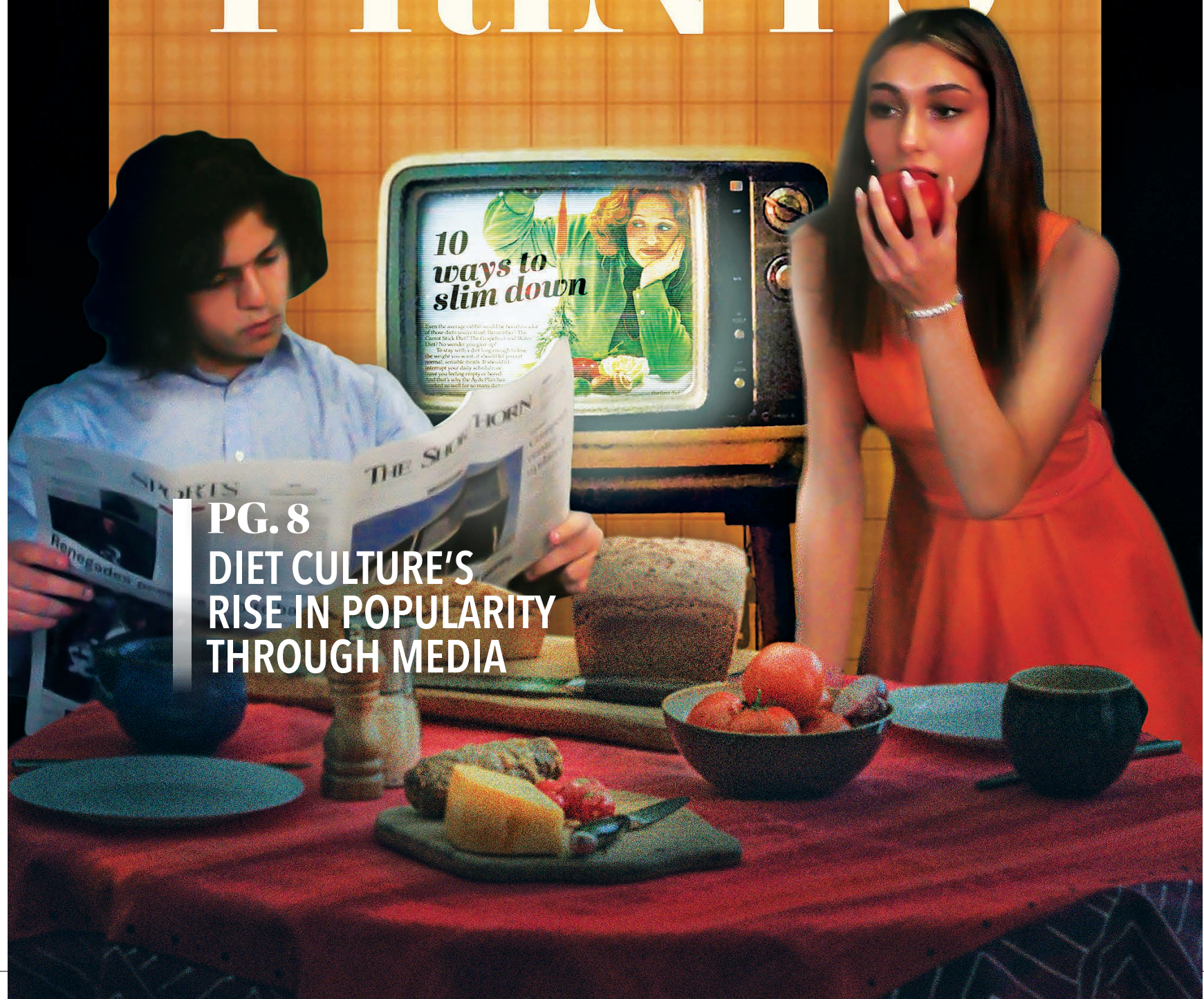


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ISSUE 3

PANTHER PRINTS



PG. 8
DIET CULTURE'S
RISE IN POPULARITY
THROUGH MEDIA

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LETTERS FROM THE CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Diving into the third nine weeks of the year, this issue was an overall great experience as the team dynamic was able to grow into something I wasn't expecting. Working with the staff has been like working with a family; I am so grateful for the long-lasting bond that I've created. I would like to thank all of the staff members for being so resilient and understanding, especially as we near the end of the year. I hope everyone has a great spring break and thank you to all of our readers for showing us their unconditional support.

Although every day is full of new work to do, the moments I spent working on design was both a form of pleasure and relief. With only one grading period left, I'm cheering on my fellow seniors in hopes that we can all finish this chapter in our lives with no regrets. Throughout your busy schedules, I hope that while reading this issue, even for a brief moment, will bring a form of enjoyment or interest in your life. Have a great spring break.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editor,

I loved the student creations story. I liked how you talked about the background of someone's art and how they got into it. It's important to see these young artists express themselves and get the exposure they need. The story was well detailed, informative and says a lot about the young students' life.

- Jonathan Martin Del Campo, 11

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.

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

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Puzzled Panthers

By Sydnie Grayson

Are seniors required to attend school on SAT day if they are not taking the test?

Seniors are not required to attend school until the SAT testing is over. The testing should be over by approximately the third period, in which all students should be on campus by fourth period.

"I know they don't come in the morning because that's when the 11th graders are testing," IB counselor Temie Lehman said. "They are going to have to come for half of the day."

Are students able to change their schedule once it is submitted?

Once the counselors meet with individuals about their schedules for the upcoming year, the deadline to change it is May 5.

"After that, they're stuck with whatever they choose," Lehman said. "We like them to make sure they pick smart classes and [ones] that they want to take."

What are the requirements to graduate high school in Texas?

In Texas, 26 credits are required to graduate high school. These credits must include 0.5 credit of professional communications, physical education, government and economics. As for core classes, four credits are required for math, English, history and science, as well as two credits of a foreign language.

Prom: Night to Remember

By Michelle Mendez-Arreaga

Prom is just around the corner as the senior class officers and Associate Principal Robert Eppler prepare to give seniors a memorable night. They've had several meetings to make the event happen, and on the night of April 1, it will all finally come together.

