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Issue 2

PANTHER *Prints*



**Death of News: How News
Gap Reaches Students
PG. 12**



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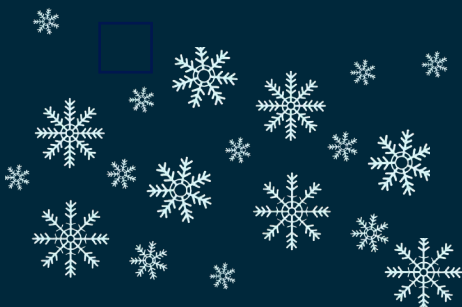
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LETTERS FROM THE *Editors*

As we wrap up the second nine weeks, I want to take a moment to thank our staff for all their hard work. We finished the second nine weeks strong, and I am excited to start the new year even stronger. I especially appreciate you, our readers, for supporting Panther Prints. I hope you find something in our second issue that makes you smile today. I wish you all good luck with final exams, so that you can enjoy a well-deserved winter break. See you next year.

Throughout the progression of the second issue, I have seen such improvements between the writers and their articles. Their love and excitement to write these articles has flourished. I can't wait to see that joy be put onto the faces of our readers! Go Panthers!

I had lots of fun designing this quarter's issue. Despite the countless hours I spent learning a new program within a week, the process was a unique experience and polishing up the final details felt like a relief. Furthermore, I can proudly thank our staff and further contributors that made our second publish possible; I extend the newspaper's gratitude to you guys, thank you. I can't wait to start working on our third issue!

As we wrap up the first semester, working on the second issue with the staff has been a wonderful experience. I learned the importance of featuring many people in this school to highlight their importance and contribution to the school. We all made improvements throughout the term and being a part of this community has been an incredible experience. I hope you all enjoy reading our second issue and have a great winter break!

As we wrote our second issue, we all became closer and I truly appreciate each one of my staff and editors. All of them contribute so much and I genuinely enjoy being a part of Panther Prints! Thank you to all of our readers, I hope your semester exams go well! Have a great break!

MISSION STATEMENT

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

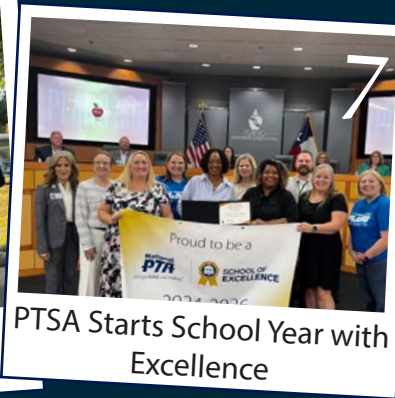
DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY

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

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HIGHLIGHTING EXCELLENCE: TEACHERS OF THE MONTH

By: Inara Pabani

Students in the AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination, program surprised three of their campus teachers after naming them December's "Teacher of the Month," recognizing their dedication, mentorship and impact on the campus.

"It's a motivational thing for the teachers," said AVID teacher Mackenzie McCall. "They mean a lot to our AVID students and make a difference to other students."

AVID has three classes, mainly sophomores, juniors and seniors, where they allow their students to nominate three teachers each month, highlighting their passion for teaching. The "Teacher of the Month" is a recognition program designed to honor educators who have shown outstanding commitment to their school.

"It's nice to be acknowledged for sure," Eisenberg said. "Because sometimes you do wonder as a teacher on how you're being received, it's grateful to know that the kids think I'm a good teacher."

Before joining, Eisenberg practiced as a physician therapist for 20 years. Much of her volunteer work focused on helping children in foster care, which inspired her to work in public schools and guide young students toward successful careers while encouraging them to give back to others.

"It made me always think, it must be a fun job working with kids who want to learn more about their future," Eisenberg said. "This is my first teaching job and I had it for ten years."

Eisenberg teaches Practicum One of Health Sciences and Pharmacology. Her role in this class is to prepare students with essential patient care skills and guide them toward earning the Patient Care Technician and Pharmacy Technician Certificate. Through her guidance, students gain real-world experience, develop professional skills and are often able to start paid positions in the healthcare field at an early age.

"She is really nice and she's good at communicating," HOSA senior officer Muhammad Safi said. "I would describe her as caring, passionate and overall a great teacher and a leader."

From early-morning rehearsals to late-night performances, the band director's dedication struck a chord with AVID students, also earning him Teacher of the Month for December. John Brennan is one of the band directors along with serving as leader for the East Cluster Band Program. He started his career in Plano I.S.D. since 1999 serving as Associate Director for 18 years. He spent three years as percussion teacher along with teaching concert, varsity and jazz band. Brennan is well known for leading his bands towards success as multiple of them won in UIL, University Interscholastic League. He is also an published author where he written multiple articles.

"I taught all of the band levels throughout my time here," said Brennan. "It's always the kids that make the job worth it."

Known for turning recipes into life lessons, the campus culinary teacher, Steven Pilat, was one of the teachers that were honored with "Teacher of the Month" along with Eisenberg.

Chef Steven Pilat leads the Culinary Arts Program at Plano East Senior High. Every Friday, he and his students prepare delicious treats during lunches through their "Bistro Snack Sale". Before becoming an official high school teacher, Pilat started his career in teaching at cooking classes towards adults and college students. His goal was to help prepare his students for careers in culinary arts by teaching them skills, techniques and professionalism.

"I ran into the director of the art institute," said Pilat. "He was in the market for instructors. I started teaching here and have loved it ever since."

Teachers have the biggest impact on the students' young minds by helping them guide their generation towards brighter futures. Through their daily actions, they shape not just academic skills but character, confidence and dedication. They become role models that students carry for their future.

"I love that there are students that love the teachers as much as we do," said McCall. "Teachers don't get recognized very much. I think it's nice even if it's just for an award."

SPEECH AND DEBATE: SUCCESS THROUGH DEDICATION

By: Kristhel Soto Castro

Photo by: StrategyThinking

The Speech and Debate team ranks them 41st nationwide, conquering 2,959 schools through their dedication and strict schedules.

During Sept. 5 and 6, Speech and Debate competed in the Plano Senior Wild Cat Fall Fair Tournament and placed first in sweepstakes. The team excelled in Congressional Debate, ranking in the top three. They also placed first in original oratory and second and third place in extemporaneous speaking and public forum.

“For congressional debate, most people try to get there like 10 minutes early, so we can talk amongst ourselves [about] how the rounds are gonna go,” Congressional Debate Varsity member Shardul Patel said. “You have to plan certain things before the round starts, so it goes as smoothly as possible.”

Hundreds of students across 14 states participated in the Grapevine tournament. Advait Boyanapalli successfully placed first in congressional debate and qualified for Texas Forensic Association state, earning the first Tournament of Champions bid. Third place was also awarded to Anshveer Kang & Tisha Sinha in duo interpretation.

“[What] I have to do to prepare is, like, you have a bunch of topics, and I just have to write speeches for them,” Congressional Debate Captain Advait Boyanapalli said. “I think of the arguments that the people on the opposite side of me are gonna say, then prepare on how I respond to them.”

In the Chapel Hill and Lindale tournaments, Angelo Ferris and Sahmed Davuluri placed first in

domestic extemporaneous speaking; Aditi Gaddam and Marisa Galu placed second in public forum debate.

“The preparation [for public forum] is a little bit different, because it’s a different format,” Debate Captain Shivam Tripathi said. “The National Speech and Debate Association publishes a topic for [public forum], and we just prep on that topic. We also have to prep blocks or answers to arguments that our opponents would say in a round, and that makes later rebuttal speeches a lot easier.”

Speech and Debate offers a wide variety of topics for students to sharpen their interpersonal speaking skills. Students can choose to participate in Lincoln-Douglas, cross-examination, oral interpretation, prose and poetry, extemporaneous speaking, informative and persuasive or congress.

“I also spend a lot of time writing flowery language into the speeches because that’s a big part of, like, making it emotionally appealing as well,” Patel said. “So I spend a lot of time making sure my speeches hit those emotional chords.”

