



“Lion pride in print”

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2017

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

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Sports:
Lions, Lady
Lions continue
to battle
through
spring
seasons.

— See page 7



Scan QR code to go to the SchoolWay app, which can be used for both iPhone and Android.

ILPC SLATED

The newspaper staff and journalism students will take part in the Interscholastic League Press Conference April 22-23. The convention is held on the campus of the University of Texas in Austin. Students take part in a total of six conventions throughout the weekend. There are four on Saturday and two on Sunday with all conventions being 50-minute-long sessions. Journalism professionals and sponsors will teach the sessions. Individual awards are distributed for several divisions within newspaper and yearbook. Broadcast divisions will be announced on Saturday followed by the overall publication ratings during the awards ceremony on Sunday. *The Lions Roar* newspaper staff has received 11 consecutive Star Awards over the last decade. These medals include one bronze, four silver, and six gold.

CHEER RESULTS

Cheer tryouts were held on March 10 to elect next year's varsity, junior varsity, and junior high cheerleaders in the high school gym.

The varsity cheerleaders will be Madison Ratliff as head cheerleader, Lindsay Lucas, Krysten Morris, McKenna Thompson, Kourtnee Waters, Caroline Masters, Madi Connally, and Alayna Koemel. Laney Jaco will be next year's mascot.

Junior varsity cheerleaders are Blanton Belcher, Landree Connally, and Carli Edgar.

Junior high cheerleaders for next year will be Haily Cox, Gracie Price, Ella Webb, Isabella Alvarez, Lizzie Chavez, and Savannah Hobbs.

PROM RESULTS

Seniors Roman Fuentes and Michaela Reames were crowned as Prom King and Queen at the Happy Life Wedding Venue on April 1.

A total of three senior boys and three senior girls were nominated for prom king and queen, including Roman Fuentes, Jordan Pleasant, Jake Green, Michaela Reames, Alexis Munden, and Kylea Gardner.

The annual event used the theme “Starry Night” this year. The venue was decorated with white flowers, fairy lights, and navy decorations.

The nominees were selected by junior and senior students, with the top three among the boys and girls named as nominees.

The overall winners for King and Queen went to the two students with the most votes.

District becomes ‘innovative’

Newly approved educational concept adds flexibility

BY RYLIE SCOTT
Assistant Editor

Through the Texas Education Agency, Albany Independent School District is going through a process to earn the title of “District of Innovation” in order to be permitted to make local decisions based on new and innovative concepts.

“A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 that gives traditional school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas’s open enrollment charter schools,” superintendent Shane Fields said. “To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan.”

To become a district of innovation, the Board of Trustees must approve a resolution, hold a public hearing, and appoint com-

mittees to develop plans with comprehensive education programs. The plan must be posted online for 30 days, the Board must notify the Commissioner of Education of the intention to vote on the proposed plan, and the school board and District Advisory Committee must approve the final plan with a two-thirds majority vote.

“The Board of Trustees approved the final vote on March 20th,” Fields said.

According to junior/senior high principal Kevin Hill, the newly-formed advisory committee includes teachers, administrators, and a couple of community members that decide on certain aspects that they feel are important for our district to change.

“Instead of necessarily changing the education law, the TEA allows certain districts to make some adjustments in certain areas,” Hill said.

The plan can be updated and amended as Albany ISD continues to go forward.

“For instance, we asked for a change from the uniform start date where every school has to start after the fourth Monday in August,” Hill said. “If at this time next



Principal Kevin Hill (center) shows Blaine Kayga (left) Brayden Sullivan, and Jose Comacho (right) a drone to be used next year in Makerspace lab. PHOTO BY RYLIE SCOTT

year, we look at something else that as a district we would like relief from, we are able to adjust.”

Since it is a district-wide reform, the District of Innovation flexibility will not only affect the high school and junior high campuses, but the elementary as well.

“The impact on Nancy Smith Elementary is primarily focused on the school start date, classroom teacher/student ratio option, and teacher certifications,” elementary principal Jonathan Scott said.

Along with district of innovation, a new program

will be introduced to the high school as well – Makerspace.

“Makerspace is a part of our innovation,” Fields said. “We are hoping to provide more Career and Technology opportunities for the students, which could hopefully lead to certifications. We are also allowing ourselves in the District of Innovation Plan the opportunity to employ experienced people who are masters in their career field to teach career courses if there is a need and an opening.”

Makerspace will be a

lab-like area that encourages hands-on learning through the use of tools – anything from glitter and glue, to homemade circuits, 3D printers, and computer-aided design software, or CAD.

“It is a safe place to create, problem solve, and dare to think differently,” Fields said. “There will be failed attempts along the process as students tackle challenges, and that is okay. There is not a cookie cutter plan that says what it has to be, but it will be a space that

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One-act performs Holocaust play

Students place as district alternate

BY JILLIAN GUINN
Staff Writer

One-Act Play performed *Remember My Name*, finishing as district alternate.

Sophomore Caroline Masters and junior Natalie Hayner were rewarded with All-Star cast, and junior Lindsey Lucas received a technical award.

“I really think we did a great job telling the story,” director Jenny Scott said. “The acting was great and everyone worked hard and was flexible with the adjustments.”