"In December, the officers [started] discussing themes for prom," Eppler said. "After they've narrowed it down, they take a field trip to where it will take place. In late January, they [sent] out examples of what they are envisioning to the coordinators. From then on, they sell tickets in February."

Prom will take place at the Plano Event Center this year at 8-11 p.m. The senior class officers have contact with the designer and coordinator to know how much they need to spend. After finalizing the ideas, the officers start publicizing on social media to reach out to the students.

"They can contact us through our Instagram @peshseniors if they have any questions, ideas or concerns," senior vice president Katie Do said.

This year, the theme is set to be Old Hollywood. Inspired by the Met Gala, decorations will consist of Hollywood red carpets, film and cinema. The theme was chosen because of its versatility.

"With Old Hollywood, you're able to dress with the theme but [also] allowed to come as you are, which is why we like it so much," Do said. "It's all about the glamor and the sparkles. If you want it to go a little bit more in theme, it'd be around lace or pearls. However, if you want it to be more in the times, people would like the corsets [and] silk."

Attendees believe that this year's theme allows them to come in style.

"I love the concept of Old Hollywood; it is very classic and elegant," senior Angela Lac said. "I am expecting people to wear fur coats and white gloves. I am super excited to see how everyone dresses up for the occasion."

This prom will focus more on the student body's opinions. Additionally, unlike previous years, this prom will be


led up by a prom week. Students will have the chance to dress up for themes given on certain days of the week, similar to homecoming week. Students will be able to suggest prom week theme ideas, what kind of food they'd like at prom, and what kind of music they want to hear, through google forms. The goal is for students to feel just as part of the planning as the officers are.

"Hopefully we hear Spanish music since homecoming didn't really have that," senior Jonathan Perez said. "I am planning on recommending music so we have more of a diverse playlist."

As for tickets, it is recommended to purchase them prior to the day of on the HometownTicketing website. Students must use their student ID as the passcode to purchase tickets. Each ticket costs \$45 if purchased beforehand, and \$55 if purchased at the door the day of prom. Students attending are allowed to bring one guest under the age of 21.

"This is a once in a lifetime event for us as seniors," Do said. "I have the pleasure of being able to plan it and use my ideas. I feel like I have a voice, but it's not just for us [officers]; it's for everyone. It's for all the seniors and their guests, and we want them to feel open and invited to help out. We are hoping that they enjoy themselves."





Speaker Kevin McCarthy speaks to reporters on Jan. 24 during his third news conference of the 118th Congress.

Photo from the U.S. House of Representatives

History Made During House Speaker Election

By Varsha Jhanak

On Jan. 7, Republican Kevin McCarthy was elected Speaker of the House after a staggering 15 rounds of voting. The election proved to be historic as it was the first time in a century that a House speaker election took multiple ballots to complete. The Republican Party's division over whether McCarthy should be elected House speaker caused the multiple rounds of voting.

"With Democrats and Pelosi, even though not everyone in the Democratic party liked Pelosi, they knew that unity was important in order to get things done," junior Harper Whittemore said. "However, with this election, the big issue wasn't both parties; it was within the Republican party. Because of all of the instability, McCarthy's issue was his own party, the people who were theoretically supposed to support him."

To begin, party members nominate their chosen candidate for the speakership. Then, a roll call vote is held, in which representatives will answer "yea" or "nay" to a candidate. To be elected as House speaker, the candidate must earn the majority of the votes from the members who are voting. Usually, elections are decided through one round of voting, making this year's election extremely different from others.

"I think with this [election], you had a lot of things coming in," AP U.S. history teacher Sarah Fischer said. "One:

Republicans coming back in to have the majority within the House. Two: it had been a while since the Republicans had that. You had so many different factions within the Republican party on how to deal with everything. McCarthy had to really think 'How in the world can I navigate these two sides' plus bring in the legislation we want to have processed."

This year's process of choosing a House speaker posed a challenge as rep-

"Even if you don't like the current people in power, it's necessary that the government functions."

- junior Harper Whittemore

resentatives could not be sworn in until the speaker was elected. Because of this, the House of Representatives could not do their job until the election was over. Currently, the Senate and the White House remain under Democratic control. However, the Republicans control the House of Representatives by a narrow 10 seats with Republicans making up 50.6% of the House. Republican Matt Gaetz, a member of the ultra conservative Freedom Caucus in Florida, mocked McCarthy for being an illegitimate squatter after he moved his belong-

ings into the speaker's office. Dan Crenshaw, a Texas representative, referred to Gaetz and his holdouts as childish.

"It's not something we necessarily want to think about," Whittemore said. "It is very likely that elections like this could possibly become more common in the near future. But, if you consider it, it's deeply worrying for the future of our government. Even if you don't like the current people in power, it's necessary that the government functions. The entire situation is worrying for the future of our government and the way our country is going to be run."

In recent years, teenagers began to believe that their votes do not have any effect on the government. In a study done by the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics, 42% of students believed that their votes don't make a difference. In addition, 56% of students agree that politics today cannot help the challenges our country is facing.

"It's so important for us to be able to have that conversation and to see that [the] government works," Fischer said. "It may not have been smooth, but this is the democratic process and we got an answer in the end. People compromise, not in a neat little bow kind of compromise, but they did compromise in the end and isn't that what our government is supposed to do?"

*Math teacher Doris Kottwitz grades papers during her lunch break on Feb. 8.
Photo by Sumayya Ali*

Childhood Fantasies to Reality

Teacher of the Year Winner: Doris Kottwitz

By Sumayya Ali

Whispers filled with anticipation circulate the auditorium as Principal George King adjusts the microphone, preparing to present this school year's "Teacher of the Year" winner. The room bursts with applause as math teacher Doris Kottwitz's name is announced.

"I [felt] disbelief," Kottwitz said. "There are a lot of good teachers here, [so] I guess I thought someone else would get it. I was quite shocked."

