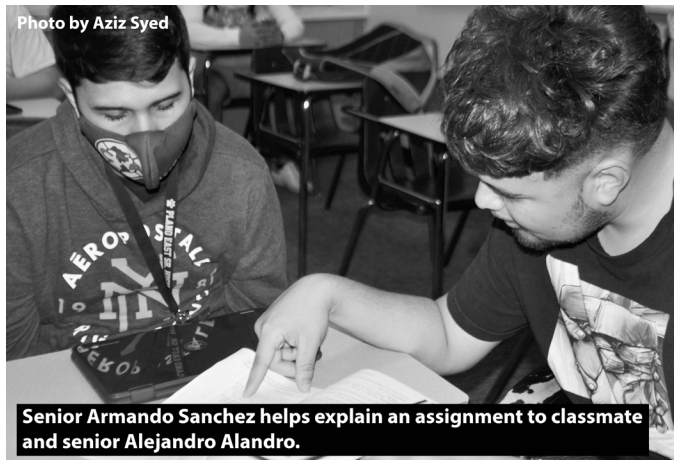
the gap between her and the students. She trusts that Sanchez can communicate lessons effectively because of his unique ability to connect generations. Womack believes that his leadership abilities will help him define his future.

"He is a very strong leader; he's quick to teach and explain why something's right or not right, it's a natural quality that he has to help promote everyone's success," Womack said. "I even bounce ideas off him because I value his opinion and his ability to see things outside of the box."

Last summer, Sanchez worked almost every day at his uncle's pool company as well as a detailing shop, while also spending time learning more about cutting hair and practicing his skills with scissors as well as trimmers after work. Ideally, Sanchez hopes to open his business while pursuing his other skills and

hobbies. He understands the amount of work it takes to build something like a business and hopes to take what he's learned from working at his uncle's company and potentially start his own. He knows this won't be an easy feat, but plans to take business and automotive courses to understand how to lay the foundation for his company. Sanchez is currently perfecting his skills inside and outside of school and is trying to build strong relationships with his peers and teachers.

"I'm hoping to get a good job, save a good amount of money, and go from there," Sanchez said. "Cutting hair and working on cars are my passions and it's definitely been a long life long goal."



Senior Armando Sanchez helps explain an assignment to classmate and senior Alejandro Alandro.

trucks with his dad. This interest in cars led him to enroll in the autotech class at school last year which confirmed his desire for a future working with cars. He's even part of a race truck group with his friends called Texas Quality.

"He has a natural business sense and he's got a plan for his future," Womack said. "He enjoys class discussions and higher level thinking and applying things to real world scenarios, which makes him a real practical, down-to-earth young man."

Womack encourages free thinking in her classroom and promotes different ways of learning. If she can't communicate a topic effectively to her class, she'll ask Sanchez to help bridge

Photo from Unsplash

# Activism Advancing, Technology Transitioning Social Media's Role in Magnifying Advocacy

By Kayla Vu and Sydnie Grayson

Descending the stairs to join her family for dinner, junior Kripa Kannan walks to the table. Her mother clicks the button to turn on the television where it lights up to the news channel, giving the daily report. The shock rushes through Kannan's body as the breaking news announces that Russia is invading Ukraine. She finishes her dinner as quickly as she can to tentatively listen as the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, declares his military assault on the country of Ukraine. Scrolling through her feed on Instagram, the screen shines with an updated post on the war through UNICEF's page. Each morning, her phone buzzes with new notifications regarding these affairs. Like Kannan, UNICEF's millions of followers gain new knowledge on current events such as the Russia-Ukraine war through their social media platforms. While the news is a platform for information, social media accounts like UNICEF implement foreign affairs as a way to provide a better understanding into the daily lives of social media users.

"[The news anchors] would talk about the immense amount of casualties that were being brought upon [the Ukrainian people]," Kannan said. "Es-

pecially on the way to school, different podcasts or radio stations will be reciting important events or situations that happened to specific families that were

has brought a lot of donations to them, to provide resources for the families."

## Era of Visualized Information

As the Russia-Ukraine war progresses, new reports continue to flood news programs with the events of the war displayed on television mirroring the violence of previous hostilities. The affairs of the Vietnam War were the first to be broadcasted on national television, leading to the conflict being referred to as the "first television war." The introduction of television to the national majority transformed the world of communication into a new modern age and allowed for the feature of various public events. While only a small number of American families owned a television in the 1950s, according to the National Archives and Records Administration, almost 90% of American households had at least one television by the following decade.

"TV had such an important place in history because it helped change the way people saw the news," professional social media strategist Alexandra Pedrini said. "With TV, it takes you from only hearing something to also



affected. For UNICEF, they post images about all of the bad things that have been brought to the Ukrainian families; just showing [the donation page]

seeing it. [Visuals] can have a massive impact on how people interpret information [and] are such a powerful way of communicating with the public. Showing the reality of what's happening can make a really deep and significant impact on the viewers so that the message resonates a little deeper."