Sophomore Caroline Masters (L-R), Senior Kylea Gardner, Sophomore Kade Everitt, and Junior Rylie Scott perform the play *Remember My Name* by Joanna H. Kraus for the public in preparation for their district contest in Anson. The cast placed as the alternate play at district competition. PHOTO PROVIDED

Before the district performance, several students had to step down from their positions which made it difficult to prepare, according to Masters.

“Juniors Dax Neece and Parker Moon, and sophomore Kade Everitt stepped up when we needed them and did an excellent job,” Scott said. “I wouldn’t have changed anything, but it definitely made it harder for the students to prepare.”

Right up to the performance, the cast was struggling with the time limit on the play. There was even an alternate ending in case they were almost out of time, according to Scott.

“A little piece inside me was worried about the time limit,” Lucas said. “We hadn’t really

SEE “One Act” Pg 8

Academic competitors advance

Near record number qualify for regionals

BY KADE EVERITT
Staff Writer

Students competed at the District UIL Academic meet two weeks ago with many advancing to regionals. Among those advancing, the journalism department is sending the largest contingent.

“I’m really pleased with the journalism competitors,” journalism coach Donnie Lucas said. “Everyone who competed in a journalism event advanced in one contest or another. Now we need to buckle down and practice because regionals is

a much tougher competition.”

Senior Rachel Hill, who is advancing to regionals with a second in feature writing and third in editorial, competed in journalism events at the district meet for the first time in Anson on March 25.

“I was kind of unsure how exactly I would do, but I just tried to write as well as I could and give the judges what they wanted,” Hill said. “I didn’t want to be too fancy. I wanted to be straight up and catch the judge’s eye in the first five sentences. I wanted to hook the judges on my story.”

Hill also acknowledged that doing writing events has prepared her for college classes in the fall.

“I want to pursue some type of English major or a journalism minor,” Hill said. “Having this experi-



Sophomore Caroline Masters practices her piece for Prose and Poetry coach Jennifer Everitt before participating in the district UIL competition on March 25. Several students advanced to the regional meet in Odessa.

PHOTO BY KADE EVERITT

ence like in newspaper and getting a random prompt to try to come up with a story has broadened my horizons and made me more mature.”

According to UIL coordinator Rick Davis, Albany did exceptionally well at the district meet.

“There are a total of 16 kids going on,” Davis said. “So that is well over 50 percent of the total number of students who competed. I am very proud.”

Although students did very well, the school placed third with 303 points.

“Stamford won the meet with 434 points and Haskell was second with 432,” Davis said. “There were four other schools that were at least 120 points behind us, so we were a good solid third place.”

SEE “UIL” Pg 8

EDITORIALS

Four finals a year is enough

There has been talk of getting rid of exemptions from finals for students who have a grade that is high enough in that class that taking the final is not necessary. Proceeding with this idea would be a big mistake. Having exemptions makes students want to try harder in order to become exempt from some finals. Students do not like having to stay at school all day during finals week. Most students try to raise their grade at the end of the semester just so that they will not have to take the final. Without exemptions, students may not try to bring up their grade.

For each absence, the school loses money. Forcing students to take every final would almost guarantee more absences. At the end of the year, most students are not worried about class anymore and simply want school to be over. It would make more sense for the school to continue offering exemptions so they do not receive less money from the state.

Being forced to take every final would also put a great deal of stress on students. Studying for a major test in every class would be hard and time consuming. This is exactly what students would have to do if they were forced to take every final. Having to do this would add a lot of stress at the end of the school year.

Supporters of making all finals mandatory think that if students take finals, they will be better prepared for college. This opinion is misguided. Under the current finals policy, students are still required to take two finals each semester. Taking four finals over the school year is enough to give students a feel for how college courses will be conducted.

The school should continue with the current exemption policy that is in place now. There is no need to change a system that works so well.

Early applications are vital

Most young people in today’s society idolize particular colleges, hoping to one day attend the university of their choosing. Being accepted into a “dream” college and attending until graduation is possible but requires hard work and determination. Filling out scholarships as early as possible is one way to better your odds of acceptance and make the waiting process much more comforting. Waiting to hear back from a university on the status of your application is the longest, and most tedious part of the application process. When applying early, the university is more likely to see and review applications faster, which consequently shortens the timespan between submission and acceptance.

Entering in the early admission bracket puts one in a much smaller group of applicants and will make him or her more apt to being accepted than those who apply later. College admission is somewhat first-come, first-serve because they only accept a specific number of incoming students each year. Even if one was to make perfect grades, he or she still might not be accepted if all spots for incoming freshmen are taken at the time of the application review. That is why it’s crucial to apply as early as possible.

Getting one’s applications started early also looks better in the eyes of the administration and those reviewing a person’s information because it not only shows that one is motivated, but that he or she is passionate about being accepted into that specific university. Something as simple as having enough self-motivation to fill out an application early could earn a person a spot in his or her “dream school.”

Some could argue that applying early doesn’t matter as long as you make high test scores and good grades, but that is false. Universities accept a set number of students each year, and no matter the circumstances, they will not be able to increase that number. It is extremely important to fill out college applications as early as possible in order to make one’s chances of enrollment higher.