Preparing for UIL competitions requires significant time and dedication from its participants, as they often adhere to rigorous work hours. Students tend to spend their after-school time preparing speeches according to their prompts. Speeches allow participants the creative freedom to detail their writing and add their own spark to greater appeal to the judges.

“There’s a lot of school time that’s dedicated to Speech and Debate,” Extemporaneous Speaker “There’s a lot of

ing Captain Angelo Ferris said.

“There’s a lot of individual practice that goes on for events like congress [where] you have to prep-out entire speeches. It can amount to like hundreds of hours per year for a single [student].”

Teams are made up of novice and varsity participants. For those beginning their speech and debate course, the captains focus their practices on the basics of Speech and Debate. At the end, based on the novice’s performances, captains give constructive feedback. For varsity members, their practices are more independent. Their typical practice sessions range from discussing heavy-detail topics in groups to practicing and writing their speeches on their own.

“In debate, you’re always obviously arguing with other people, there’s multiple people [you compete against],” Boyanapalli said. “In speech, you give your speech. No one else in the room matters. It’s just your performance that matters.”



Photo by: PlanoISD

FIRST AI ACTRESS: TILLY NORWOOD

By: Sydney Rocio Wade

Artificial Intelligence “Actress” Tilly Norwood sparks concern amongst the acting community, including young aspiring actors who are concerned about the future impact that AI will have on the arts.

“Comparing the acting of an actual human to the acting of an AI would be, like, comparing the most beautiful, wonderfully decorated cake to, like, a cucumber,” senior Haley Rogers said. “Like it’s still edible. But why would you want to eat that whenever you could eat the cake?”

Norwood was initially created to provide a way for filmmakers not to have limitations as they do with human actors, but it is also aiming to become a star in the rising generation of young actors. Created by Eline Vann Der Verlden, founder of the AI production company Particle6, Tilly is only the first of the AI actors to appear, but many argue that AI is not and can not be an actor.

“The arts are a very specialized career path, and a form of expression,” Rogers said. “I don’t think artificial intelligence can really replicate that to the extent that an actor, technician or artist can.”

Tilly Norwood is programmed to do what many actors and actresses have trained for. The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists discussed concerns with Norwood’s programming utilizing other actors’ performances as training, which means it doesn’t ask for permission or offer credit and compensation to those who are used. Actors argue that digital replicas do not create opportunities, they erase them.

for a human audience to connect with a human actress compared to

“I don’t think artificial intelligence should be allowed to take jobs away from talented people,” Rogers said. “It’s honestly comedic that people think that AI would be able to perform to the extent that a human can, whenever it comes to doing art.”

Junior Juan Rodriguez believes that Artificial Intelligence can actually be useful in the industries, especially under certain conditions, such as voice replication. He argues that if an actor or actress were to die, then if allowed by the family and the actor themselves, they can use AI to replicate their voice, continuing their legacy in the project.

“This character in Cyber Punk 2077, his name is Victor,” Rodriguez said. “His actor died before they could release the expansion due to complications with his health. His family gave full permission to use [AI].”

Although it can be useful, many argue that the human touch could replace technology, which is lacking the authenticity and emotional depth a human brings to the table when it comes to a creative process such as acting. AI lacks authenticity because it only reuses what it is programmed to know it is not human.

“I think it’s a thousand times easier for a human audience to connect with a human actress compared to an AI actress, cause it’s almost just common sense,” junior Shayra Abreu said. “Humans want that connection, which is why we write stories, which is why we act, which is why we create entertainment overall, because we want that connection, and we won’t be able to get that connection with AI actresses and actors.”

Similarly, Tilly Norwood lacks the complexity of a human actor or



Photo by: Particle6

to express herself and her emotions through a story. That is why people watch movies and plays to feel something, to connect. According to SAG-AFTRA, viewers do not want to view computer-generated content that does not have that human connection. Abreu also mentioned that financial motivations are a major factor that contributes to the rise of artificial intelligence. AI actors are centered to assist filmmakers on certain limitations and maximize profit by cutting costs and increasing production efficiency to assist companies and studios. However, Abreu and Rogers believe that it is about the arts and the love actors and actresses bring to their job, not the money.

“The only reason why these AI actors and actresses would exist is because of money, and you can’t do anything about money,” Abreu said. “Everything’s about money at the end of the day, but you also can’t focus only on money. You have to do it for the love of the game.”

93% out of 110 students agree that AI actors should

2.5% out of 110 students agree that AI actors should

4.2% out of 110 students chose not to comment.

PTSA STARTS SCHOOL YEAR WITH EXCELLENCE

By: Soha Syed

Recently, the PTSA was awarded the School of Excellence award for the 2024-26 year. Bringing in a remarkable start to the 2026 school year, the PTSA has organized multiple events and grants like teacher luncheons and student scholarships to serve the community.

“Our PTSA continues to be active,” Psychology teacher Giselle Devilier said. “Those types of things help support the community.”

The PTSA consists of about 540 members to exceptionally support the 3000 member student body. With a combination of student, teacher and parent members, the committee focused on two standards to uphold and strengthen, achieving the School of Excellence title. Standard 5 went on to promote knowledge and power within the community and Standard 6 concentrated on collaborating with the school to improve its conditions. To work on these standards, the PTSA made it important to work with the students and teachers, understanding the needs and areas for improvement.

“It’s all of us working together to make Plano East a good place,” PTSA president Mitzi Behnke said. “[A good place] for the students, first and foremost, [and] a good place for teachers to work so that it’s a good work environment. And to make it a place where parents are happy to send their kids to school there.”

During the school year, the PTSA performed multiple efforts including volunteer events to aid teachers. It was vital, as the Plano East student body carries about 3000 students and can be difficult to support that high of a capacity. One of the activities they im-

capacity. One of the activities they implemented throughout the school year was helping out with the copy machine to print out the large amounts of papers teachers needed. The PTSA also designed multiple meetings for students, parents and teachers to voice their concerns and questions about the school.

“It is challenging because it is such a large campus and it’s hard to reach everybody,” Behnke said. “We are trying to make everything accessible to everyone.”

Despite being excluded from School of Excellence standards, the PTSA also makes other strong efforts that uphold their own values. During Stayday, the group holds a stand with more affordable meal options for students who may not want to spend a ton of money. The booth allows students to still participate in the day of fun with their classmates while wearing off the worry of the wallets. They also focus on accessibility by organizing the free senior luncheon at the end of the school year. The yearly tradition acts as a special send-off to the senior class uplifting seniors towards their futures.

“I’m the student representative chair from the World Wear Bin,” senior Madison Tsao said.

“[Through the PTSA], my people skills have improved as I have had to make charts [in my role and through that] have been better at talking to adults.”

With student chairs, the PTSA younger representatives can contribute to student’s input on the school and also directly serve the community with initiatives such as donations and volunteer work. One of the PTSA traditions includes the scholarship raffle, which is available to their student members. The scholarships function as a way to serve back the student members for their involvement in the PTSA. With a small 16 dollar membership fee, any student can join the PTA to help serve the teacher & student body and be eligible to the group’s perks. In addition, students can be in charge of the PTSA’s multiple efforts. The World Wear Bin, one of the volunteer projects, raises clothing donations for those in need.

“One of their mottos of the PTSA is to make every child’s potential a reality,” Behnke said. “We’re not focused on one specific group of students and we are not just focused on the teachers. We’re trying to reach out to everybody.”



Photo by: Plano East PTSA Instagram

DECONSTRUCTED: LONGEST GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

By: Aisha Ali

The longest government shutdown in the United States ended when President Donald Trump signed legislation to reopen the government. The house voted 222-209 on the funding bill which was then passed by the Senate. Full funding for SNAP through Sept. 2026 is included in the legislative passage.

“The big question is, who gets the blame,” dual credit Government professor Steve Sorenson said. “Both sides are saying it’s [not] their fault. Republicans want to massively cut the money for government programs like Medicare, or Medicaid. And then and welfare, and the Republicans say, because you Democrats won’t compromise, the government has been shut down.”

A major holdout that prevented the democrats from passing the bill sooner was the demand to include an extension of Affordable Care Act premium tax credits, which are due to expire at the end of this year. Although the bill does not include this extension, the democrats agreed on a requirement that a vote would take place by mid-December.