The results for "Teacher of the Year" are announced during both the A lunch and B lunch faculty meetings. Since Kottwitz attended the second meeting, staff members who attended the first meeting were sworn to secrecy.

"[When] they announced her [name], she was very surprised," math teacher Linda Becker said. "[It] was very exciting and we are all so happy for her because she really deserves it."

Becker teaches precalculus and Honors Algebra two and has known Kottwitz for seven years.

"[Kottwitz] has been here a long time," Becker said. "[She] knows everything there is to know. Anyone on the [math] team that has questions about math or how to do anything at a really high level, she knows it all. We all really love her and respect her."

From a young age, Kottwitz was accustomed to taking an import-

ant position in the classroom. She recalls constantly insisting on taking the role of a teacher by instructing and guiding others around her.

"I always wanted to be a teacher, even when I was little," Kottwitz said. "My nickname was 'little judge.' I was always teaching and judging what [everyone] was doing, even as a little kid."

Kottwitz teaches AP Calculus and Dual Credit Multivariable and Differential Equations and has been teaching at the school since 1988, seven years after the school originally opened. Even now, she describes her students as her greatest joy in teaching.

"What I [like] most, is when the light goes on," Kottwitz said. "All of a sudden you can see [students] getting it. When you start seeing the look on their face, that 'ah ha.' I love that moment [and] watching it."

Her love for teaching and connection with students ensures her classroom is an engaging environment. Senior Otto Beall, a member of the math club, has known Kottwitz since his freshman year. This year he's enrolled in her Multivariable Calculus class.

"She approaches every new concept from the perspective of a student trying to solve a new problem," Beall said. "Rather than giving us the formulas, pasting them on the screen or asking us

to write them down, she actually gives us problems we don't know how to solve and gives us hints. Her [teaching style] is really all about building intuition before memorizing the concepts."

Kottwitz's distinct teaching style is not the only thing that makes her class captivating for students.

"I think it's important to mention that she has a good sense of humor," Beall said. "Being in class with her it's almost like a back and forth [discussion]. Our class especially, people are always cracking jokes and she's okay with it because she can kind of snap back with a good comeback. It's a very lively class setting and that's what I enjoy about it; we're having fun but we're learning a lot at the same time."

But the road to getting here was not an easy one, for teachers, managing a classroom and improving their craft takes hard work and resilience. Kottwitz is always trying to improve and get feedback from others.

"Be willing to seek advice, be willing to seek help if you need it," Kottwitz said. "Even if you think you don't, talking to someone about something, just saying it out loud, and bouncing ideas off of someone [helps]. That's true no matter how long you've taught. I think it's [important] to try and improve every year."

PANTHER PROFILE

Making Memories with Music

By Kayla Vu

The sound of a violin cuts into the silence as the reverberation of other stringed instruments gradually joins in. With the strike of the drums, the entire orchestra bursts into sound, performing Sarah Kirkland Snider's composition, "Something for the Dark." Among the sea of musicians, senior Solomon Makonnen plays his bass clarinet, filling the room with a melodic atmosphere.

"Honestly, none of it hit me until my old band director from McMillen came up behind me after the concert [and] then I just started crying," Makonnen said. "He's been there since I've been absolutely horrible on my instrument and then he was there to see what I was finally able to do. It was sad, happy and frustrating all at the same time."

On Feb. 11, Makonnen played in the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All-State Symphony Orchestra at the Lila Cockrell Theatre in San Antonio. Within the district, 55 students qualified for the TMEA All-State with 12 of those musicians coming from this school. In early January, Makonnen placed as the number one bass clarinet player in the state.

"Him making first in the state is just incredible," McMillen band director Josh Kurzweil said. "When he told me he did fairly well on his recordings and wanted to share them with me, I was like 'this sounds really good,' but I didn't know how it would fare against the other bass clarinets of Texas. It's an incredible honor. I'm so proud of him, and I can't wait to see what he does beyond [high school]."

Although Makonnen made it to All-State playing the bass clarinet, he also plays several more instruments including the trumpet, piano, bass guitar, three different clarinets and four different saxophones. Makonnen's family on his



Senior Solomon Makonnen practices his bass clarinet on Feb. 17. The weekend prior to this, Makonnen played in the Texas Music Educators Association All-State Symphony Orchestra in San Antonio.

paternal side is part of the reason for his musical passion. Despite his grandfather's main job being a pilot in Ethiopia, he still bestowed an adoration for music to his 11 children, encouraging all of them to play at least one instrument. One of Makonnen's uncles, Dereje (DJ) Makonnen, went on to devote his life to music; he ended up winning two Grammys with Ziggy Marley as the pianist for the Best Reggae Album in 1989 with the album, "Conscious Party."

"Music is just in my family," Makonnen said. "In order to understand why I even learned and how I learned it is because my family is huge on music. Every time I hear an instrument, I'm like 'can I learn that instrument and fit that into a different sound?' A majority of it was just me being self-taught and learning how to read sheet music."

In his sophomore year, Makonnen received the recognition of a TMEA All-State musician, playing the contrabass clarinet. However, once Makonnen reached his junior year, he struggled to meet his expectations.

"I was kind of riding high and I took it too far in the ego department," Makonnen said. "That was my lowest point where I thought 'am I really the musician I think I am?' I think my maturity level has gone through the roof since last year. I finally recognized that com-

petitions aren't always about competing against each other, but instead making friends that make you work harder."

Through all of his experiences from reaching All-State to joining a Baylor University band camp, Makonnen tries to connect with other musicians and people. Senior Victoria Hartman, Makonnen's friend and a fellow member of band, describes him as an outgoing individual.

"He's one of those friends that even though I haven't talked to them in a while, I can still strike a conversation like nothing has changed," Hartman said. "He always looks his best or tries to exude confidence even if he's having a bad day or he's always trying to make people smile to put a smile on his own face."

After high school, Makonnen plans to study neuroscience and pursue a career as an established doctor. Despite his goals to follow down the medical route, Makonnen still has aspirations to return to school to receive a degree in music education and continue to play music throughout his life.