THE

LIONS ROAR

ILPC 2016 Silver Star Winner

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

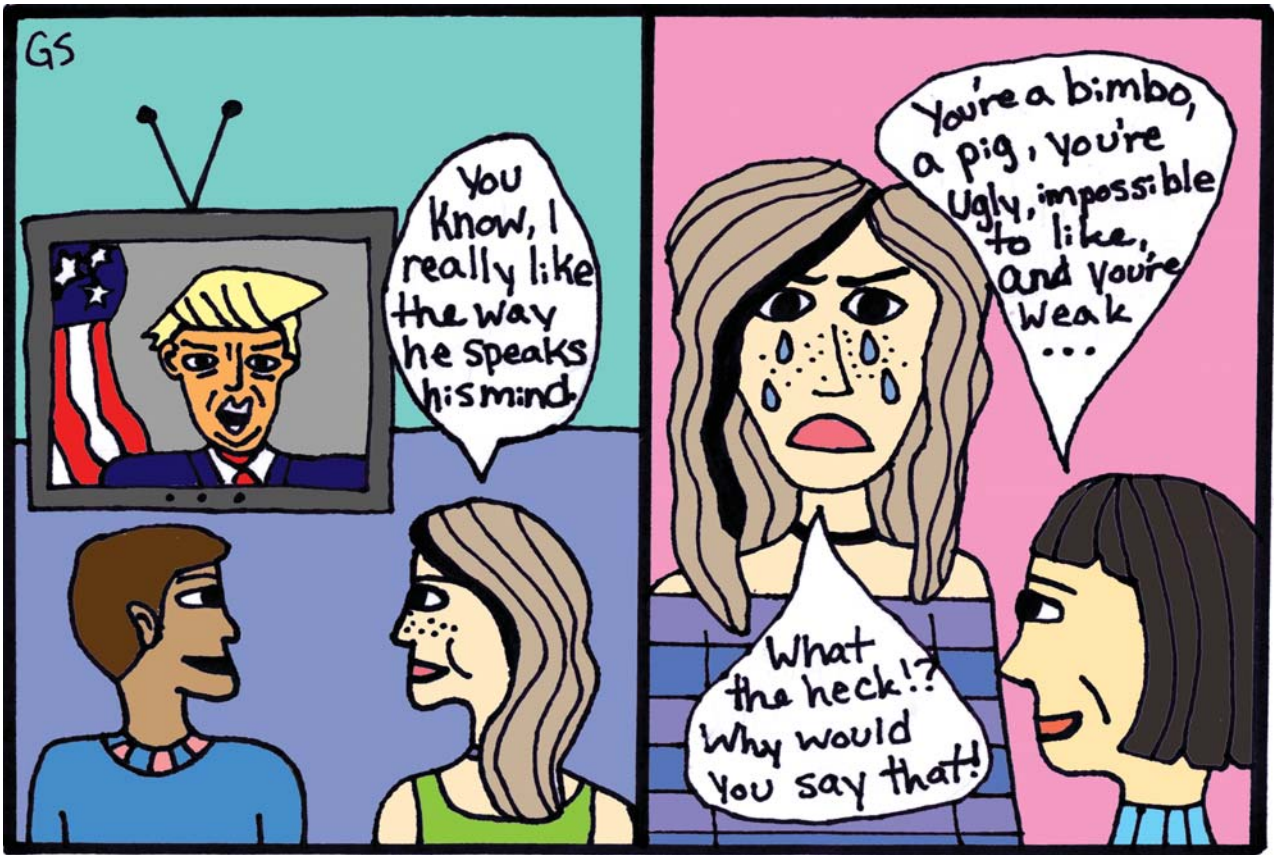
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More to life than high school achievements



Gardner Seeds

As my time at AHS, and in Albany, is coming to an end, I’ve been reflecting back on the years spent playing sports, signing up for various leadership positions, auditioning for plays, and so on. The thing that I have come to realize the most is that, to be frank, none of it really matters as much as we think.

The thing that I feel that everyone needs to know is that there is so much more to life than a cheap rhinestone crown and a sash that reads prom queen. You can go on to be wildly successful and no one will ask, or care, if you were voted class favorite in your 32-person class at your 2A high school. The same goes if you don’t get the part in the play or you don’t win the crown. I remember being so crushed when I didn’t get the part I wanted my freshman year in One-Act Play. But you know what? I couldn’t tell you a single line in that play now. Looking back I wish I had realized how much more I would accomplish during the next four years that made that one loss seem pretty

insignificant.

Sure, there are great accomplishments in high school that you should be happy about, such as taking your football team to state two consecutive years, but when you’re 50 years old sitting in your cubicle at your job, what you did when you were 17 and 18 years old might not be as defining as you once thought it would be. I don’t in any way mean to discredit the hard work that each player and coach put in to making those state appearances, I just mean to say that you will have the chance to do far greater things in your life than representing your high school in the championship.

For the first 18 years of your life, these accomplishments are the highlights, and they should be. But when you get to the end of your life, you could be well into your 90’s. A favorite quote of mine is from Erma Bombeck.