“The government shutdown is a consequence of the Democrats and Republicans being unable to agree on the debt limit,” Sorenson said.

According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, the debt limit is the total amount of money that the government is authorized to borrow. The longest government shutdown in the United States ended when President Donald Trump signed legislation to reopen the government. The house voted 222-209 on the funding bill which was then passed by the Senate.

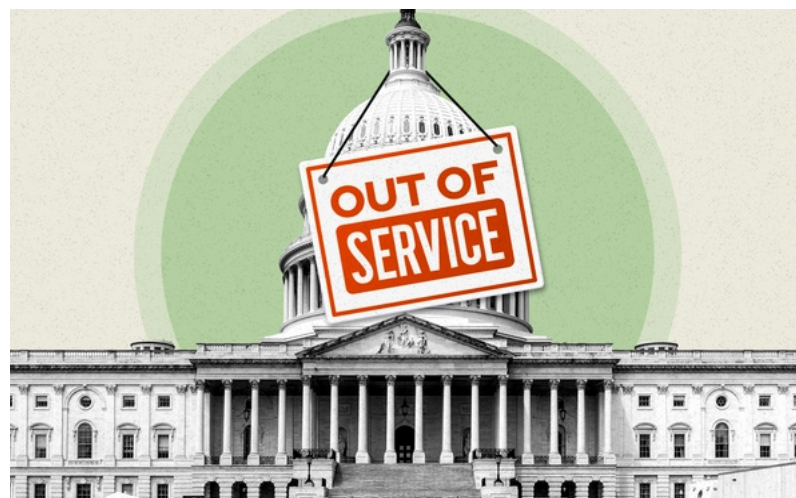
“I talked to my grandma and she didn’t get her [snap benefits],” an anonymous student said. “She lives in assisted housing, so maybe that has something to do with it. She doesn’t have a job because she is [older], so she gets her money from the government but we had to give her money.”

After the federal government shutdown ended, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission has resumed issuing full Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits to clients.

“[The government shutdown] means our whole federal budget process is completely wrecked,” Sorenson said. “Like they don’t have a solution, we need to have a budget. I mean, this is like, you know, there’s an iceberg and then a big part under the water is that the tendency is for Congress to pass what’s called a continuing resolution.”

Sorenson explained that when the government resorts to short-term fixes that do not address underlying issues, the government shutdown is extended. Continuing resolutions temporarily keep funding at the same level it was during previous years.

“This all comes back to long term versus short term thinking,” Sorenson said. “Because you want all the kids educated, because long term, you want an economy that’s working, and for that you need educated workers.”



CAFETERIA STAFF: SERVING SMILES BEHIND EVERY BITE

By: *Kristhel Soto Castro*

The sizzling oil, steamed rice and fresh-cut vegetables simmer together in a plastic bowl. Carefully prepped, this delicacy melts into a hot pot of sweet and savory flavors. Even with the rigorous meal planning, the cafeteria staff functions not just as coworkers, but as friends and family focused on delivering flavorful meals at breakfast and lunch.

Every day in the cafeteria, the FANS members make sure each student is served fresh, steaming food. Their pre-made schedules and nimble work allow them to serve students multiple meals on time.

“I [have] to pin up the juice and get [it] ready for breakfast and make sure everything’s ready for the next day,” FANS member Nettie Hughes said. “I come in and prep for breakfast and get the line set up and everything, and cook cookies and wrap them and stuff and get them ready for [you] guys.”

Clocking into work, the staff’s first task is to check for maintenance, defrost the food, and plate the entrees for the morning shift. Students can start their day with breakfast—maple-soaked french toast or ham and cheese croissants —warmed up and ready to dig in. By the end of their first menu items, they clean up and begin preparing lunch and its next series of meals.

“I have four teams, every team has three people, and they rotate their [roles],” Cafeteria Manager Marian Yousef said. “They have a schedule for serving, for cleaning, for delivery, for everything, so we have a schedule that we go by.”

While preparing for lunch, their plan is simple, but it requires a lot of teamwork and coordination from every member present. Each person is responsible for different sections of the dining hall, serving four separate lines either at the register, prepping the meals or cooking more food for the upcoming students. Whenever necessary, they switch positions and offer to help each other out.

“Sometimes I do broccoli, veggies or sometimes [whatever] they need,” an anonymous cafeteria staff member said. “[I prep] fruits and, like you know, it’s not straight. When lunch is over, we clean up, and we get ready to go home.”

The staff’s goal is to serve a nutritionally balanced meal by following the food group ratios set by MyPlate. Every day, they cook three separate entree options to accommodate students’ preferences and dietary needs.

“I like how they make sure that us kids are able to get what we want,” senior Rayaah Sulahry said. “They prioritize our time and are always ready to serve us. I especially love it when I ask about something and they are helpful [on] the information about the food.”

The sweet aroma isn’t the only thing that lures students into the school’s dining hall. The staff’s friendly atmosphere and appealing humor ease students into easy-going conversations.

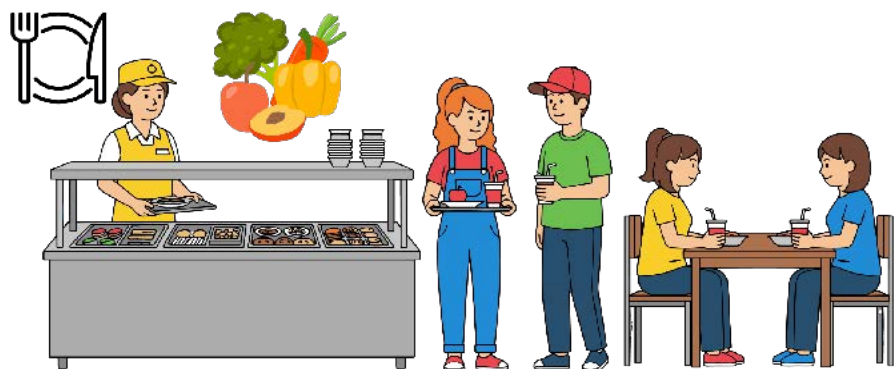
“I love the cafeteria staff working [here],” senior Donovan Gramajo Escalante said. “Every single time I go and pick out something to eat, they’re always cheerful, talkative and they’re easy to get along with.”

The staff also built emotional bonds amongst themselves. Always being stuck at the hip, they’ve formed a second family here at work.

“Oh, this place is like family to me even when I’m with my brain out and coming from home [to school],” anonymous said. That’s how [we are]. And we have a great manager, she’s so great.

Through thick and thin, they handle difficult situations together. Any problems the staff encounters during work, they’re open to communicating for a solution.

“Yeah, it’s like family thing,” anonymous said. “[We will] fight, [we will] disagree, but [we will] come back together. We all, you know, make everyone feel special.”



CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANTS: DIGITAL LIFELINES KEEPING CAMPUS CONNECTED

By: Aisha Hasan and Aisha Ali

In a small corner along the side of the library, the campus technology assistants spend their time working diligently to meet the needs of staff and students. As classrooms become increasingly dependent on electronic devices, the CTAs deal with a multitude of problems on a daily basis, serving as a bridge between traditional school and modern technology. “I got here right before COVID started,” Campus Technology Assistant Robert Litwins said. “All [the] students had chromebooks in their classrooms, but they didn’t have them checked out to individual students yet. And then [COVID] suddenly changed everything.”

The COVID-19 pandemic altered many lives and jobs, and the job of ‘campus technology assistant’ is no different. With students at home and not school with their Chromebooks drastically changed the functions of the CTAs’ jobs. It changed once more when students returned to school and the way everything worked during COVID no longer worked as well. Students repopulating school campuses led to new problems for the CTAs to solve. The CTA is a fundamental role in the school that can only be filled by those who are capable. The CTA team deals with a multitude of problems on a daily basis in order to make the process of schooling easier on the students and teachers. Litwins retired from an engineering position in the field of telecommunications. He has been working as a CTA at Plano East for about six years. “[I enjoy] the flexible time off work schedule with PISD, the interaction

with students and staff was another reason for me coming here,” Litwins said. “It was a little easy going, and a little more relaxed.”