"This is just who he's meant to be," Kurzweil said. "He always had this sort of potential and to see him reach that was just fantastic. He takes his music just so seriously and that's the best part as a teacher: to watch them take themselves to the next level. It was always neat to be even just the smallest part of that journey."

Photos from Unsplash

Diet Culture's Rise in Popularity Through Media

By Aveesa Bhayani and Sydnie Grayson

Warning: This article includes topics regarding eating disorders and dieting.

Dieting in the media, especially through celebrities, emerged as a way to promote certain body types. As social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, rise in popularity, teenagers have been watching celebrities enhance or adjust their body to modern beauty standards. According to the Mayo Clinic, teenagers and young adults are more susceptible to dieting and eating disorders.

"I think [with] social media in general, there's such a standard of beauty," Lifetime Wellness and Nutrition teacher Megan Abernathy. "I really think that affects mental health especially for people from the ages of 12 to 24 because their brains are still developing. They're basing a lot of themselves on social media and what they see."

Dieting Trends in History

In ancient Greek times, dieting was used as a way to promote calmness through moderation and regulation of food. Aside from the Greeks, diets were also popularized in the 1900s. In the 1930s, the Hollywood or grapefruit diet was promoted, claiming that eating a grapefruit a day would lead to weight loss in 12 days. It based itself on the fact that the citrus from the grapefruit helps to burn fat from the body; these claims had no evidence,

so this diet trend died out. Another diet, invented by Dr. Sanford Siegal, was called the cookie diet. Publicized in the 1970s, it required an individual to consume one to two 'special' cookies for breakfast and lunch while keeping dinner at 500 to 750 calories. Once again, this diet fad claimed to keep the metabolism rate from slowing down while also controlling hunger.

"This generation is definitely more health conscious than my generation,"

"From an early age, we learn that people-pleasing and conforming is the way we get what we need. It feels safe to fit in and scary to stand out."

- dietician Jessica Setnick

dance teacher Mackenzie McCall said. "I did not think about less sodium or going to the gym. I know that sounds silly, but like we just went to Whataburger. We just didn't think about all of that."

Diet culture is defined as the assumption that bodily appearance and food diets are of greater importance than physical and mental well-being. There are different kinds of diets including liquid diets, cleanses and celebrity diets. The 'Era of Extremes' is a term coined to the 2010s where diets grow to the extreme by eliminating whole food groups from an individual's pal-

ette. Celebrities like the Kardashians and the Jenners promote body standards and diets, such as intermittent fasting, through their social media platforms.

"Models are the standard of beauty especially now that Tiktok influencers [and] Instagram influencers are becoming bigger like celebrities basically," Abernathy said. "It all has to do with their looks. I think that's a big reason that a lot of kids around the high school age group [are] trying to fit in. They see those models as what they're supposed to look like to fit in."

In America, this fad of dieting became more prevalent with one in two teenage girls and one in four teenage boys attempting to diet or lose weight to change physical appearance, according to Caring For Kids. There are several factors that affect this, including being unhappy with someone's weight, having lower self-esteem, and feeling less control in one's life as claimed by the National Library of Medicine.

"Part of our nature is wanting to fit in," dietician Jessica Setnick said. "From an early age, we learn that people-pleasing and conforming is the way we get what we need. It feels safe to fit in and scary to stand out."

Progression of American Food Culture

In a world filled with social expectations, there comes a time when those expectations become unattainable; a fine line between impossible and 'try hard-

@PESHPRINTS

er.' A dancer can bend her body to limits most would never dream of, but the strength of her body is only as strong as her mind as she faces the internal struggle most teenagers face today.

Everyday, students of every size, shape and color walk the halls of the school. A study by the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders says that 11% of these students will be or already are diagnosed with an eating disorder; of these students, 42% are athletes.

"It really does stress [my] mind out because I always have to worry about being on weight,"

junior wrestler Jonathan Oren said. "I feel like the type of culture that we're in right now, to just get some fast food and call it a day is really tough on someone like me [who is] just trying to stay healthy and maintain weight."

Senior Noah Gamadia struggles with the opposite problem as the struggle of conformity clashes with his natural genetics. As an individual with high metabolism, Gamadia follows a strict, protein-heavy diet. To help bulk up, he eats seven meals a day and works out daily.

"As a teenager, I try to fit in as much as I can, looking a certain way or being strong or [playing] the role that I have to play as a teenager," Gamadia said, "I eat a lot and barely gain any weight. I go to the gym as much as I can, but there's not really much I can do."

As a direct result of the American capitalist society, the classic fast food culture is sold to consumers in super sized value meals. The appeal of 'the best bang for your buck' is a large factor in the toxicity of diet culture. A study at the University of North Carolina shows that portion sizes have increased 226% from 1986 to 2016. When it became evident the population wasn't rising at the rate food was being produced, chain restaurants began supersizing meals to sell more food for less money. This contributes to the contradictory correlation between body standards and fast food seen in the U.S.

"That's why it has to be sold to us, because it's so unnatural, but it's easy to believe," Setnick said. "Advertising is not so much about defining the features of a product but rather to play on your emotions of wanting to fit in and feel comfortable."

Fast food can be seen at almost every intersection; the quick rise of fast food is largely due to an increase of advertising. An exposure to a multitude of ads increases the probability of unhealthy consumption by 30%. Advertisements' ability to prey on insecurities normalizes the connection between emotions and food,

76% of students think social media more negatively affects body standards

9% of students think social media more positively affects body standards

8% of students don't use social media

7% of students chose not to comment

**out of 320 students polled*

thus the introduction movie cliché of eating ice cream out of a tub after a break up.

"It's almost like there's no choice but to see it," senior Abigail McManus said. "You see it on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Tik Tok. You see it on all these social media platforms and now you can't even tell it's an ad half the time."

Battle of Genetics

The push and pull to achieve 'the perfect body' is a fragile dance between health and beauty. However, chasing the next big cure for body dysmorphia does not change the fact that a 'one size fits all' does not in fact fit all. The reality of this fact puts emotional strain on a teenager's relationship between food and mental health.