“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me.’”

My hope is that every person, including myself, could relate to this in some way when it comes to the end of their life. I’m hopeful that one day we all may use every ounce of talent that we have and become something great.

Leaving my heart across the Atlantic



Rachel's Revelations

The smell of dirt, the sound of children yelling ‘mzungu’, the taste of garden-fresh vegetables, the sight of chickens scurrying through the streets, and the feel of hands all over my arms stole my heart during spring break. The more I travel to Uganda, Africa the less I want to come home.

I recently came back from my second trip across the pond to Uganda, and I now have a personal connection to the place. On the first day we visited the school, I met a sweet-faced little girl. Even though I could not get her to tell me her name, I fell in love with her. She never released my hand, and she stuck by my side all day long, dancing and playing with me. The next day at the same school, I got to teach a class. As I walked around the classroom, a hand grabbed mine. I looked down, and sure enough, that same sweet face was looking up at me. Her teacher

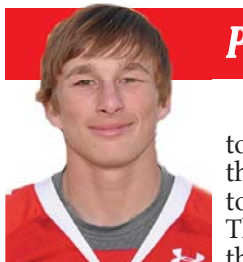
was the one who told me that her name was Shakira.

That night, news was presented to me that my team and I had the opportunity to sponsor a child. My mind instantly went to this sweet girl who had stolen my heart. However, we had 25 kids to pick from. I was desperately praying that she would be one of the 25. The next day, I saw her smiling face in line with 24 other beautiful kids and I just knew that she would be the one I would sponsor.

We drew for picking order, and I drew number two. When my turn came, I chose the shy five year old whose hand held mine tighter than anyone else’s. For 12 American dollars a month, I will be able to provide a school uniform, lunch, shoes and education for her until she graduates.

I now have an even greater reason to go back to this captivating place. I plan on following Shakira as she grows up and staying in contact with the school in Uganda. Being able to provide so much for so little has helped me grow more than anything I could experience on American soil, and I look forward to the day that I can share this beautiful story with Shakira herself.

Hunting helps build strong relationships



Parker's 'Pinions

Albany is one of those small towns across the Lone Star State that is different from others due to its longstanding traditions. There is one tradition in this town that I like above all else, and that is hunting.

Our small town is located in one of the best areas in Texas for whitetail deer, dove, duck hunting surprisingly, and quail hunting. Most people around here take for granted how good the hunting really is, but in the years past, there was a drastic decline in quail population all across the state; it was to the point where my dad thought I would never get to hunt them. It got to where seeing a single quail was like winning a million-dollar lottery ticket for surrounding land-owners and hunters. Before the decline, I used to hear about all the new friendships made and tricked

out quail rigs around the town on the weekends during hunting season, but I was too young to remember any of it. This past year, I finally knew what everyone was talking about because the quail population increased to a point enough for hunting. My favorite part about quail hunting is getting to train and run dogs. Last year I bought my first lab and learned to train her. It has been the best experience of my life because I never realized how intelligent a dog could be. Along with labs, I get to work with my dad’s English Setters.

The reason I am now in love with quail hunting is because of the new people I get to meet through my dad or friends. This has already led to memories that can never be taken away and friendships that can’t be broken. For a small town in the middle of nowhere, most kids or even adults wouldn’t get to experience this. It shocks most of my dad’s friends from Dallas when I tell them that the majority of kids my age don’t hunt or fish. Hunting is a passion for me and my dad, and we try to cherish each chance we go together as if it is our last.

Our 2¢ worth



If you were President what would you do?



SENIOR GRANT HEAD

I would solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by encouraging the two-state solution and drawing all of the Jews out of the West Bank.



JUNIOR ADAM FAITH

If I was President I would make the Vice President do all of the work, and I would have fun and do whatever I want.



SOPHOMORE ELYSA MARTINEZ

I would make everyone equal.



FRESHMAN JEB BECKER

I would allow immigration so there could be more cultural restaurants.

ROARING REVIEWS

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE



February 10, 2017 PG 129 min
Fantasy/Action

There are big changes brewing in Gotham, but if Batman (Will Arnett) wants to save the city from the Joker's (Zach Galifianakis) hostile takeover, he may have to drop the lone vigilante thing, try to work with others and maybe, just maybe, learn to lighten up. Maybe his superhero sidekick Robin (Michael Cera) and loyal butler Alfred (Ralph Fiennes) can show him a thing or two.

Director: Chris McKay
Writer: Seth Grahame-Smith, Chris McKenna
Stars: Will Arnett, Michael Cera

Staff Review:



THE GREAT WALL



February 17, 2017 PG-13 120 min
Fantasy/Mystery

The Great Wall is a 2016 monster film directed by Zhang Yimou and starring Matt Damon, who plays a European mercenary in China during the Song dynasty. He encounters the Great Wall of China and meets Chinese soldiers who defend against monsters. In search of gunpowder, Damon is captured by the Chinese soldiers but inevitably joins the fight against these monsters to keep them out of the city.