Litwins’ first passion was working with technology. Similarly, Campus Technology Assistant Barry Thompson enjoys making technology accessible to everyone and using it as a tool for students to use for their learning process.

“The most common problem is password issues,” Litwins said. “There are a lot of login issues and stuff like that.”

The two CTAs, Litwins and Barry, both agreed that the most common problems include login issues, forgotten passwords and cracked chromebook screens. Barry believes that it is their job to not only issue Chromebooks, but ensure that they run smoothly throughout the time a student has it. Whenever a student is unable to login to their Chromebook a CTA is there to help them. Even with problems like uploading and exporting files the CTA team is there for the student in need. From login issues to missing files the CTA manages it all.

“Some of the resources for the special education department can be difficult to obtain,” Litwins said. “It can be unique and frustrating at times since the resources are not always available.”

The CTAs have to cater to each student’s needs, even if they may be difficult to accommodate. This is one of the many ways in which the CTA are crucial to any modern school and are an indispensable part of a student’s life. The resources are not always available, especially with limited school funding. Despite this the CTA staff work hard to accommodate every student’s needs as best they can. To assist people in such a way requires passion as well as know-how in the technological field of work.

“The best part is solving problems for people when they really need to have a device,” Litwins said. “Seeing the relief on their faces. I would say that is the most satisfying part.”



STUDENT SENATE SPARKS CAMPUS CHANGE

By: Aisha Ali

From brainstorming sessions to collaborating with different organizations, Student Senate aims to boost student engagement while ramping up its presence on campus.

“Compared to last year, we weren’t as involved in school activities and making it known [which projects] we were doing,” senior Jessica Chung said. “So this year we’ve been trying to push out what we’re doing on our Instagram and social media, as well as getting more involved with the other clubs on campus to kind of kind of assuming it’s like to have all of our our projects, like align with the other clubs, so it’s not a competition between two different clubs.”

Student Senate is also continuing their annual Peanut Butter drive, it is their first food drive of the school year. This year was a huge success, as they got over 200 jars of peanut butter. All of the peanut butter was donated to the North Texas food bank. This event also sets the foundation for future service projects and opportunities for students to get hours.

“Panther Boutique is another one that not a lot of people are aware of, and it is where you can donate and get formal attire, especially for the people who can’t financially afford it,” Chung said.

President Avleen Randhawa is also working on a personal project known as bathroom bins, which is when members of Student Senate supply feminine hygiene products, like pads and tampons, to stock the girls’ bathrooms.

“I feel like [working in senate] has really changed my perspective on

has really changed my perspective on the school and how much effort the admin puts into the student body, and I feel like that goes kind of unnoticed,” Chung said. “Literally, it was eye opening to see. It kind of upsets me how people don’t notice that as much because now I get to see the behind the scenes, and like how much effort they really try to put in.”

The Student Senate works on projects to show student appreciation for staff on behalf of the student body. They are preparing for teacher appreciation week with the memory jar project, where students submit their favorite moments with teachers via google form. Once teacher appreciation week rolls around, the heartwarming notes will then be delivered to each teacher.

“We want to bring some bigger projects to the student body,” Randhawa said. “I think the first [project] was us taking more action, like during pep rallies. This year, every single pep rally if we want to [host] a game and, like, more fun to bring to it. With Stay Day, which we do every year, we also wanted to make it more fun, have more activities, this year and we had a really great turnout.”

Additionally, they made cards for the custodians and the Faculty Relations Committee hosted a ‘Grab & Go’ breakfast for the cafeteria staff. Student Senate is consistently looking for opportunities to improve. To meet this goal, they posted a feedback form on Instagram and received multiple responses.



“Senioritis has been hitting every single senior,” Chung said. “Me included, so, I want to kind of lower that and implement more changes and projects to make sure that they participate as well and feel involved in the school and not just trying to get senior year over with.”

Instead of doing the bare minimum like finishing projects every year and having the committees work on whatever other projects they want to, the Student Senate is prioritizing quality over quantity.

“I’m more proud of what we’ve done, like we’ve made a lot of changes to Senate this year,” Randhawa said. “Like how our process and how we did things like getting projects proposed and approved. There was a lot of work [for the] officers at the beginning of the year and I would say I’m mostly proud of us for getting that done and being successful with it and getting it done in time.”

Student Senate teaches valuable leadership and teamwork skills. In addition to looking great on college applications, it helps students stay connected and involved in school events.

“[Joining Student Senate] is a really good opportunity,” Chung said. “We do a lot of stuff involving the school and it’s just mainly finding your niche in projects and doing what you [want to] do and making the change that you want to see for the school year.”

DEATH OF NEWS: NEWS GAP REACHES STUDENTS

By: Soha Syed, Isabella Tolentino and Katie Nguyen

Local newsrooms are shrinking, community papers are closing their doors and more people are turning away from journalism. Many small publications have reduced staff or moved entirely online, struggling to compete with social media platforms that deliver faster, but not always accurately. As more people rely on headlines, artificial intelligence generated media, short clips or second-hand posts, misinformation spreads easily, blurring the line between fact and opinion. Students are starting to feel the consequences firsthand as they miss important coverage on local issues and policies that directly impact their lives. The lack of credible news allows misinformation to spread more quickly, making it harder to stay engaged and participate in important conversations regarding the future community involvement now and in the future.

“I feel like what people my age see is a lot of fake news,” senior Omar Al-Hashmi said. “What [we] mainly see is AI, misinformation, or just off-putting propaganda. It’s weird. There’s so much going on globally, I think [students are] blind to what’s happening overseas, even while it’s in front of them, on their phones.”

PRINT NEWS: DECLINE DUE TO TECHNOLOGY

In recent decades, the wave of new technology has had a negative impact on simple things like news sources. As phones and social media advances at the blink of an eye, so does the decline of print news.

“I would say I watch or see the news around twice a month at most,” senior Javeria Muqet said. “I think people my age only really watch or see the news from a political standpoint. I only kept up with the news mainly during the recent election. I think that the reason why most kids my age don’t consume more credible news sources is because they just don’t care.”

Informational news sources are facing a major decline, with misinformation spreading more and more as technology advances and generations grow, there’s been a global decline in people consuming legitimate news. Oftentimes, people see misinformation on social media or unreliable news sources. Over the past decade, print news, news broadcasting and legitimate news in general have begun to die off.

With around 3,000 students, many don’t follow or consume regular news. Many students don’t keep up with local news, they mainly keep up with mainstream global news. Global news has become more relevant in recent years, mostly because of social media.

“I mainly get my news and information from apps like Instagram and Tiktok, I don’t really keep up with local news much,” Al-Hashmi said. “I only keep up with global news. I watch and see the news everyday, but I think people my age don’t pay attention to the news. I feel like all they see is mainly fake news. They just don’t seem to care.”

In recent decades, print newspapers have seen a major decline in customers. With a major movement from print to online, newspapers like the Dallas Morning News conducts major changes to their workforce by moving almost fully to online. According to Forbes over the past decade, close to 3,000 print publications have ceased their production as a result of online news and media taking over.

Artificial intelligence has become so ingrained in our everyday lives as of recently, leading to the mass epidemic of false information. Students especially are more likely to be susceptible to this kind of misinformation. With AI created pictures, articles, and videos, many students have either fallen for this type of misinformation or spread it unintentionally.

“With the growing use of AI, there’s just so much fake news out there,” Muqet said. “There’s a lot of misinformation out there. It’s crazy.”



Students are more likely to pay attention to information spread within their friend groups, families, and schools than they are to pay attention to news worldwide or within the U.S.

“The current state of our country makes me not want to see the news anymore,” Muqet said. “I just really don’t care anymore, if there was something exciting or interesting happening in our country then I think that I would want to watch the news more. But there’s not, all that’s happening is just either boring or disappointing. I think that’s another reason why people don’t want to read or see the news.”