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"[Weight watching] has taken a pretty heavy toll because I really want a cheeseburger," Oren said. "But I would say it really is rewarding to see how far I've come. I've started from being quite chubby to becoming a little bit happier with the way I am, so it's really helped with my mental image."

Weight cycling is a particularly adverse effect of modern diet culture. The process of losing weight in a short amount of time only to gain it all back is often seen in athletes. According to Setnick, when gaining weight, plaque builds up in the arteries, and when that weight is then lost, the plaque does not decrease. When an individual once again gains weight, more plaque accumulates, leading to a decline in cardiovascular health. While many see weight loss as cutting back on food, there are many ways to healthily lose and maintain weight.

"Personally, I don't like cutting down on food because I live for food, so I would say exercise or take it one step at a time," freshman Az-Zahra Ali said. "If you're trying to work towards [weight loss] I'm pretty sure [you'll] be dedicated."

The 'holy grail' diet of an influencer is not a direct translation to the diet that works for a viewer's body. Genetics make up about 80% of a person's bodily physique according to NBC news, proving that what works on one person's body will not necessarily work for someone else.

"Everybody takes different vitamins for their level of weight and what they can handle," McManus said. "With exercise too, everyone works out different amounts for your specific body mass. So why is that different for food? Why is it different for what you want to eat, if that's what you enjoy you should do that."



Gym Culture's Prevalence in Society

By Varsha Jhanak

Fitness and gym culture have always been prevalent in society with people always wanting to improve their bodies and cultivate healthy habits. Fitness culture dates back to ancient Greece as the country is the root of the modern health club or gym. The rise of the fitness industry came when body builders such as Joe Gold and Arnold Schwarzenegger popularized bodybuilding. In fact, Joe Gold established one of the most successful gyms, Gold's Gym, in 1965. Fitness and gym culture evolved over time and adapted with the internet as at-home workouts became prevalent on platforms such as Youtube.

"I've played baseball all my life and the only way to get better at baseball, at a certain point, is in the weight room," junior Joshua Marentes. "[Gym culture] is when you go into the gym and you can put all your stresses and anxieties on the bar. I usually go with my friends and it really connects people."

In recent years, a gender gap at gyms came into the light. According to the CDC, globally, women are less likely than men to get enough exercise. In a report done by NPR, 77% of men reported physical activity and 66.9% of women reported physical activity.

"[Gym culture] is kind of gendered," junior Arin Meeks said. "There's a lot of gender insecurity in that. For guys, it's more of a friendly environment. It's almost solitary though, and in general American culture, guys are more likely to go to the gym. I very rarely see girls, but when I do see girls, they're already fit or they do a lot of cardio. Gym culture is more social based."

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), negative gym environments can cause exercise addiction, appearance anxiety and body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). With the spread of fitness culture, many people criticized its toxicity. On social media, unhealthy fitness and weight loss techniques, such as strict fluid di-

ets and extreme carb

tions but you're still pushing yourself. It releases a lot of hormones too, like serotonin increases and cortisol decreases. It's just overall a good environment."

Gym culture is different for each person, but its mental and health effects are undeniable. According to a survey done by Better, a charitable social enterprise that provides services to the community, health, and leisure sectors,

41.8% of people went to the gym to improve their mental health. Science proves that exercising and going to the gym is extremely beneficial. According to the CDC, benefits include reducing health risks, strengthening bones and muscles, and increasing chances of living longer.

"It can be negative for some people if they have body dysmorphia but mostly it helps peo-

ple," Marentes. "I'm definitely a lot more confident. It also helps with staying focused on a task for a long period. It helped me become a better person."

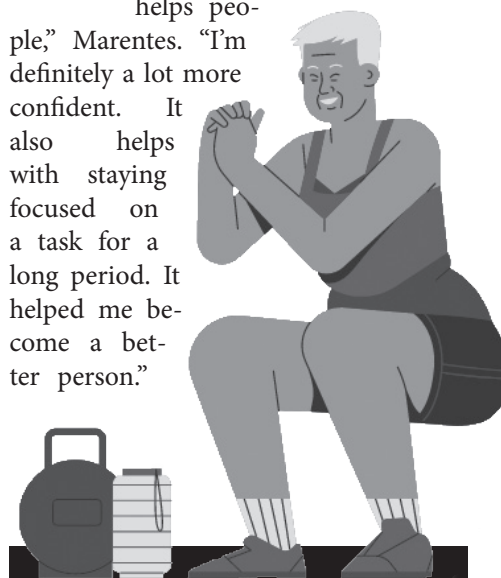
"When [fitness influencers] become something that you become influenced by, it can lead to a lot of unhealthy habits and self-confidence issues."

- junior Arin Meeks

deficits, are promoted by influencers. "It used to be magazines, but now it's fitness influencers," Meeks said. "You see them with super toned abs and you feel like 'that should be me.' When [fitness influencers] become something that you become influenced by, it can lead to a lot of unhealthy habits and self-confidence issues."


Going to the gym does have its fair share of benefits depending on how a person perceives it. According to the CDC, being physically active can improve brain health, help manage weight, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve the ability to do everyday activities.

"It's not so much about the looks and being toned, at least for me," Meeks said. "I just think that I've liked exercising when I'm stressed out or something. I think that this is more of an individual thing and you don't have to rely on other people or a coach or anything, you go at your own pace. Of course, the muscle part is fun but it's really just a mental release. It's pretty simple ac-



25%
of adults are not
active enough to
protect their health

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2022



Junior Jordan Mizell plays in the varsity basketball game on Jan. 20, defeating Flower Mound High School 74-45.

Photo by Aveesa Bhayani

Men's Basketball Team Camaraderie Fosters Success

By Maryam Ahmed

The men's varsity basketball team had a particularly successful season this year, winning 31 out of 36 games and beating several top ranked high schools. The team's success this year is mostly owing to a stronger sense of community among the players, a bond that only strengthens in the face of adversity and pressure.

"We had a really good season last year," varsity assistant coach Mark Lambert said. "We just missed the playoffs and coming back this year, we feel like we could make a really nice run into the playoffs."

An unusual feature of the men's varsity basketball team this year is the lack of seniors in comparison to previous years. Out of the 12 players, there are nine juniors, two seniors, and one sophomore.