Director: Zhang Yimou
Writers: Carlo Bernard, Doug Miro
Stars: Matt Damon, Tian Jing, Andy Lau

Staff Review:



LOGAN



March 3, 2017 R 141 min
Sci-Fi/Drama

In the near future, a weary Logan cares for an ailing Professor X in a hideout on the Mexican border. But Logan's attempts to hide from the world and his legacy are up-ended when a young mutant arrives, being pursued by dark forces. As his health deteriorates, he must fight to protect himself and those around him. *Logan* is a representation of the circle of life through the eyes of a mutant.

Director: James Mangold
Writer: James Mangold, Scott Frank
Stars: Hugh Jackman, Dafne Keen

Staff Review:



Students find enjoyment in cooking

Chore becomes hobby for some due to creativity in kitchen

BY HENRY KELLY
Entertainment Editor

Some find it relaxing, while others find it exciting. Either way, cooking is a helpful hobby that can be used throughout a lifetime.

Junior Jessica Vega found pleasure in cooking at a young age.

"When I was seven, I would bring blueberry muffins to the third grade class," Vega said. "It's always fun, especially with my mom."

Vega's mother has been a big influence when it comes to cooking.

"My mom cooks in a restaurant, and I learned everything from her," Vega said. "I would see her cooking food I like, and I would think about how I wanted to do that too."

Her mom has also made an impact at the restaurant.

"My mom made a meal at the Ice House," Vega said. "The workers can make things for themselves, so she made the 'Mexican hamburger' for herself and her boss liked it and put it on the menu."

Vega says the responsibilities of high school have gotten in the way of cooking.

"In junior high, I used to cook around three times a week with my mom," Vega said. "Now, I'm involved with a lot of activities, so I can't cook as much."

The little cooking she does now is usually baking.

"I mainly bake pastries and cakes now," Vega said. "And now my sister can too, so we bake together a lot."

Vega finds cooking with her mom the best bonding time.

"I make memories with my mom when we cook," Vega said, "mainly because we both love doing it."

Vega says when she cooks alone, she is usually cooking just for herself.

Unlike Vega, science teacher Andre Raymond likes to cook for his family.

"I cook a minimum of three times a week," Raymond said. "I mostly like cooking vegetables because there are so many different ones and different ways to cook them."

Things have changed for Raymond since he first began cooking.

"I started to cook at home more because I needed to help around the house since it was so busy," Raymond said. "Now, I go to HEB and find a vegetable that I've never cooked before to try it out."

Raymond's fondness for cooking began when he was young.

"When I was in junior high, my parents worked out of town, so I started learning to cook for myself," Raymond said. "I started with pasta and sauces because you can't really mess those up too much."



"The younger you learn things, the more you can perfect them. So it is good to involve kids in the kitchen. That's also the way you pass down recipes."

— Jenny Scott



Junior Jessica Vega (top left) stirs a pot of soup while her mother (top right) adds spice during a lunch break. Vega's mother has been a big influence in her love for cooking and the two have been creating meals together for years. Junior Katarina Caudel (left) cuts potato skins at the counter as she prepares to make homeade mashed potatoes for her family. Caudel hopes to attend culinary school and open up her own restaurant in the future. Both students enjoy cooking in their spare time.

PHOTOS BY HENRY KELLY

Raymond says his knowledge and experimentation in cooking grew from there.

"When I was young, there weren't any of these different sauces that we have today," Raymond said. "There was maybe sauce with meat and without meat and that's it, so I began to try out new flavors for variety."

After years of cooking, Raymond has found favor in grilling.

"I like to make barbeque on the grill," Raymond said. "I really just enjoy being out there; I find it relaxing."

Like Raymond, sophomore Braden Davis prefers cooking on the grill.

"My favorite things to cook are fajitas and steak over an open fire," Davis said. "They're easy and fun to make and usually always taste good, so you can throw new things together."

FCCLA sponsor Jenny Scott says cooking at a young age can

influence the rest of a student's life.

"There are those that follow the recipe and those that can throw stuff together," Scott said. "That goes back to cooking at a young age."

Scott feels it is important to learn to cook in people's youth.

"The younger you learn things, the more you can perfect them," Scott said. "So it is good to involve kids in the kitchen. That's also the way you pass down recipes."

Though she prepares food at times, Scott is not the main cook of her family.

"My mom normally did the cooking when I was a kid, and now it has switched for my kids," Scott said. "My husband has been cooking since a young age and does most of it now, while I mostly do the baking."

Junior Katarina Caudel is the main cook of her household.

"I cook Monday through Thursday and sometimes on Saturday and Sunday," Caudel said. "I cook

for my family, but they will sometimes help with the spices."

Caudel's love for cooking was influenced by her grandmother.

"She encouraged me to dive deeper into cooking," Caudel said. "She lives in California, so she sends me cookbooks and recipes to try out."

She plans to take her cooking to the next level and go to culinary school.

"I plan to use TSTC (Texas State Technical School) as a stepping stone to CIA (Culinary Institute of America) and get my bachelor's degree in a field of cooking," Caudel said. "I want to start my own restaurant once I'm out of school."

Caudel also realizes the hard work that it will take to achieve her dream.

"I'm going to be taking a lot of business classes alongside my culinary classes," Caudel said. "I know it might be a rough path, but that doesn't mean I will give up."