SOCIAL MEDIA RAPIDLY CIRCULATES MISINFORMATION

As the online age continues, social media proceeds to transform how the public views news. With the usage of high engagement and visibility platforms like Tiktok and X, a simple scroll can rapidly spread information on topics ranging from politics to the latest celebrity scandal. As a result, these addictive but knowledgeable apps are unintentionally becoming a main news source for the public. “I don’t really watch the news that often, but I still feel pretty knowledgeable [on current events],” senior Shauna Kaykov said. “[My main news source is] social media, like TikTok.”

According to the Reuters Institute, 54% of people get their news from social media rather than traditional sources like TV and news corporations. With this shift, many who are not involved or stay up to date on current events can now be informed. Though social media tends to

hold a negative connotation, its quick facilitation of news allows for anyone to be educated. However, the absence of research and context can also result in easier misinformation of news.

“Sometimes I have to go and do my own research outside of [Tiktok],” Kaykov said. “If you are gullible, you’re going to end up with wrong information.”

Due to high participation on social media, anyone can report and comment on news. While it can increase the amount of meaningful discussions on topics like political violence or censorship, more often than not it can fuel rumors and misinform the general public. From Tik Tok’s beginnings, the platform spread misinformation on news about COVID-19 policies, origins and vaccines. According to Media Matters for America, the platform’s algorithm allowed conspiracies and false facts relating to COVID-19 and its vaccine to circulate farther than public health information from trusted sources like the World Health Organization. While the app has attempted to balance misinformation by signing a 25 million dollar pledge for ads that increase public health awareness, the algorithm’s effects prevent the spread of facts and replace them with more interesting but false theories. As a result, hateful rhetoric spread to groups like foreign governments and ethnic communities and accused them of deceitful behavior relating to COVID-19’s cause. “I think people are following the opinions that they see online,” senior Kelly Harr said.

Along with the increased use of AI, fake videos and pictures can be easily generated to misinform the public. With the illusion of trust-

worthy evidence, many can use these videos and pictures to falsely promote their own ideologies. According to The Guardian, the recent NYC mayoral election featured multiple AI-generated videos, phone calls and pictures created by candidates to corruptly display themselves. Eric Adams, the incumbent candidate, used AI-generated robocalls in different languages. Adams and his supporters flooded social media sites like X, with news proclaiming his honorable act of inclusivity and believing in the falsehoods. Instead of taking the time to learn these short statements, Adams used AI to deceptively appeal to the multiple cultural audiences within New York City. According to the Guardian, other candidates also created videos with AI to misinterpret and harbor bad information on their fellow competitors. Beyond creating false publicity on themselves, candidates can now use AI-proof as evidence to defame other candidates and spread false propaganda. In a world where politics are already corrupt, AI generation facilitates even more dishonesty in elections.

“We might become less informed,” IB freshman Maya Sharp said. “We might rely more on TikTok and news sources and can affect the economy or politics depending on where we get our sources.”





INFORMATION GAP: NEWS DECLINE RISKS TOMORROW

When newspaper printing decreases and newsrooms cut staff, communities lose access to essential information. Vital decisions about schools, public safety and local government are made without citizens fully informed, leaving citizens to rely on incomplete headlines or rumors. As access to trustworthy reporting dies out due to fewer people seeking reliable news, the public's ability to hold leaders accountable weakens, and the foundation of democracy faces a growing threat.

"How can the people make good decisions if they're not getting good information, it is a necessity for the future of democratic systems of government," American Studies teacher Joseph Russell said.

According to Reuters Institute, in most countries, traditional news media have been struggling to connect with the public. If this trend continues, future generations may grow disconnected from current events and less likely to participate in their civic responsibilities. Educators and journalists worry that low engagement with credible news threatens democracy. Progressively, these behaviors weaken democratic involvement

and reduce the influence of future generations on government decisions. Democracy suffers due to a decline in informed participation, and eventually, public debate grows shallow. A lack of awareness allows misinformation to shape opinions and gives power to those who manipulate headlines for personal or political gain. Without informed and active generations, the future risks becoming one

the future risks becoming one where political decisions are made behind closed doors and public input is not considered.

"I feel like checking the news plays a big role in how generations improve and become aware," junior Ashley Le said. "For example, learning how to vote and who you're voting for."

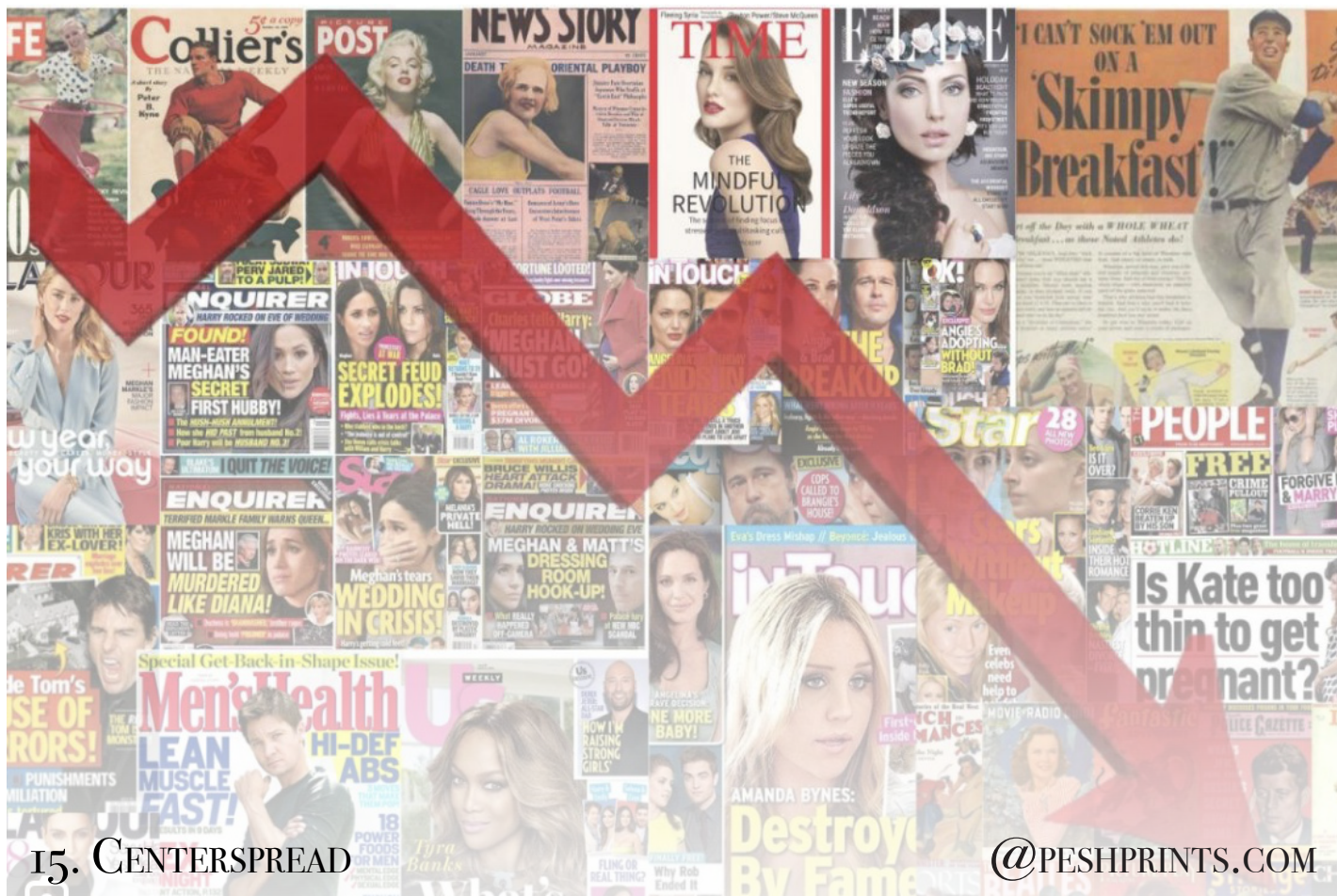
Teenagers face a unique risk as news consumption declines. When the youth disengage, public participation eventually declines. Young people shape the next generation of voters, leaders and decision makers, but many no longer engage with credible information. According to Digiday, around four out of 10 people under 35, which is 42 %, tend to actively avoid the news.