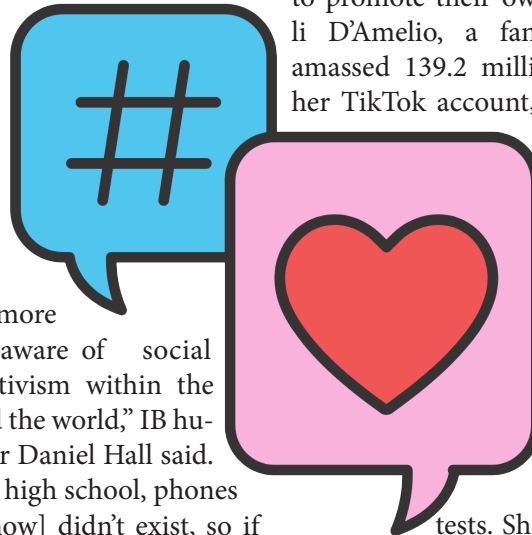
Television paved the way for national and global affairs to be highlighted with networks such as the Columbia Broadcasting System and American Broadcasting Company occasionally documenting the works of activists. Martin Luther King Jr.'s notable "I Have a Dream" speech aired on both networks, gaining the attention of the American public and John F. Kennedy. In the modern era, the establishment of the internet became the next turning point in the world of communication. By the mid-90s, when commercial web browsers opened to the public, movements for racial equality, women's rights, LGBTQ rights and environmental protection expanded.

"It's easier to coordinate activism now," IB English teacher Karen Holloway said. "Before the internet, to reach a lot of people, I [would've been] able to only reach the people I lived or worked with. You could only reach out to a small community, but with the internet you could really reach people worldwide."

Technology continued to evolve with the advancements of video recording and the invention of the mobile phone sparking an age of digital communication and changing the way younger generations consume information. Although the internet was more commonly used for entertainment, activist groups were able to share their message to a more mainstream audience through activities like virtual sit-ins and email campaigns. MoveOn, a progressive committee aimed to achieve social justice and po-

litical progress for all individuals, was formed in 1998 and utilized the email system to organize digital petitions and protests. The increased availability of mobile devices also enabled students and teenagers to participate more in activism.

"As a generation, [students are] a lot more cognizant and aware of social change and activism within the community and the world," IB humanities teacher Daniel Hall said. "When I was in high school, phones like [we have now] didn't exist, so if we wanted to learn about the news, it was going to be because [we] would intentionally seek it. Students these days are just fed a lot more information than previous generations were."

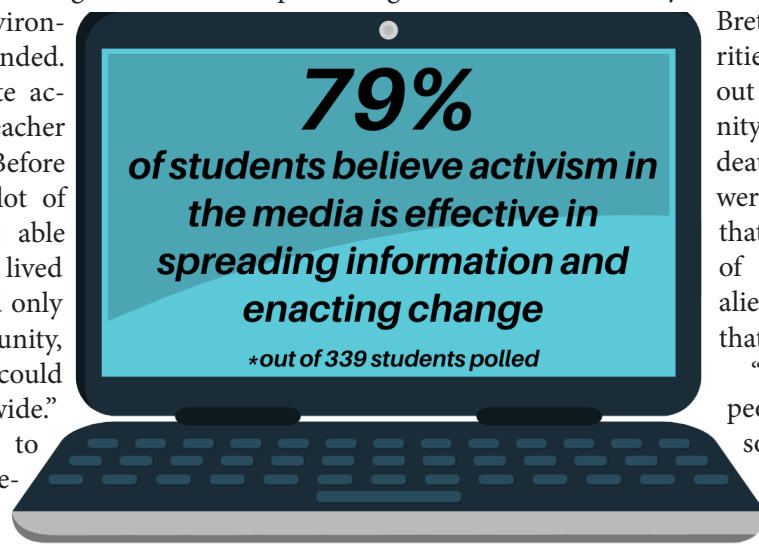


click of a button. Celebrities and influencers emerge from the screen of a mobile device to share their thoughts and opinions and use their platform to promote their own agenda. Charli D'Amelio, a famous influencer, amassed 139.2 million followers on her TikTok account, allowing her to promote brands such as Morphe, Linktree and Invisalign. In regards to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, D'Amelio spoke out in support of these pro-

tests. She posted a video, receiving 28 million views and eight million likes, stating her stance on the issue and how she would continue to be an ally to the BLM community. Days before this, fellow influencer Bretman Rock criticized celebrities who were not speaking out in support of the community following George Floyd's death. He said his comments were in regards to the fact that influencers were scared of losing brand deals and alienating certain companies that supported them before.

"They've got to appease the people," marketing teacher Jason Duncan said. "They have an accountability to the fans. They are the people who ultimately put them in these positions of [being] celebrities. That would have an amazing influence on how an individual might act. I'm not saying all celebrities do whatever their fans entail, but there is some level of responsibility to your fans if they put you on this pedestal for you to be the person that they want you to be. I think, right or wrong, that's just the nature of being a celebrity."

With a quick repost, reshare or



### Activism Through Modern Lenses

A new medium has popularized due to its efficiency and widespread influence across the world: social media. Current events and exposure of ideas regarding awareness and activism can be spread over different social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook with the

retweet, viewers can promote serious issues from the comfort of their own home allowing for a flood of opinions on their feed from the amount of attention. This provides an easier alternative to attending protests or donating to a cause. While sharing this information can spread awareness quickly, the requirements of contributing to a cause leads to the idea of slacktivism.