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

BY HENRY KELLY

Moonlight

Moonlight received its well-deserved Oscar for Best Picture through its gritty representation of true life and love.

It portrays the life of those in urban areas which is possibly foreign to residents of small towns like Albany. This two-hour film brings to light the struggles of African Americans and homosexuals in modern-day America. Its incredible cast and story create a realistic representation of the effects of life's events and how they shape people into their true selves.

Moonlight also reveals the cruelty of bullying, which is truly universal. This goes on throughout the main character Chiron's youth, and viewers get to see step by step the tormenting that he must go through because of reasons he can't control. *Moonlight* displays the formation of a man through his experiences, and bullying is one of the most influential factors in Chiron's life.

Another aspect of life that *Moonlight* touches on is the influence drugs

have on many Americans. It can pay for homes and tear them apart, which are both revealed in the story of *Moonlight*. Its influence is another deciding factor in shaping youth.

The acting and screenplay in *Moonlight* was superb and allowed the movie to feel like real life. It allows

viewers to fully submerge yourself into the movie without worrying about whether it is realistic or not. With this in mind, it also led me to think about the struggles of people in this same situation in real life. This isn't a make-believe, heartfelt movie, but instead is a mirror image of our world today and the lives of minorities, homosexuals, or any others that are in this same situation.

The mix of hip-hop/rap and classical music puts a unique twist on the movie that didn't take away from the visuals but instead amplified them to meet their purpose.

Moonlight is a realistic depiction of the endless struggle in the life of a homosexual and the way different aspects of life form a person from youth to adulthood.

Manchester by the Sea

With grief being a natural part of our lives, some struggle heavily with it, while others find a healthy way to do deal with it. *Manchester by the Sea* dives deep into the subject and shares with viewers the lives of those that have lost family and how they cope, or rather react.

While I expected a dark and dreary experience, *Manchester by the Sea* had life in its scenes. I caught myself laughing out loud to a movie revolving around people losing loved ones. It wasn't a lighthearted film, and laughing during this movie was the last thing I expected.

After watching the movie, I still can't quite see how Casey Affleck received Best Actor for his role. I thought he played the part well, but I didn't see the kind of performance I would expect to win the Oscar. The thing is, the actors did work very well together for the scenario and made the movie feel realistic.

The movie's storyline felt like a flat plain. It never really picked up, but it never really slowed down. It kept a steady pace. That's good and bad. It kept me moderately focused, but all the while I was hoping for the movie to start to pick up. There were a few moments when action would pick up, but they came and went just as quickly. So maybe the storyline was more like a plain with a few small hills.

Flashbacks provided great background for viewers but could be a little confusing. There were times when I questioned whether it was the present or memory. Only a few movies really use flashbacks perfectly. Nonetheless, when the viewers learn about a certain past experience, we can see how it has affected Lee (Affleck) through his actions and reactions.

Manchester by the Sea is a film built on grief and how people react to it. I felt the movie portrayed this part of life in a realistic and partly even educational story of a man who has lost in many more ways than one.



Students participate in Trump poll

Majority of students approve of Trump's early actions

BY BRIAN HAMILTON
Staff Writer

Two-thirds of the student body feel that President Donald Trump has done a good to excellent job in his first two months in office. A recent poll asking students to grade Trump's effectiveness as President shows that, though some disagree, most students approve of his time in office so far.

"I like that he has delivered on almost every campaign promise he made," Fuentes said. "He puts the American people first, and other countries second."

However, public relations and the media, according to Fuentes, are Trump's biggest obstacles.

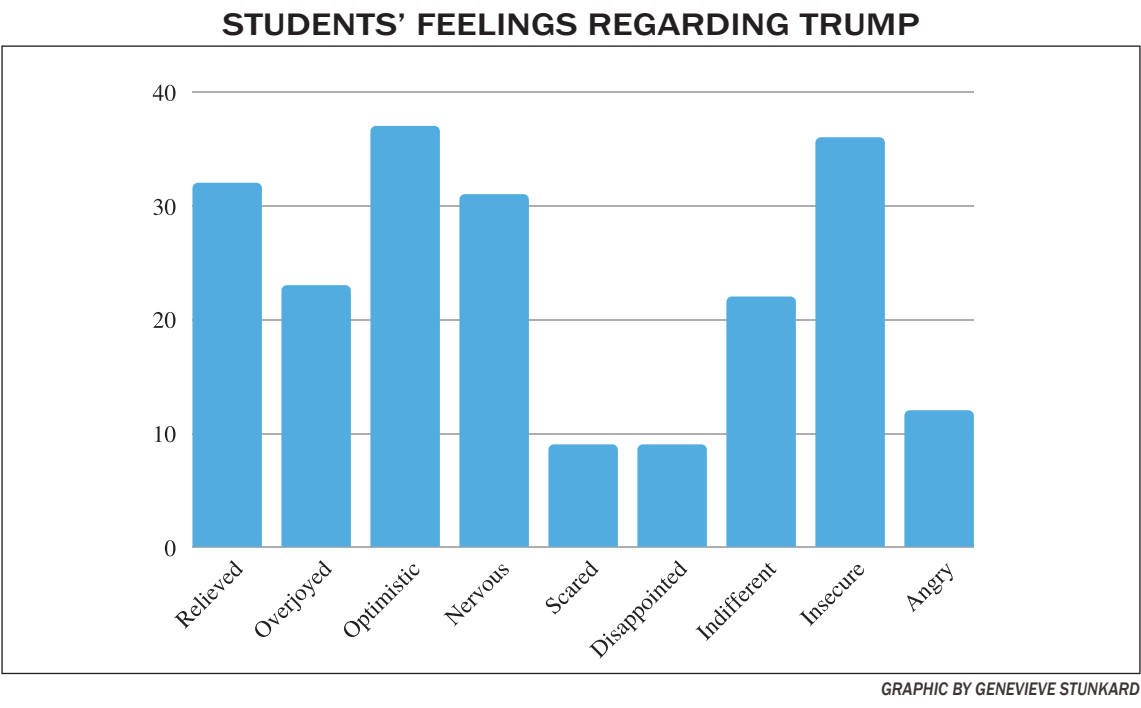
"Coping with the mainstream media and appealing to all Americans will likely be a problem for him," Fuentes said. "I only watch liberal-based media, and it is evident that there is extreme bias."