56.6% of students said they are not consistently updated on the news, but have a general idea of what is going on

34.2% of students said yes, I try to stay updated on the current news events.

3.9% of students said no comment.





This behavior narrows their understanding of the world and weakens their connection to real events that affect their lives. A generation that turns away from verified reporting loses the ability to recognize misinformation. Without accurate information, young people form opinions based on rumors, emotions or one-sided sources.

“I think that not checking the news could lead to more people not only not caring on a local level, but also on a global level,” junior Erin Rhysde Vern said. “It makes people divided when they don’t pay attention to what is happening in the world.”

As fewer people follow credible reporting, they begin to lose track

lose track of global events and how international decisions affect their daily lives. Issues like climate change and worldwide conflicts demand international teamwork, but that teamwork depends on informed citizens who recognize their shared responsibility to improve their futures. When people tune out the news, the response to global crises slows, and collective efforts to address urgent problems weaken. If people continue to tune out to credible news, the world may face a future where unity is replaced by division, and understanding is replaced by indifference.

“Checking the news will allow for more people to be aware of what they’re voting for, and also

the policies that are being made,” Le said. “I think that frequently staying updated on the news can allow for more people to be educated on certain topics that can apply to them.”



ANIMAL TESTING: EVALUATING ETHICS

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Panther Prints Staff voted 9-1, the majority believing that animal testing should be illegal.

Annually, over 115 million animals are used worldwide either in experimentation or to supply the biomedical industry. Animal testing involves conducting scientific and medical experiments on animals in an attempt to develop treatments and determine the safety of certain drugs and cosmetics.

Animal experimentation involves a high failure rate for tests and intentionally inflicts pain on animals, so it is unethical.

According to the National Welfare Library, the Animal Welfare Act is a federal law that regulates animal treatment. Animals are living, so they have intrinsic rights. This is the idea that animals have their own inherent value, so animals have the right to be treated with respect for their own sake, rather than being a means to a human end.

According to Humaneworld, during the 1940s the Food and Drug Administration dropped chemicals into the animals' eyes and then applied more chemicals to their skin. Despite observing redness, swelling and bleeding, the practice continued for decades and was specifically used on rabbits. Since then, scientists have developed over 50 alternatives that are more effective and humane compared to animal testing. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that research facilities used over 300,000 animals in activities in just one year. Animals used in experiments are subjected to force feeding, food and water deprivation, and the infliction of burns and additional wounds to study the healing process.

According to Human Society International, animals are often killed by carbon dioxide asphyxiation, decapitation, neck-breaking or other means. The new methods include 3D printers and utilizing human tissues grown in laboratories. Another method includes vitro testing, which is when tests are done on cells or tissues in a petri dish.

According to the California Biomedical Research Association, nearly every medical breakthrough in the last 100 years has resulted directly from research using animals. For example, animal research has contributed to major advancements in developing treatment for conditions including breast cancer, brain injury, cystic fibrosis and tuberculosis. The research conducted contributes to the development of cardiac valve substitutes and anesthetics.

Although critics argue that animal testing is essential for medical advancements, this does not change the fact that animal testing is unethical and animals are entitled to their individual intrinsic rights.



CAFFEINE OVERLOAD: HOW ENERGY DRINKS EFFECT STUDENTS HEALTH

By: Ava Canaday

In recent times there has been an increase in the consumption of energy drinks. Many students resort to energy drinks to help give them energy throughout the day. It does give a boost in energy however but everyday consumption leads to further health complications.

Energy drinks cause serious health problems for students that lead to serious health complications in the future.

Energy drinks permanently impact students' health, forcing caffeine to be the major thing keeping them involved in daily activities. According to the Cleveland Clinic, energy drinks are made of ingredients like concoction, taurine herbal extracts like ginseng and different amino acids. The two most powerful ingredients are the amount of caffeine and sugar that is in energy drinks. Caffeine can lead to high levels of anxiety, jittery feelings and trouble sleeping. However, caffeine is not the only problem with energy drinks. These side effects lead to higher health problems and fewer years to live happily. Strokes among all have been seen to increase as the more energy drinks are being consumed. The high levels of sugar contained in energy drinks leads to weight gaining and metabolic issues. With having high levels of sugar in a drink it makes it worse for people and makes the tasting of the drinks seem more artificial and burdening in the mouth of the consumer. Thus, making these drinks harder to digest and leading to more addiction rather than drinking them to boost people's energy levels.

Recently energy drinks have been known for causing cardiovascular problems, nervous system problems and an increased chance of stroke. According to MayoClinic, overconsumption of caffeine, which is also known as caffeine toxicity can lead to higher chances of hallucinations and deadly heart problems.

In addition to metabolic issues, energy drinks can also cause sleep problems for many students. Many young people have seen a decline in their sleep schedule. According to Health, the more often someone drinks energy drinks, the less sleep they will end up getting. Caffeine promotes a more wakeful sleep by blocking a sleep inducing chemical called adenosine. Without this chemical it reduces the amount of deep sleep a person can get, which is considered a stage of sleep for feeling refreshed for the next day. Without having enough sleep many people experience mood changes, depression, weight gain and fatigue.

Energy drinks are not as harmful or addicting as drugs. However there are still some non-reversible effects that both share in common. Addiction being the biggest one, as just as someone can get addicted to a sport or a food, energy drinks are no different.

Although energy drinks can help students be productive for a longer period of time, they ultimately ruin a student's health. According to Healthline, addiction is described as a psychological condition that many get from making a habit out of something. When students try to stay alert in class, once a student drinks one energy drink it is difficult to step away from them.

Though it is unhealthy, drinking energy drinks every once in a while will not affect students' health. Having one every once in a while allows students' bodies to fully digest the drink. Only drinking a few doesn't leave as extreme side effects as having one every day. Drinking energy drinks all the time can lead to cardiovascular problems and nervous system problems that can be devastating for students' health. However, drinking them everyday will affect students' health. Caffeine, insomnia and addiction are all seen as harmful to people's overall health which leads to cardiovascular and nervous system problems in their future. Health for students should always come first which is why many should try some alternatives to help stop this deadly addiction before it causes worse effects on their health. For individuals struggling to get off of energy drinks try drinks like coffee, tea and fruit based drinks to fill those energy needed cravings.



STEP FOOT INTO ATHLETIC TRAINING

By: Sydney Rocio Wade

Photo by: Abigail Mui

Every winning team has staff dedicated to injury prevention, recovery and performance. Many athletes rely on dedicated athletic trainers to assist in their sports in order to keep them healthy and ready to perform. Whether it is practice or a big game, the trainers are there to help.

“A lot of people think athletic trainers are just like the glorified water girls or something,” junior Rhianna Pandya said. “

But there’s so much more that we do. We help run physical days, and we handle a lot of injuries and physical therapy for all of these different sports. So we’re more than just water girls. We really are, like, medical support.”

Athletic trainers are well-trained and considered on-site healthcare providers for sports teams. They assist with all sports such as volleyball, basketball, baseball, soccer and football. They help the athletes by keeping the water station filled with water, treating injuries such as taping an ankle and assisting with physical therapy. According to Rhianna, it is a hard job depending on conditions such as working in the heat, cold or even when it rains.

“It’s super fun, but also very time-consuming,” junior Ava Nguyen said. “I do have to miss a lot of class for games, specifically sixth or seventh on Tuesdays or Fridays, but I think it’s worth it because you get to travel with the teams and watch them play.”

On Friday nights, during football season, when looking at the sidelines, the trainers are hard at work. They leave before the players to make sure

On Friday nights, during football season, when looking at the sidelines, the trainers are hard at work. They leave before the players to make sure they can get everything set up and ready to go, like the taping station and the gatorade station. Each trainer has a different assigned job for the game to run smoothly, whether it’s helping with big injuries, filling up waters or first aid. All trainers get a chance to do these jobs, helping them improve their trainer skills along the way.

“Without an athletic training course, they’d have to do all of their physical therapy outside of school,” Pandya said. “They wouldn’t be able to have any taping or anything done if they had injured their wrist.