“Liking a post; is that doing anything? Is that changing anything?” Duncan said. “Sure it can be useful for awareness, to show that perhaps there are ‘x’ number of people that support whatever idea has been put forward. I think this is where the term slacktivism has risen from; social media saying, ‘yeah, that’s wrong’ or ‘we don’t agree with that’ or ‘we do agree with this.’ It doesn’t enact change.”

Slacktivism originates from the words “slacker” and “activism,” meaning individuals may support a cause while having little commitment. Examples include reposting an organization’s post without having a significant impact or contribution and signing or sharing online petitions. On social media, a simple repost gets the idea of a cause out in the world, but it is debated on how effective that method of spreading information is.

“It’s very easy to get swept up in looking for that stimulant and not actually doing what you’re supposed to do and [social media] does turn performative after a certain amount of time,” junior Isabel Phung said. “People really do need to take con-

stant reality checks and be like ‘What are my true intentions when posting this? Do I actually care? Do I want information to be spread? Do I just want more views or more money?’”

## slack·tiv·ism

/ˈslaktəˌvɪz(ə)m/

the practice of supporting a political or social cause by means such as social media or online petitions, characterized as involving very little effort or commitment.

from Oxford Languages

### Media’s Impact on Society

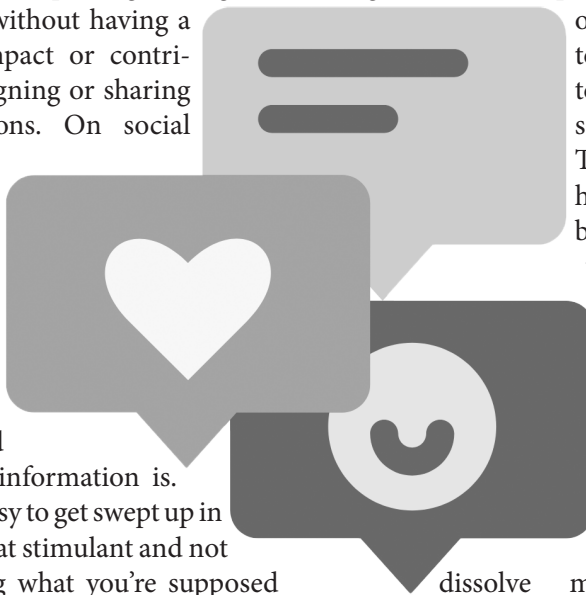
As social and political issues persist, recent campaigns such as BLM and Stop Asian Hate are able to utilize platforms to enact change in various communities. According to the Pew Research Center in a 2020 study, 23% of adult social media users in the U.S. changed their viewpoints on various topics due to exposure to content on social media. This number has increased by 7% since the last survey conducted in 2018. British influencer Jessica Kellgren-Fozard uses her YouTube platform to dissolve misconceptions of chronic illnesses and disabilities by sharing her personal experiences as a member of the community. Despite the ability of social media to reach and in-

fluence large audiences, Hall explains that posts on these accounts shouldn’t be the only advocacy for change.

“Social media platforms are a great starting point but they’re not the end to all things,” Hall said. “It gets people talking [and] makes people aware, but that’s the first of several steps in enacting change. I think that the difficult thing with concrete change, regardless of what you want to see, is that it comes down to action.”

Social media can also allow for biased ideas to be shared with similar ease. In late April, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and the richest man in the world, bought Twitter for \$44 billion. Musk claimed that his intentions are to expand freedom of speech on the platform with one of his first initiatives to reinstate accounts that have been previously blocked. However, regarding both his business and presence on social media, concern was raised that this gives him the power to block or suppress those who criticize him or his company. With the way various platforms work, social media algorithms can also prevent exposure to different viewpoints through the process of data mining. During the Cambridge Analytica Scandal, the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre exposed that data analysts were mining information from over 50 million Facebook profiles to market political ideologies. “Everyone, including myself, is guilty of jumping to conclusions,” Phung said. “With the way that apps like Instagram and TikTok are programmed, it shows more of the things you like. That causes huge polarization and lack of view from the other standpoint. It should be normalized to check multiple sources and see if this information is reliable.”

Although there are limitations to using social media, these platforms



still allow for issues to expand to different forms of activism. Organizations like UNICEF implement themselves into different communities through social media in order to initiate discussion about local and global issues. With activities such as volunteering, donation opportunities and writing to government officials, UNICEF expands its activism to school settings as a way to encourage younger generations to voice their opinions.

“UNICEF shows volunteering opportunities and ways that they can get involved in the area either helping volunteers or [partaking] in different service opportunities,” Kannan said. “I feel that if we didn’t post it on social media, it wouldn’t get as much attention.”

Student-led accounts also allow for local issues to be highlighted such as *planoeastgeese* on Instagram. The account, although unofficial, garnered over a thousand followers and serves

as a hub for photos and information about the geese. After students were

***"[Social media] is a double-edged sword because it's really easy to reach a lot of people but it's also abused a lot."***

***- IB English teacher  
Karen Holloway***

minded students to not only respect the geese’s boundaries, but to also not harass those involved in the conflict. As issues emerge, social media continues to be a center for news, education and activism. However, for activism to positively impact and influence society, it ultimately depends on the motives and reasons of the advocate.