Even so, he commends Trump for his successes.

"His biggest success to me has been his initiative to visit large businesses and corporations that have threatened to go to different countries and to encourage them to stay here in order to keep jobs in this country," Fuentes said.

He is not too fond of the recent "not my President" protests.

"It is flat-out embarrassing, and a lot of those people don't even know what they're protesting against," Fuentes said. "For instance, many Democrats argue against Trump's immigration plan, but they don't realize that Bill Clinton called for a mass deportation



and received almost no scrutiny."

Conservative beliefs align with what he feels is right for the country.

"I believe that conservatism follows the principles of the constitution more than liberalism does," Fuentes said. "I also believe my Christian beliefs align more closely with the Republican Party values."

Observing and studying helped him garner his viewpoints.

"I have these views because I have studied and put a lot of research into our current events and the history of our nation," Fuentes said. "From that I realized that I have different views on policy than the Democratic Party."

The majority of the student body is in favor of the newly elected president with 33 percent of poll-takers giving Trump an A.

"We finally have a President that prioritizes his own people before others from foreign countries," Fuentes said. "He's received a lot of scrutiny for this because the left takes our freedom for granted."

He feels much differently about Trump than junior Genevieve Stunkard, who says Trump makes her feel angry, scared, nervous, and disappointed in America.

"I, as a Christian woman and someone who is partially Hispanic, am abhorred with the way he thinks he can speak about people, and it feels personal," Stunkard said. "I don't believe he has the best intentions for every citizen of this country, and he's a vastly hateful and immature person."

She believes that he has a lot to overcome in order to become a good President.

"I think Trump's biggest obstacle is overcoming his own ego," Stunkard said. "He's impossible to take seriously when it's obvious how little knowledge he has on policy and matters of diplomacy."

In regards to Trump's successes, Stunkard sees no commendable accomplishments.

"His biggest success was somehow getting himself elected," Stunkard said. "He said many

hurtful things and somehow people still admired him enough to elect him."

What's Trump's biggest failure? "It's how he conducts himself as a whole," Stunkard said. "He seems to have no regard for others, and I feel like the idea of money has taken over his soul."

Obviously, Stunkard has strong feelings about the President.

"I don't like anything about him, like how he treats his wife or women in general," Stunkard said. "He is classless and immature and politically uneducated."

In regards to recent "not my President" protests, Stunkard stands with the protestors.

"I support them because I don't see President Trump as my President either, and I doubt I ever will," Stunkard said. "I think the President of the United States is supposed to be a godly man or woman, whatever they believe in, with moral strength and awesome leadership, which is not Donald Trump."

Her political views come from what she believes aligns with her Christianity.

"He is the opposite of what I think a Christian person should be," Stunkard said. "Even though he claims to be one, I don't see any love in his heart."

While most people gain political opinions based off of their parent's beliefs, Stunkard, like Fuentes, formed hers independently.

"My parents never really tried to influence my views until I was older and had already made my decision," Stunkard said. "Though my dad is a conservative Republican and a Trump supporter, and my mom is a liberal Democrat. I formed my own views by following what my heart felt was right for people."

Those in the middle ground, such as junior McKenna Thompson, agree with views from both sides.

"I'm nervous because of how he uses social media," Thompson said. "But I feel that he's trying to make a difference for the better."

Thompson does find some hypocrisy in his character.

"He stands for freedom of religion yet tries to ban an entire one from our country," Thompson said. "We all came from a lineage of immigrants."

Trump has his pros and cons, Thompson said.

"I like that he's not afraid to say what I think everyone else is thinking," Thompson said. "However, I do not agree with the defunding of Planned Parenthood for reasons other than abortion, such as contraceptives, screenings, and things like that."

She has mixed feelings about the "not my President" protests.

"I think they're valid because we do have freedom of speech, but it seems pointless," Thompson said. "It is okay for you to express your opinions, but I don't think it's going to change anything."