If they don’t have people who know how to do all this stuff, it’d be very difficult to have an athletics program.”

The athletic trainers take care of the student-athletes by making sure they are healthy and in top shape to play or practice with their peers. Though they may not be in the spotlight, they play a vital role in the athletic department. Athletic training is not only a valuable program for the athletes, but it is also valuable for the students who go through the program.

“Being a trainer does open the path for future careers in medicine,” Nguyen said. “Not just sports medicine, it could lead to careers in physical therapy, or just medicine in general. It helps the students learn more about whether they would be interested in pursuing these careers.”

The class is an opportunity for the students who are interested in

dents who are interested in exploring the world of medicine in a hands-on way, because it is much more than just learning about basic first aid. Trainers are also equipped with the knowledge and skills, such as anatomy and physiology, in order to understand how the body works. The athletic training program is filled with hardworking and determined students who dedicate their time to this course, and to the teams that they assist, opening opportunities for them to develop new skills as well as learn new things about the other side of sports, which is medicine.

“I think it’s one of the best decisions I’ve made,” Pandya said. “I love athletic training. Through athletic training, I became really interested in sports medicine, so now I’m actually really interested in becoming a sports medicine physician or possibly an orthopedic.”

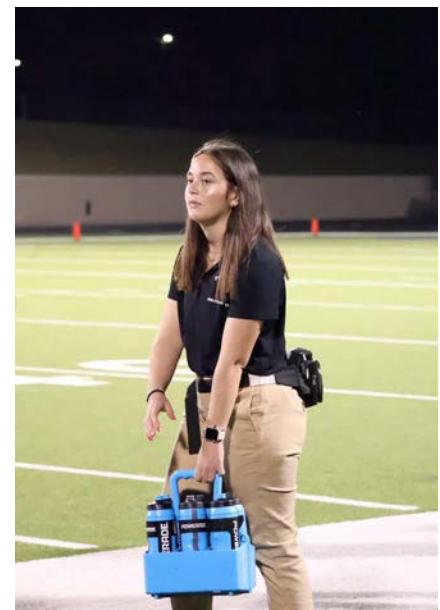


Photo by: Abigail Mui

GAME ON: NEW SEASON TAKES COURT

By: Katie Nguyen

This year's boys' basketball team is gearing up for another exciting season, showcasing talent, determination and teamwork on the court. Led by experienced leaders and energized by new players ready to make a difference, the team has spent the preseason improving their skills and building trust. As the season tips off, the players are set to channel their preparation and confidence into every game, leaving their mark on the court from start to finish.

"I think with all the teamwork, the good chemistry, all being together as a team and no one being an individual in the team, I think we can all make it to the playoffs," junior Tristan Pressley said.

The bond between the basketball team has grown stronger through long workouts, tough practices and time spent outside of the court. Every challenge they have faced together, whether it is pushing through harsh practices or fighting back during close games, the team has grown closer as a group. The trust they have built allows them to play with confidence, knowing that every player has the other's back. That connection has turned them from just a roster of names to a family that is ready to be there each time they step on the court. Their chemistry and mutual respect for one another have become the foundation for their hard work, fueling their drive and determination as they head into the new season.

"We've had very high expectations for the basketball program," basketball coach Matt Wester said. "I think we've won more than 24 games

each of the last four years, and this year we're returning nine kids from the '25 winning team."

Excitement is spreading across the school and throughout the community as the new season starts. Students are already talking about packing the stands, families are marking dates on their calendars and fans are eager to see what this year's team will bring to the court. The talk in the hallways, the social media hype and the excitement at pep rallies all point to the same thing: people can't wait to see this team play on the court and show just how much their practices have paid off. With so much excitement building, it is clear that this season is more than just basketball; it is a chance for the Panthers to bring the school together and make memories that will last long after the buzzer.

"We talk a lot during practice, we're a good team, and I think we're very disciplined," Pressley said. "The coaches have made a huge impact on our team, and how hard we try."

The coaches have driven every step of the team's preparation. They've pushed the players to reach new levels, emphasizing not just skill development, but also discipline, strategy, and capability. Every practice has been carefully planned to challenge the team, scrimmages are set up to stimulate high-pressure game situations, drills are designed to improve both the individual and team, and film sessions are used to break down every play to find ways to get better. The coach's guidance has made the team sharper, more confident and more connected, turning the team's



talent into skill.

"The kids have been working very hard, they've probably worked as hard as any group I've coached in the preseason," Wester said. "I don't think we've ever put a team through as much rigorous training as we have this group."

More than anything else, it's the friendships that are capturing everyone's attention. From the first whistle to the final buzzer of practice, the team have been pushing themselves to the limit, running drills, perfecting plays and working tirelessly on every aspect of their game. The practices drone with energy as athletes rotate through shooting drills, all while maintaining focus and discipline. This constant energy that buzzes through the team brings the players closer and encourages them to work harder, pushing each athlete to give their best in every drill and carry the same intensity and determination onto the court during every game.

"We have a lot of juniors and seniors on our team, so we have good chemistry, we hang out outside of practice and we're good friends outside of school," Pressley said.

MAKING RACKET: BADMINTON CLUB TAKES OFF

By: Aamna Umer

As the school year progresses, students are wondering when they will hear from the Badminton club, excitedly anticipating participating in activities and fun tournaments. And fortunately for them, the wait is cut short as the club works hard to push on track all the activities planned for this year.

“Badminton is not really popular here,” President Shiru Zhang said. “Since nobody else started this club, we decided we would. So, we started it in your junior year.”

Despite being one of the most popular sports, Badminton is not as widely played in the United States. Intending to share a sport they loved, the members of the badminton club continue to work hard starting junior year to ensure that more people learn to play it alongside creating memorable connections to look back on and cherish. They create a welcoming community which, through their dedication, becomes a space where students can gather and unwind.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a complete beginner or know how to play,” Vice President Kyrie Keith said. “We make sure everyone enjoys it.”

These gatherings provide more than just casual play; they also allow students to develop their skills,

practice teamwork and experience the excitement of friendly competition. They ensure that everyone feels included. Whether you’re playing for the first time or are a seasoned player, this club provides an environment where everyone can just enjoy the sport at its core without any pressure.

“We just really want people who are new to badminton to experience it for the first time,” Zhang said. “Even if it’s just for fun, it’s important that students have a place to play and connect with others.”

Encouraging participation has also been a work in progress. While badminton is not mainstream, social media and word of mouth have proven effective. They collaborate with other school organizations like Asian Appreciation Association and Muslim Student Association to reach even more students. The response proves encouraging for the club, and several students show a growing interest. As the club grows more, Zhang and Keith hope it becomes a recognized fixture in school, being carried on even after they graduate.

“I just really want this club to still be here when we graduate,” Keith said. “Even though it’s not popular, somebody has to take over.”

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Photo by: Particle6



often falls on mainstream sports, the badminton club stands out as a cultivating community. For seniors to end their high school in excitement, and for juniors who keep the badminton club alive. By growing the club, fostering teamwork, and bringing every member closer together, they aim to make their years at school unforgettable and also set in stone the club’s footing.

“I really love playing with my friends,” Keith said. “So that’s the main objective of this group, to have fun.”

50.4% of students said it would be fun to see more Badminton tournaments

35.5% of students did not comment

16.8% of students said they would not.

HOLIDAY MOVIES: STAFF PICKS

By: Inara Pabani

Frozen (2013)

This movie celebrates the beauty and fun of through stunning visuals along with a heartwarming story about two sisters. “Frozen” is a Disney film directed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, famous for portraying themes of sisterhood and self-acceptance. The film mainly focuses on the bond between two sisters. Viewers deeply connect with Elsa’s struggles of self-doubt as Anna’s determination to reach her sister and embrace love in all forms highlights themes of courage, loyalty and empathy, which viewers find inspiring. The film engages the youth on an emotional level, making it more than just a story but a reflection of the challenges of growing up and learning to accept yourself.