“[Social media] is a double-edged sword because it’s really easy to reach a lot of people but it’s also abused a lot,” Holloway said. “Since people can now just post whatever they want to so many people, they don’t always say the wisest things. We should be careful and check for the abuses from [social media].”

allegedly stealing goose eggs, the account addressed the situation and re-

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# Sports Teams Prepare For New Seasons

By Aziz Syed

As the school year comes to an end, the coaching staff prioritizes summer training to prepare their teams for the new seasons. The importance of summer training can get overlooked by sports players because of the intense work athletes do during the school year. The volleyball, tennis and football teams practice different team building activities and exercises over summer to better prepare themselves for next year. The coaches push for a balance between strict skill-based training and group team building exercises.

Volleyball player junior Krista Dooley believes that the reason the volleyball team started the year strong was because of their summer training. She imagines if the team carried on the practice and work ethic they displayed at the beginning of the season, they would have been more successful toward the end. The team participates in a performance course to practice team building exercises as well as recreational activities to better construct comradery. Dooley knows that the fundamentals of having a good season is practice, and there's no better time to practice than in the two months preceding the school year.

"Sometimes we would have breakfast after training and really be friends outside of practice," Dooley said. "We spend a lot of time together building bonds which I think is just as important as the training we do."

In a sport like tennis that is often centered around individual skill based training, summer practices may seem less important because of the less team oriented aspect of the game. Tennis player junior Lydia Roh believes that tennis, just like any team sport, is dependent on the relationship between the players. The summer program the team attends has a balanced mix

of athletic training and team building exercises. Roh, as well as some other players on the team, also take part in private tennis lessons to better advance their skills. Roh knows that the team will continue to improve be

the lack of fundamental skills led to most of their losses and imagines that summer training will be the best opportunity for the players to come together and work on the smaller things holding them back. He hopes to put



Photo by Leslie Hernandez

**Junior varsity tennis coach Robert Gifford instructs tennis player and junior Lydia Roh during training.**

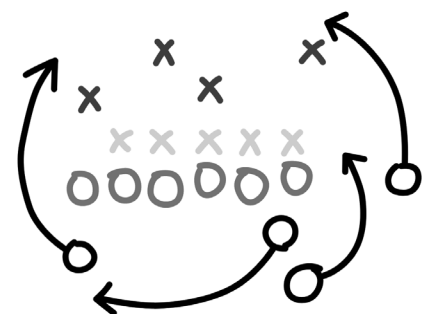
cause of the attitude they bring to the court through both losses and wins.

"Personally I think our team can improve on our athleticism and move our feet more," Roh said. "I think our team is very positive and we always try to see the good side of things so I'm looking forward to summer training."

With a new athletic director for football, a new work ethic is being instilled to encourage the practice of fundamental skills and discipline. Football player junior Daniel Oliver attributes most of the losses in the last season to the absence of discipline the team showed because of how close the games were. He imagines if the team had trained more during the break before the year, they could have had a stronger season. Oliver believes

an end to a cycle of seasons of losses.

"Coming out to camp every morning is a grind thing, we need everyone to come in everyday and grow as a team, be more disciplined and work harder than the people across town from us," Oliver said. "I think summer preparation should be everybody's first goal right now because what we're coming from isn't too good and we need everyone to be a brotherhood."





# Fields to Future Graduated Seniors Return to Support Baseball

By Kayla Vu

Finishing their district playoffs with Marcus winning 18-2, seniors on the baseball team prepare to graduate from the team. Throughout his six years coaching at the school, head varsity coach Michael Martinez oversaw the training of dozens of players with new players joining every year. However, what always sparked pride in him was seeing the return of graduated players.

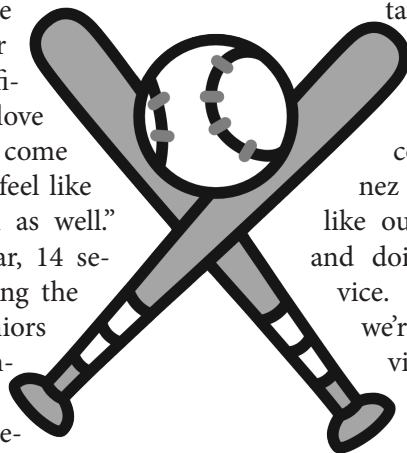
“I have always encouraged that it’s not just four years that you’re here,” Martinez said. “We want [players] to be a part of the program even after they’re gone. I definitely enjoy and love when old players come back and we want to feel like this is their program as well.”

From the prior year, 14 seniors graduated, leaving the team with mainly juniors and sophomores contributing at a varsity level. Despite their departure, old members still returned to support the team from a community standpoint. Several graduates occasionally meet up with current players for events like Alumni Night or casual dinners. During Alumni Night, old coaches and players from as long as 40 years ago returned to watch the winning game against Hebron. One of the more recent alumni, Jack Lubow, who continued his baseball career at the University of Texas at Dallas, reminisces about his time on the team.

“It was the best four years of my life,” Lubow said. “I was really close with the coach and the players. Looking back, my favorite times [were] when [we were] eating as a team

and having bus rides together. Those memories always just stuck with [me] and I can’t really forget them.”

Along with focusing on practices and improving gameplay, team bonding between players is heavily valued. Members frequently organize player-centered activities like group dinners and team effort events like their annual fruit fundraisers. Martinez explains that working together to help others can not only increase team chemistry, but that their actions can also serve as a representation of the school.