"Our seniors are still leaders, but our junior class has stepped up to be leaders with our seniors," junior player Isaiah Brewington said. "Everyone [has] just come together."

Despite the younger makeup of the team, these players have all been together since middle school, contributing to a team dynamic that facilitates efficient communication on the court.

"I think chemistry played a really big role in our team's success this year," junior Jordan Mizell said. "If you can't really trust your teammates, you might not be willing to make the extra pass or be willing to trust them on defense."

This team chemistry is very evident in their track record this season, as they beat highly ranked schools this year that they typically don't beat, such as Coppell High School with a score of 79-68, and Warren High School with a score of 57-46.

"We beat three top ranked teams in two days," Brewington said. "I thought that showed how good of a team we actually are this year."

The team's success also comes at a time when the world is slowly lifting itself out of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased the opportunities available to the team for higher level basketball.

"This year we've gotten more opportunities for exposure," Brewington said. "There have been more scouts and writers coming to see us because we've been winning so many games, and that wasn't really the case last year because of COVID."

Aside from the increased publicity, the pandemic subsiding means the team is able to return to running their practices the way they used to before COVID-19 hit in 2020.

"With less of COVID, we can get into the gym more often and in bigger groups instead of having to worry about people being vaccinated and people having to quarantine," Mizell said.

Although the team won a vast majority of their games this season, they were not without their challenges. For

instance, junior Rachard Angton tore his ACL before the season even began.

"Everyone was upset about it because they're really close and [Angton] was going to be an integral part of the team," Lambert said. "We hadn't started playing games at that point, and there was all this worry of what we were going to do."

Even though the camaraderie among the players was vital to their success, it made it all the more difficult to have Angton benched before the season started. In the long run however, the rest of the team was able to step up and have a successful season.

"We knew he was going to be a big part of our team and our success, but we've been there for him and we understand that he'll get better soon," Brewington said. "We're more playing for him because I know he wishes he could be playing with us."

The men's varsity basketball team was able to come together in the face of adversity and their long-standing team dynamic pushed them to be one of the top schools in the district.

"My mindset is 'let's keep winning, let's keep being the best,' and that's the rest of the team's mindset as well," Brewington said.

Ignorance Becomes Arrogance

Cultural Appropriation Inexcusable

Staff Editorial

As the internet developed and spread, cultural practices rich with history and symbolism began to receive increased popularity on social media. While this can be considered a good thing, more often than not, these practices are ridiculed, exploited or misused under the guise of ignorance.

The most common breeding ground for cultural appropriation is social media. Traditional practices are rebranded as “trends” and “aesthetics” and exploited for money or fame. Examples include the “clean girl” and “brownie-glazed lips” trends where beauty practices commonly used by people of color gained popularity and were renamed. Not only were they rebranded, but credit was also not given. These trends also reinforce harmful stereotypes. Other trends contain more damaging undertones, such as the “Arabian Nights” aesthetic where people would dress up in religious and cultural clothing and switch to revealing outfits draped in gold while dancing to music. This is disrespectful to various cultures and religions. All of these trends are prime examples of picking

what people choose to accept. When a practice is considered “trendy,” individuals participate and further alter the tradition, not questioning the significance behind what they’re participating in.

This isn’t limited to the internet, with events such as Coachella, performers and attendees wear bindis, a Hindu religious marking that signifies a person is married. In the past, attendees also wore Native war paint, feathered headpieces, and traditionally black hairstyles while refusing to understand the disrespect they are demonstrating. From Kendall Jenner

wearing a bindi to Alessandra Ambrosio wearing a Native American headdress, traditional clothing should never be worn lightly. Dating back centuries, people conserved and honored their sacred practices. For celebrities to wear such significant pieces of clothing as decoration and statement pieces is an insult to everyone who respected and protected their cultures for so long. A survey done by YPulse, a data collection site for youth,

shows a constant exhibition of cultural appropriation.

Not only does this show blatant disrespect, but also a refusal to learn. In a day and age where culture and information can be spread with a few clicks on the internet, important information and history can be accessed easily. Websites such as Groundwork for Change and Native Appropriations are only two sources from many that offer in-depth information on cultural appreciation and appropriation boundaries.

While an argument can be made that the majority of rural areas are homogeneous in culture therefore sufficient exposure and education are unavailable; however, this doesn’t disprove the fact that the internet in the U.S. is widely accessible. With easily accessible web pages and articles in multiple languages, cultural appropriation should not be as large of an issue as it is. If a brand or individual is unaware of the history of a product that is being released or consumed, they are also unaware of the damage it may cause. If they are capable of producing and promoting their products at a large scale, they can afford to conduct their research or

ask people of the respective culture. This doesn’t mean people cannot take part in other cultures, there is just a way to do so respectfully. Such as Angelina Jolie’s visit to Afghanistan, where she wore traditional Afghani clothing after taking an interest when seeing the locals. In the future, individuals and organizations should conduct their research before producing a cultural product. In the time we live in now, ignorance is no longer an excuse.

**The Panther Prints staff voted 5-2, with majority opinion believing that ignorance is not a valid excuse for cultural appropriation*



presents that 64% of teenagers acknowledge that cultural appropriation is a significant problem in the United States and that it’s most commonly found in various brands. Popular brands such as Gucci have been called out for cultural appropriation. Gucci continuously held mostly white runways and exhibited cultural clothing on their models. Oftentimes, these models will be displaying cornrows, dreads or other hairstyles not fit for their hair type and not from their culture. The use of African culture despite the refusal to hire and respect black models is a con-

Corrupt Consumption Continues

By Michelle Mendez-Arreaga

Nowadays brands such as Shein, Romwe and ASOS have been growing because of their affordability and aesthetically appealing clothes. Social platforms such as TikTok and Pinterest have been notable for bringing attention to these brands, so it's no surprise that they continue to thrive. Their customers resume to promote them, unintentionally or not. However, promoting such brands and buying their products precisely is unethical. It encourages them to continue to destroy the planet, potentially harm buyers and make no change to their immoral labor circumstances whatsoever.