Photo by: IMDb



Photo by: IMDb

Home Alone (1990)

Known for being one of the best classic Christmas comedies about a young boy who accidentally gets left behind by his family at Christmas and must defend his home from a burglary. This movie highlights the themes of independence, family and courage. For families, Home Alone became a yearly holiday tradition that balanced laughter with heartfelt lessons about what truly matters during the time of Christmas.

How Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)

“How Grinch Stole Christmas” delivers a vibrant and heartwarming take on Dr. Seuss’ beloved tale about how the Grinch’s hatred for Christmas is transformed after he discovers the true meaning of the holiday through kindness and generosity. Throughout this generation, the movie became a holiday that taught the value of kindness and understanding. This film blends festive themes with humor while exploring themes of redemption, acceptance and the meaning behind holiday traditions. It encouraged us to look beyond appearance and the importance of community.



Photo by: IMDb



Photo by: IMDb

The Polar Express (2004)

Based on a 1985 children’s book by Chris Van Allsburg, “The Polar Express”, directed by Robert Zemeckis, is a wonderful movie for anyone who wants to recapture the magic of Christmas. The audience explores the story of a young boy who, on Christmas Eve, embarks on a magical train journey to the North Pole, learning about the spirit of the holiday and the importance of believing along the way. The film’s stunning animation and nostalgic story captures the wonder of children for the youth, reminding the magic in holiday traditions. The film focuses on a heartwarming adventure that blends fantasy, humor and heartfelt themes, making it an memorable experience that creates a sense of joy for the families.

Charlie and The Chocolate Factory (2005)

This movie shares many joyful and heartwarming qualities. “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” follows a young Charlie Bucket as he wins a golden ticket to visit Willy Wonka’s magical chocolate factories along with six other children, where wonder, imagination and life lessons abound. The film evokes a sense of delight and togetherness that resonates much like a classic holiday story rending viewers of the simple happiness of childhood and the importance of appreciating those around us. For the youth, the film inspires creativity, reinforces the value of empathy and reminds the viewers that appreciation of the small joys in life can lead to lasting happiness.



Photo by: IMDb

TEN DOLLAR FOUNDING FATHER: TEN YEARS WITH HAMILTON

By: Aamna Umer

As Leslie Odom Jr. returns to reprise his iconic role as Aaron Burr, a newer generation of theater students is rediscovering the show's relevance, finding themselves reflected in it. With a play so upbeat, "Hamilton" was first performed on January 20th, 2015, on Broadway at the Public Theatre, and from that fateful day, it lit up every history classroom and empty school stages. In the beginning, few could predict that its mix of rap, revolution and raw emotion would resonate so powerfully with the younger generations, but it continues to skyrocket and stay just as relevant in theaters today.

"It motivated me to try and aspire to be at that level of acting," freshman Marley Key said. "Hamilton is definitely one of those things that made me feel like 'oh, this is what theater is about.'"

From school plays and stage performances, many students in the theater, like Key, are not just inspired by the show's storytelling but also find themselves incorporating the energy, discography, and lyrical mastery from "Hamilton" in their own performances. This freedom in creativity leads to students leaving their marks in high school theater, as students did with their performance of the musical SIX. The confidence students discover through "Hamilton" doesn't stop at the stage.

"When I saw the play, it showed me that you just have to be confident," junior Genesis Baldwin said. "If you're nervous, people can tell. It helped me mentally be louder and believe in myself."

me mentally be louder and believe in myself."

This confidence bleeds into everyday life, and it hones student's abilities to be their authentic selves. It encourages students to speak up for themselves, and keep their voice steady and heard. Or as Lin Manuel Miranda puts it, 'holler just to be heard.' This musical helps students discover what they want through means of performance.

"I took that confidence I saw in 'Hamilton', and I told myself that I have to try," Baldwin says. "Because if I'm insecure about it, I won't even start."

Beyond the stage, the influence of "Hamilton" extends into classrooms as well, transforming history lessons that were once boring into something much more engaging. Its resonance with the younger generation increases its impact on education. By combining music that appeals to the younger generation, it turns complex events into memorable lessons and connects the students to these stories more.

"It was hard for me to keep up with history," Baldwin said, "But in theatrical form, it's easier to understand. It has really helped me in class as well."

In many history classes, "Hamilton" is used as a way to provide unforgettable lessons. Music and performance help students stay engaged and stay informed through the knowledge of the lyrics that the broadcast performers sing.

"It really helped me believe in my intelligence," Baldwin said. "For students who especially struggle with comprehensive subjects like history,

'Hamilton' makes it as easy as can be."

Inclusivity and representation are two key lessons from "Hamilton" that students carry into their educational pursuits. The diversity in this musical challenges students to consider different perspectives, showing that history is not through one group of people, but through the working of people from every background.

"I think 'Hamilton' definitely influenced the way people of color look at extracurriculars," Baldwin said. "It inspired a lot of people, especially students of color, to join Theater."

The influence of "Hamilton" goes far beyond just the stage on Broadway, as it also brings together students under the umbrella of history, performance and art. This musical is a reminder for students that history and its depiction through music shows America's story in a way that's much richer and personal than in textbooks. "Hamilton" highlights how the nation's growth and identity has always been shaped by those of every background.

"It sticks with you," Key said. "The music, the meaning, the way it tells the stories. It just stays in your head, even years later."



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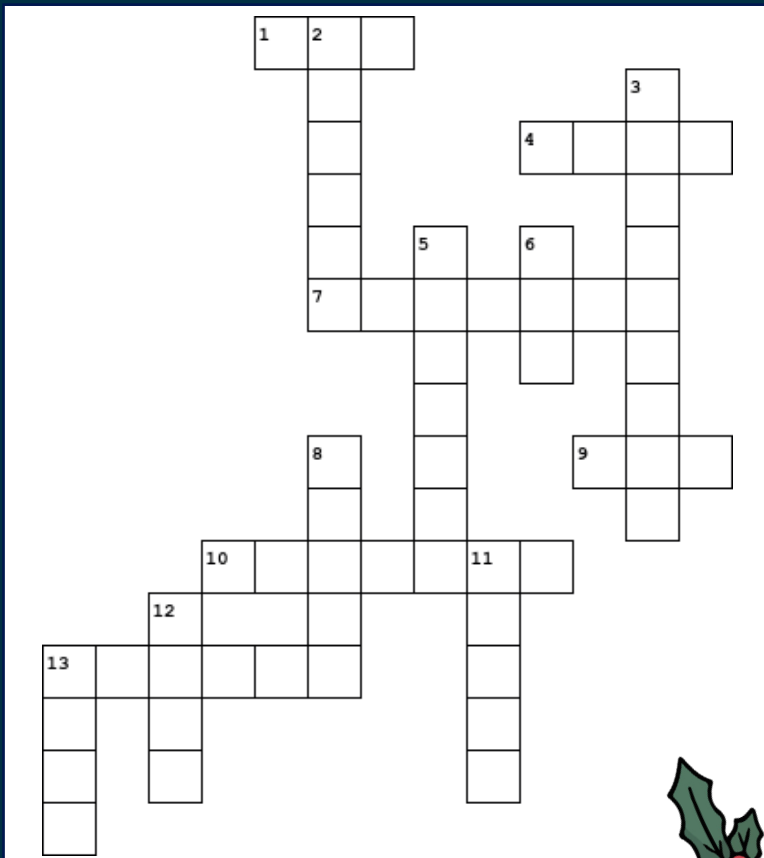
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Christmas WORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. What color is Rudolph's nose?
4. What does Santa give to the naughty children?
7. In which country did putting up a tree for Christmas originate from?
9. "A _____ horse open slay" (Hint: Jingle Bells)
10. "_____ the red-nosed reindeer.."
13. "_____ the Snowman, was a very jolly soul.."

DOWN

2. Popular Christmas drink.
3. Popular sweet treat during Christmas?
5. "_____ I made it out of clay."
6. What is the name of the Grinch's dog?
8. Main character in the movie named 'Elf'.
11. The city the McCallisters are going on vacation to when they leave Kevin behind.
12. "Silent night, _____ night."
13. How many ghosts visited Ebenezer Scrooge in 'A Christmas Carol'.

FINISH THE WORD PUZZLE AND COME TO THE
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