“We really want to embody what it means to be a community,” Martinez said. “We really do like our players going out and doing community service. To the people that we’re helping, that [service] may be their only connection to Plano East so we really take that to heart.”

Looking back on his four years on the varsity team, senior Caleb Bergman prepares for his upcoming graduation with fond memories of his time on the team. In the upcoming months, Bergman will soon join the ranks of Baylor University’s baseball team. Holding a positive outlook for the future, Bergman expresses his desire to return one day to support the team.

“I want to come back every year at some point and watch a couple of football or baseball games to support the community,” Bergman said. “Hopefully once I’m out of college and have my own job, I can give back to the people who started the prime of my life.”

# Tom Brady’s Retirement Dilemma

By Rishi Mallela

Following a loss to the LA Rams in the 2021-2022 playoffs, former New England Patriot and now Tampa Bay Buccaneer Tom Brady announced his retirement on Instagram Feb 1. Stating his uncertainty about being “100% committed” to the sport of football for another season, he decided to hang up his cleats and commit that time to his family and other business endeavors.

For nearly two months, the football world wondered what the upcoming season would look like without the 44-year-old quarterback. However, amid an already crazy offseason, Brady announced his return to the gridiron saying that he was coming back for his 23rd season in Tampa for “unfinished business.”

His comeback can be attributed to his long attachment to the NFL, the shift in player talent from the NFC to the AFC, and his meeting with Cristiano Ronaldo following his hat-trick against Tottenham Hotspur.

In recent weeks, the NFC lost nearly 10-star players from seven teams, with most of the players moving their talents to the AFC, especially to the AFC West division. With this in mind, the league presents less competition for Brady to get to yet another Super Bowl, especially considering the polished free agents he managed to convince to sign over his time on the Buccaneers. This not only gives a way for him to add to his Lombardi Trophy tally, but gives him more than enough confidence to look to another season in the league with Tampa.

# Coaching Changes in Football Program

By Rishi Mallela

Former athletic director and football head coach Joey McCullough announced his retirement after eight years in the program. This year, assistant head football Tom Rapp retires from his position as well. In search of his replacement, the football program looked to former Woodrow Wilson head coach Anthony Benedetto. Incoming Benedetto and offensive and defensive coordinators were attracted to the program given the high level of play by the team.

"The students, the diversity and hard workers here make it a great place to coach," Benedetto said. "The students want to be disciplined and structured, they work hard, and they want their dreams to come true. It really makes it a place to want to coach at."

McCullough joined the program in 2014 and had a memorable 28-54 record over his tenure. In his time as head coach, the program saw three playoff appearances and he brought dynamic energy to the offense, holding the same school spirit he had in his past playing and coaching stints. Rapp believes that the quick call to actively get the team back on track following a troubling season before McCullough's appointment is a massive part of the legacy McCullough will leave on the program. He looks to McCullough as a man who upheld the school spirit, bringing the same tactics and strategy he had as a player into the talent he had each year.

"He lived and died [this school] in everything he did," Rapp said. "He worked tirelessly to improve the program in the ways he saw that it should be run, and I feel like he did that."

Rapp feels the one thing he adjusted from is the demographic of the team with students' skill sets and physiques being different as each class of athletes

enters the program. Looking back, he maintains that his impact on the program shows by his adjustment to the growing standard each player is refined too, adapting to the talent available. As well as refining their athletic talent, Rapp believes in making student-athletes successful beyond their football careers. He believes that his faithful impact on the football program is his adherence to the importance he placed on balancing the academic and athletic success of each individual, entering or exiting the program.

"The thing that I look at the longer that I've coached is the

the best athletes they can be," Benedetto said. "They are going to sacrifice, they are going to work hard, and you're going to see a team that plays hard and makes the playoffs."

Incoming offensive coordinator Joeckel was an NCAA All-American Offensive Lineman in his playing years with over 13 years of coaching experience. His success as an offensive coordinator is a testament to the discipline and motivation he can bring to the football program. Benedetto believes that the program can see just as much, if not more, success given his knowledge of Division 6A football.

"[Joeckel's] coaching experience makes him very familiar with high 6A programs and where Plano East needs to be," Benedetto said. "For him coming over to make sure our offensive line and offense is running smoothly, disciplined and organized, he's going to do all of those things."

On the other side of the ball, defensive coordinator Matthew Clay takes the helm, also joining from Woodrow Wilson. He has experience at defensive back at Vanderbilt, with over 26 total tackles, one sack and two forced fumbles on his collegiate playing record. Students currently in the program say he is an aggressive coach who really pays attention to all dimensions of the defensive line.

"Coach Clay's coaching style is very aggressive as a defensive coordinator," varsity football junior Aden Luecke said. "He expects D-Line men and LB to make a lot of the plays up front and shut down the run game, while allowing the DBs to play freely and get turnovers."



fact that football is part of developing student-athletes," Rapp said. "I want these students to be able to move on and be very big influences wherever they live in society."

Benedetto enters his first offseason with the football program getting to know the junior varsity and varsity team, looking to develop the football program with his new strategy and game plans. Recently, Benedetto came off a winning season at Woodrow Wilson at 18-13, and he is already showing students and the local community what he and his coaching staff have to offer through social media and practices open to the general public.