This overconsumption of clothes leads to severe environmental waste and pollution. According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), fast fashion causes 10% of global carbon emissions. Additionally, the fashion is responsible for producing over 92 million tons of textile waste, which end up in landfills yearly. Customers don't seem to understand that they are part of the problem that the world is corrupting. Unfortunately many people shrug it off and continue to buy from controversial brands because it doesn't affect them personally. Customers should take accountability for their actions because nothing will change unless purchasers decide to stop supporting these lines.

Nike is known for their athletic footwear, equipment and voguish apparel, but unknown for their use of toxic chemicals in clothing, exploitation of workers and gender discrimination in factories. This company has been accused of using sweatshops to produce apparel in East Asia. Workers were paid an insufficient amount of money and had to work in

poor conditions. Nike and many brands like it will sadly continue to sell out products and will likely never run out of business, part of the reason being that many celebrities partnered up with and promote them through their social media following. In 2016, soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo signed a life-time contract with Nike worth one billion dollars, CBS Sports states. Prominent

tain. Promoting apparel as such to a huge audience can cause consumers harm. That's why it's important for sponsors to do a background check on the brands they'll promote to millions of people.

The internet provides a variety of information for free, so there's really no excuse for shoppers to not conduct research about the merchandise they purchase. There are countless sources online that inform individuals about what really goes on behind the scenes of their favorite makeup lines or the shoe brand they regularly purchase from. Additionally, there are several articles that address what organizations these popular brands donate a percentage of their profits to. Informing oneself, spreading awareness, and boycotting problematic businesses is the most effective way to put an end to this. If more consumers knew the immoral ways L'Oreal tested their products on animals, there would be a decrease in demand for their products. If more people knew American Eagle overworked and underpaid their workers, perhaps it wouldn't be as popular as it is. The first step into putting an end to unethical consumption is by getting educated.

Customers can change the trajectory of these problematic businesses. They should be held accountable for continuing to support inhumane brands that condone child labor, animal testing and exploitation. Even though it may not directly affect them, supporting many of the previously stated companies is only a step backward for mankind.

64% of students think businesses should be held more accountable for their unethical practices

13% of students think consumers should be held accountable for their purchases

12% of students think consumers should not be held accountable for what they purchase

11% of students chose not to comment

**out of 320 students polled*

people such as Ronaldo continue to give controversial brands such as Nike a platform.

Sponsorships from distinguished individuals are a huge part of the problem. Many people will buy anything with their idol's name on it, not caring about the brand's contentious background or the dangerous chemicals their products con-



Dance Big, Shop Small

By Aveesa Bhayani and Kayla Vu

As the end of the school year draws closer, seniors prepare for a night they'll never forget: prom. Although it can be a struggle to find the right outfit and accessories, sometimes the perfect purchase is closer than some may think. These local businesses are just around the corner waiting to be discovered.

MAKEUP BY FELICE

@makeupartz_byfelice on Instagram

With all the chaos, don't forget to book your hair and makeup appointments. Hair and makeup artist Felice Onori works with you to create the best experience for the best price. With the low price of \$150 for a premium package of hair and makeup done in the comfort of your own home, Onori also offers complimentary facials and skin care consultations. Aside from wedding and prom hair and makeup, she spends her free time doing cosmetics for cancer patients.

"Everybody on every budget should be able to afford prom hair and make up," Onori said. "That is what I work for. I've been in every section of income. This job is very up and down as far as finances and income, so I really can relate to people on a tight budget. Everybody wants to feel like a princess."

ALE'S BOUQUET

@ales.bouquet on Instagram

Although prom isn't centered around gifts, buying flowers for friends, your partner or even yourself can brighten up the event and add a pop of color to photos. Ale's Bouquet is another student-run business managed by senior Keila Sales. Directions to order are found on Sales' Instagram page; all that's necessary to order is a detailed description of what you want or pictures of an arrangement. Sales specializes in ramo buchón, a bouquet arrangement of more than fifty flowers, usually roses, bunched together in wrapping.

"I've seen that there's not a lot of floral design businesses in Plano," Sales said. "When my sister first started to get my mom flowers, she had to go to Dallas or all the way [to] Frisco, [so] I like the fact that I can be close by. I enjoy incorporating [the] elements and principles of design in my bouquets. It can be pretty difficult keeping the flowers all together all at once, but [in the] end it's just worth it."

DUBSSHOTS PHOTOGRAPHY

@dubsshotsphotography on Instagram

With all the work to dress up and look nice, it's no surprise that capturing photos is one of the most crucial parts of prom. Although there's the free alternative of just taking a photo on your phone, having a professional photographer provides you with high quality photos and keeps everyone off their devices. Dubshots Photography is a local photography business run by junior Wendy Williams. Booking sessions

and discussing details are all done through her Instagram account. After photos

are taken, it takes approximately a week for Williams to go through all the photos to edit them. Outside of prom commissions, Williams also takes photos for sporting events and senior photoshoots.