"We are trying to set a standard of hard-working players who do well in school and who are going to be

# Acceptance in Action

## Bowling Team's Culture, Success

By Claire Tweedie

The street lights flicker outside the Plano Super Bowl as night falls on a seemingly uneventful Tuesday. Senior Camden Henson strides into the bowling alley, the sounds of falling pins becoming more prominent the closer he gets to his team's lane. With gear in tow and spirits high, Henson swings both arms back and bowls a strike, the whooping cries of his peers energizing yet another practice for the school's bowling team.

"I really learned to love bowling," Henson said. "Originally, it was just something I did for fun at birthdays or parties, but the reason I stayed in it was because of the people. They always look out for one another."

The team's final game of the season, played by the varsity girl's team, was the State Championship held in late March. They finished top 20 in the state after placing second in both district and regionals competitions and a season score of 8-2. The varsity boys team finished third in the district with a score of 6-4, and the JV boys team finished first in the district with a sweeping record of 10-0.

"Our coach was so supportive of us," senior Pareeya Ghanaatpishe-Sanani said. "The entire time she was just telling us to

have fun and not to stress ourselves out because in the end, we made it to state. That was what mattered."

While other sports may have teams that only allow the best of the best, head coach and boys var

each team member clapping for every bowler as if they were at an actual tournament. Henson recalls the challenges and dares the boys' team creates to make practices fun and encourage each player to do their best.



Photo by Neal Klapper

**Junior Kaylee Underwood attempts to pick up the 10 pin for the spare at Plano Super Bowl Feb. 12.**

sity coach Dawn Klapper describes it as an opportunity for students to be part of a fun, competitive team, regardless of previous experience.

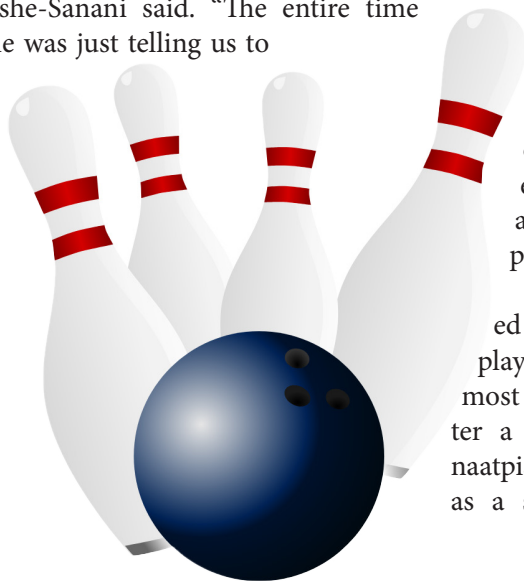
"Anyone can join and I really wish more people did," junior Kaylee Underwood said. "The coaches don't care about experience because they work with you. You don't even have to worry about equipment since we have free access to the bowling equipment people donate to the school."

Practices teach both one-handed and two-handed techniques so players can choose what they are most comfortable with and to foster a healthy team dynamic. Ghanaatpishe-Sanani describes practices as a supportive environment, with

"It's really close knit in the sense that you need to know how everyone reacts to certain things so you can work as a team," Henson said. "It's bowling, you're doing the same thing over and over, so it gets in your head when you're losing. That's why you want to uplift everyone and make sure they're doing the best they can."

As the school year comes to a close, many players hope to see continued success and continued inclusivity as more students are encouraged to join.

"Even though there's separation with the girl's and boy's teams, every one is very close to each other," Underwood said. "There's no judgment if you're bad because we want anyone on the team. If you're willing to join, we're happy that you're there."



# Commercializing Space Travel

Staff Editorial

The industry of private spaceflight has grown more successful in the journey of taking civilians to space, but benefits only a portion of the population at the expense of scientific research and environmental health.

Pollutants and toxic chemicals emit into the atmosphere as a result of vehicle launches into space, both of which have obstructive effects on the environment of not only the Earth, but the stratosphere and ozone layer. The damage to these significant factors of life can be avoided if people didn't choose to go to space just because it happened to be on their bucket list. The potential consequences that consistent space travel and tourism can cause are detrimental to the planet's environment along with everyone on it, and with a lack of knowledge as to how much damage takes place, the underlying issue is even greater.

This opportunity creates further divides as it is most accessible to the wealthy who can afford the high costs of this type of luxurious travel. Granting the privileged regular access to space results in the rest of the population suffering the consequences. These individuals are already more likely to contribute to a bigger carbon footprint given their access to other travel means such as private jets and yachts. As space tourism increases across the globe, more rockets will launch, and studies show that the soot released in every one thousand flights could increase the temperature in Antarctica by about 1 degree Celsius. It seems unfair that this particular group of people gets to create

further environmental harm for a frivolous excursion at the expense of everyone else. Putting these individuals in rockets would simply enhance their already large carbon footprint.

According to a study conducted by the University of Melbourne, only 5% of the universe has been studied, leaving a vast 95% an absolute mystery. Although there is quite a bit of advanced

tle to no chance of failure or risk.

There are however no enforcing factors to stop private space organizations, due to the fact that all of their work and operations are entirely lawful. There are no legal implications of space travel, permitting private spaceflight advocates to justify it as a positive operation that can provide an opportunity to experience the beauty of the outer atmosphere. As for the risk of civilian passengers, the Federal Aviation Administration requires a contract between operators and travelers, making sure that all participants are fully aware of any risks and dangers that may be endured and practically establishes that travelers are at fault in an instance of injury. Since waivers are signed, passengers are unable to claim that private spaceflight companies put their lives at risk, because they were made aware of that risk when boarding the space vehicle. If private space organizations adhere to

all the safety standards and licensing requirements, their enterprises are entirely authorized and warranted.

Space tourism should not be the space industry's top priority, as there is still so much to learn about the outer universe and ways to explore it without harming the planet. Scientists must expand their research and eventually provide the opportunity of space tourism in a safer manner to all people, not just those of higher economic classes.



space technology already, there is still the possibility of failure within the process of traveling into the atmosphere and the machinery used to do so. A lack of knowledge regarding the destination of these commercial space missions clearly renders the concern for taking random civilians there. Focusing on civilian space travel in the industry distracts from the ultimate goals of scientific research that should be prioritized over the traveling aspect. If there is more extensive understanding and research on space, there is a larger capacity in which space travel can be explored with lit-

\* The Panther Prints staff voted unanimously against commercial space travel

# Go Green or Say Goodbye

By Abigail Cardenas

Since the pre-industrial period, global warming has threatened the environment and humans have only worsened its impact with their meaningless actions. Poor air quality, animal habitat destruction and the emission of greenhouse gasses can almost all be tied back to humans, and it is nearly too late to reverse this tragedy. Environmental sustainability is absolutely accessible, even for young, budgeting students, and not pursuing a greener lifestyle is merely inexcusable at this point.

One action students can pursue to reduce their carbon footprint is to make simple moderations in their daily lifestyles such as moving toward reusable products and ensuring recycling when necessary. Less than 30% of plastic bottles end up being recycled, meaning simply utilizing a reusable bottle can prevent an average of 156 plastic bottles annually. Other than plastic water bottles, any reduction in plastic use is much more environmentally friendly. Switching to bamboo toothbrushes, hairbrushes and floss can significantly reduce one's carbon footprint. Toothpaste tabs are hardened tablets that look like mints that can be chewed to turn into foamy toothpaste and they can be purchased through Lush or Byrdie, reducing toothpaste bottle plastic waste. Utilizing reusable bags for groceries can save hundreds of plastic bags each year and buying reusable metal straws can help to reduce single-use plastic straws.

Another accessible alteration is moving toward a plant-based diet. Factory farming, which produces much of the meat students consume, releases more greenhouse gasses than all global transportation combined. In fact, it is the largest source of all carbon emissions. The energy necessary to produce one pound of meat protein

is equal to the energy used to produce 10 pounds of plant protein, helping to decrease energy waste. Cutting out meat consumption, even if only by a few days a week, creates a significant positive impact on the environment. This also comes with personal benefits such as reducing the risk for diabetes and heart disease, and vegetarians generally have a 14% lower cancer rate than regular consumers, according to The Guardian.

Many environmental issues stem from fast fashion, the act of mass-producing trendy clothes for a



cheaper price, which sounds ideal, but realistically takes a major toll on both the workers and the environment. Some major fast fashion companies include SHEIN, H&M, Forever 21, Zara, Hollister and many other major stores seen both in malls and online. It is estimated that this harmful industry produces around 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually, significantly contributing to global warming. Luckily, there are tons of ethical and sustainable clothing brands as well. Some of these include Patagonia, Unspun, Levi's and Polo Ralph Lauren. Understandably, many ethical brands are less affordable because producing sustainably can become costly. Luckily, there are many other ways to shop sustainably. Buying clothing secondhand reduces any carbon emissions, as production has

already occurred. There are numerous online secondhand clothing websites, such as Depop and Poshmark, where sellers list their clothing for buyers to purchase. Plano houses numerous nearby thrift stores and other shops such as Uptown Cheapskate and Plato's Closet that resale used clothing items.

Many people find sustainability unattainable due to the prospective costs, believing that investing in environmentally friendly products and a healthy meat-reduced lifestyle will take a toll on one's bank account. However, utilizing reusable products not only saves the environment but is a lasting financial choice. Investing in a \$40 HydroFlask is much more sustainable and worthwhile than purchasing a \$2 water bottle from the school vending machine daily. Vegetarianism and veganism are also accessible to anybody willing to reduce their meat consumption. There are numerous cheap plant proteins such as chickpeas and oats, and fresh vegetables are worth the investment. Many fast-food restaurants recently released plant-based alternatives such as McDonald's new McPlant and Starbucks' Impossible breakfast sandwich.

With eco-friendliness becoming increasingly accessible, there is no excuse to make environmentally harmful decisions. Every little action can either benefit or threaten the future of the environment and being unconscious of daily actions can significantly impact generations to come. Climate scientists assert that if we do not reduce global warming by 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2040, we should expect daily tragedies such as droughts, wildfires and shorter life expectancies. At this point, it is only selfish to consciously make poor environmental choices. It's time to go green before it's too late.

# Making Memories

## Seniors Celebrate Last Year of High School

By Abby Nguyen

As seniors approach the end of their high school careers, many plan to celebrate the close of a major chapter in their lives. Whether it's visiting family abroad, taking a trip with friends, or throwing a graduation party, these memories will last for the rest of their high school experience and beyond.