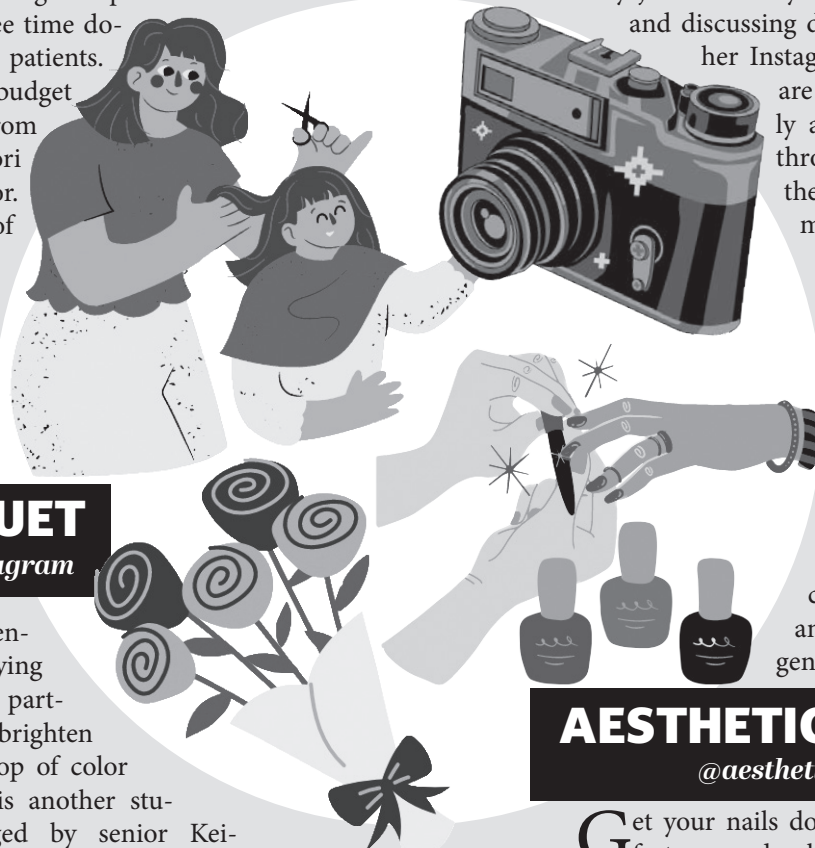
"Every time I take a picture, I try to capture a smile or someone's personality instead of them just posing," Williams said. "I'm a young photographer so there's a lot of kids that know me, so it's more comfortable taking pictures, and I know what the younger generation wants for pictures."

AESTHETICS BY SARAH

@aesthetixbysarah on Instagram

Get your nails done to tie together the perfect prom day look. Nail tech Sarah Snow started in Texas doing freelance work to spread her business and now has her own shop open and ready to paint out your Pinterest board. Snow works primarily with gel based products to give you the best quality long-lasting nails for half the price you would at a traditional salon with an average price of about \$45. Check out her Instagram for the exact pricing.

"Well Aesthetics by Sarah is more of a one on one experience, it's a lot more affordable; services last longer and you're getting more quality for your money," Snow said. "I haven't been to a regular shop in about seven years but when I used to go to a regular shop I would pay 70 or 80 [dollars] for a set."



Spring Break Game Picks

By Maryam Ahmed

Check out these underrated games for family game night over spring break. Whether it's betting, trivia or classic style card games, this list has something for all tastes.

5-CARD ★★★★★

With a rating to match its name, this easy game is essentially a version of Uno with a standard deck of cards. Everyone starts with five cards, though they may not end with five cards. Players keep placing down and picking up cards in the center until someone thinks the numbers on their cards add up to the lowest value of all the players. That person will "call," and then, in a poker-style showdown, everyone shows their cards and the person with the lowest value wins that round. Fast paced and easy to learn, 5-Card is perfect for a quick round during lunch or a group activity during a light class period.



★★★★★ WITS AND WAGERS

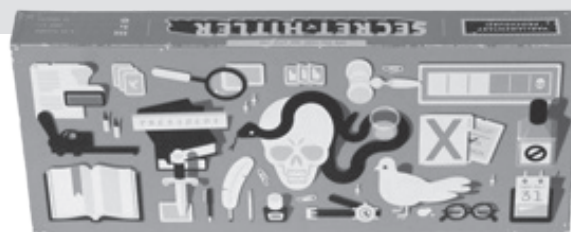
This game tests the players' unorthodox combination of obscure trivia knowledge and betting ability. The "game master" poses a random question with a number for an answer and gives answer choices. The rest of the players can either pick an answer or bet on someone else's answer. Wits and Wagers will leave the group fighting over who picks an answer, large bets being placed, and simultaneous cheers and tears when the answer is revealed.



Photo by
Billtacular
on Flickr

COUP ★★★★★

Another game of deception and gambling, players aim to be the last one standing as they assassinate other players and collect enough coins to be able to launch a coup. Every player is assigned two of five characters that have different rules on how many coins they can take from the bank, how much they can steal from other players and if they can assassinate someone else. Players can lie and claim they possess any of the five characters, but if someone calls their bluff, they're out of the game. Coup is perfect for teenagers, adults and anyone looking to perfect their poker face.



★★★★★ SECRET HITLER

A game of plotting, scheming and deception, Secret Hitler is perfect for families and larger groups. As the Liberals and Fascists, with Hitler among them, fight for control of the government, each side must eliminate politicians from the other by electing leaders, making uneasy alliances, and assassinating other players. There is always the ever-looming question of whether Hitler is about to take the throne and seize power, a question to which all other players, regardless of allegiance, must answer: ja or nein?

TACO CAT GOAT CHEESE PIZZA

★★★★★

This game relies less on charisma and more on reflexes and possibly pain tolerance, depending on who you're playing with. The objective of the game is simple: get rid of the cards. Similar to the pop-



ular card game Slapjack, the goal is to slap the deck at the appropriate time and whoever slaps it last has to take the deck. Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza will definitely have everyone scrambling to reach the deck in time, leaving the group in a wholesome mixture of chaos and laughter.

PROM★INFO

| APRIL 1 | 8-11 P.M. | AT THE PLANO EVENT CENTER |



Theme: Old Hollywood

Location: Plano Event Center 2000 E Spring Creek
PKWY, Plano, 75074

Date: April 1 **Time:** 8-11 P.M.

Cost: \$45 a person/ \$55 a person at the door

Guest Rules:

- Each student is allowed to bring ONE guest
- Guests cannot be over the age of 20
- Names of the guest must be provided when purchasing a ticket for them
- Guests are not allowed to bring large bags or purses to the dance; Only small clutch purses no larger than 4.5 x 6.5 inches will be allowed at the entrance

*Scan the QR code below to
purchase prom tickets*



Directions to purchase tickets

*Students will be required to type in
their student ID number to gain
access to purchase tickets.*

1. When you open the page, choose the 'Plano East Prom' option
2. Once on the page, click on the "Have a passcode?" and enter your code
3. You will then have the option of purchasing tickets.
4. Choose how many tickets you would like to purchase.
5. If you are purchasing more than one, you will have to provide the guest information.