### How are you celebrating the end of the school year?

"My family and I are going to India and we're going for about four weeks. We're going to visit family to spend time with my grandparents, cousins and extended family because we haven't been [there] since pre-pandemic. We're not only celebrating graduation but also to meet up with family because, throughout the pandemic, so much has changed. I'm looking forward to [the trip] to destress, get back to a clean slate, and get ready for college."

- Kirti Moteka

"I just want to celebrate myself for graduating and have time to spend with family and friends. We all know that life can become crazy, and after all this chaos, a party would fit just perfectly. [Graduation] is also something that my parents are really proud of, and they are very excited. I'm excited to see everyone there have a good time."

### How are you celebrating the end of the school year?

"There's about 10 of us, and we're all pitching in to go to Austin and stay at an Airbnb. Every day we're going to do activities like go to Lady Bird Lake, go hiking, take pictures, play card games, and stay up really late. It's basically our first time out as adults alone in the city."

- Grace Phan

"I'm pretty sure all of us are going to different colleges so it's like a last hoorah. It's the first and last time we're hanging out together as adults with no parental supervision. It's a good end to a chapter, and we're ending on a good note."

### How are you celebrating the end of the school year?

"After graduation, I plan on throwing a party and celebrating with family and friends. I'm having the party in my backyard. We're thinking of getting a taco truck and have everyone enjoy that. There will be tables so we will just be hanging out and talking with each other. I have different friend groups spread apart, but I will try to be with everyone and play card games, eat a bunch of snacks and dance if people are feeling it."

- Yovani Martinez

"I just want to celebrate myself for graduating and have time to spend with family and friends. We all know that life can become crazy, and after all this chaos, a party would fit just perfectly. [Graduation] is also something that my parents are really proud of, and they are very excited. I'm excited to see everyone there have a good time."

After spending a school year online and not being able to attend in-person school everyday last year, this year gave seniors one last chance to have a memorable school experience in person with friends and peers. This year's senior class deserves to celebrate all their hard work and perseverance not only throughout the pandemic but also throughout the past twelve years of school, while preparing to start the next chapter of their lives.



# Summer Days, Summer Nights

## Four Ways to Spend Your Break

By Sydnie Grayson

### Meadows Museum



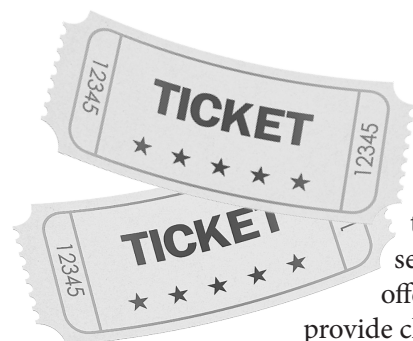
The Meadows Museum, located near Highland Park on the Southern Methodist University campus, is university-owned and showcases artists such as Francisco Goya and other Hispanic artists of the 15th to 20th centuries. Current and upcoming exhibitions include an artist spotlight on Ignasi Aballi until June 26, “Masterpiece in Residence” highlighting Juan Sanchez Cotan’s still life until June 26 and “Murillo: Picturing the Prodigal Son” until June 12. While there is no dining inside the museum, there are places on campus at the Hughes-Trigg Student Center, which is a 10-minute walk from the museum. Admission for non-SMU students is \$4, adults are \$12, seniors aged 65 and up are \$10 and nights are free for all on Thursdays.

### The Spin Coffee and Vinyl

The Spin Coffee and Vinyl is both a coffee shop and a record store. Located on the corner of Preston and McCallum Road, tucked away and nondescript, the vibe of the store is laid-back and chill. Records that you are able to look through and purchase cover the walls of the dining area. Their menu includes different kinds of hot coffee, cold coffee and espresso shots such as cortado and cold brew. Although the building is average in size, the place offers a great deal of friendliness through their workers and the atmosphere welcomes anyone who walks in. It’s the perfect place to relax and listen to your favorite music on vinyl with a cup of coffee.



### Movies in the Park Shakespeare Dallas



Shakespeare Dallas performing arts group hosts Movies in the Park where they show popular movies on the Samuell-Grand lawn. Some of these movies include “10 Things I Hate About You” and “The Karate Kid.” Tickets for each person are \$15 and the seating is first come, first serve. While the individual tickets are \$15, they offer a VIP pavilion at \$175 for up to 10 guests in a covered seating area. The gates open at 7:30 p.m. and the movies start at 8:15 p.m. They offer nights where you can enjoy a movie and bring your dog, although they do not provide chairs and blankets so they encourage guests to bring their own. It’s a great space to watch movies outside of your home or the movie theater where you can enjoy nature and one of your favorite films.

### Kinokuniya Plano

Kinokuniya Plano is a book, stuffed animal and stationary store located near Kura Revolving Sushi Bar and Ari Korean BBQ on Legacy Drive in the Mitsuwa Marketplace.

Although it is a relatively small establishment, there are a variety of fruitful products and the staff is friendly to any and everyone. This store is very colorful and entertaining and their products are predominantly Japanese, but the books are in both English and Japanese including both freelance reading and scholastic learning books. The stationary section of the store is great for either drawing or sketching and note-taking for school.

Their products are organized in a manner that allows for finding exactly what you are looking for.



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