Missionaries evangelize in Uganda

Students help others, teach God's word in Africa

BY CAITLYN PATTERSON
Staff Writer

A group of 18 people from local churches joined with a group from Early to go to Kampala, Uganda for a mission trip during spring break. The group left on March 8, and returned March 16.

Aubrey Moon, a freshman, got the opportunity to attend her first mission trip.

"I really felt called by God to go on this trip," Moon said. "I wanted to change people's lives because God changed me, and I want everyone to experience the same thing."

Among the students that went, Moon was the youngest.

"The older kids treated me like I was their age," Moon said. "I never worried about being the youngest because they always made me feel welcomed and it was really comforting."

Moon had never travelled to Africa before and had a bit of anxiety about the trip.

"Leading up to the trip I was really nervous about the flights," Moon said. "Getting on a plane, being so far away from home, and going out into the town without really knowing anybody there was scary."

Thomas Aly, the youth minister at the First Baptist Church, led the mission trip. Aly has been to Africa a total of 10 times.

"I've seen what going on a mission trip has done for kids in the past--especially what it's done in my life and just how dynamic of a spiritual event it can be," Aly said. "That's what really inspires me each year to go on trips like this with students. There was a total of 156 people saved during the trip."

Aly says each trip is different in its own unique way.

"I think I realize something new every time I go back," Aly



Senior Landon Meadows (left) plays with a little girl while on the trip to Uganda. Above, senior Hunter Owen smiles as he lifts a Ugandan child. On the trip, a total of 156 people were saved and evangelized. PHOTOS BY RACHEL HILL

said. "I always try to learn different things from each trip, but that really depends on the group you go with. If you have a group that gets along, it can really make for a good trip, but if you have a group that fights a lot, it can make the trip more of a drag than anything."

Aly said his favorite part about the trip was meeting the person he was to sponsor.

"Before we left for the trip, J.B. Hundhausen brought me \$300 to sponsor the 'little boy in blue,'" Aly said. "When we got off the van at the school I saw a kid wearing a blue shirt, blue shoes, and he had a blue wheelchair. I knew instantly that he was the 'little boy in blue.'"

The 'little boy in blue' was George Williams, who was in an accident about four years ago.

"It caused him to lose all of the strength in his body," Aly said. "It makes it hard for him to move, and that's why he's in a wheelchair."

Aly contacted George's mother to let her know that someone was going to sponsor her son to help him go to school, and she imme-

diately broke down in tears of joy.

"Their story is pretty interesting," Aly said. "His mom takes time out of her day to wheel him eight miles a day, to and from school. Her persistence of wanting her child to learn is really incredible."

This trip caused Aly a lot of anxiety, especially when his original plans fell through.

"There's a verse in Isaiah 55 that says, 'My plans are better than yours and my ways are better than yours,'" Aly said. "I tried to hold on to that verse during this trip--really just let God plan it all out. It helped me to sit back and view the whole picture and see God work through our students and adults."

The group set out to buy a plot of land to build a new church and school. Things did not go exactly as planned, but according to Aly, it worked out for the better.

"Someone bought the land we originally wanted so they could sell it back to us and make a bit of profit, so we bought another plot of land instead, and it was triple

the size of the other," Aly said. "Right now the school they have is for kindergarten through third grade and the capacity is about 60, but they have at least 200 students enrolled. So, we bought the land to build a church for the community, and we're going to build a new school for first through seventh grades, and kindergarten will stay in the school that they're in now."

Senior Rachel Hill returned to Africa after going on last year's mission trip.

"Last year I had an amazing time, and I just felt like it was home to me," Hill said. "It's where I want to serve, and I was just really drawn to Africa and its culture, and I want to go back any chance that I get."

Hill said the trip to Uganda last year focused more on conducting Bible schools, while this year's trip emphasized witnessing to individuals and small groups.

"We talked to a lot of Muslims and Catholics," Hill said. "It was a big difference from my last trip. I definitely saw a lot more poverty since we were visiting

people's homes and being in their villages."

Several students became ill while in Africa.

"The worst part about the trip was when two students from our church and three from Early got sick, so I spent a lot of time worrying about them and trying to make sure they were okay," Aly said. "Being in a foreign country without a hospital nearby and not being able to figure out what was wrong with them was difficult. It brought the team spirit down a little bit, but it ended up being a good trip over all."

Aly said he's proud of students for what they accomplished on this trip.

"The boldness of our students really surprised me," Aly said. "They really took initiative and stepped out of their comfort zones and experienced Jesus in a way that I don't think they had before. Going door to door isn't always the easiest thing and some of them were pretty nervous, but they stepped out and made the trip worth going for."

Donut shop owners thank community

Couple compare life in Cambodia to America's freedoms

BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD
Features Editor

Each day – Tuesday through Friday – dozens of students come to school carrying little white paper bags branded with iconic pink, sprinkled donuts, filled with either warm, steaming pigs in blankets, flaky, buttery croissants, or sweet, delectable donuts of every color and size.

These sacks of goodies hold the most important meal of the day for dozens of people, including students, all over town. But who are the Breakfast Gods who create the delicacies many depend on to fill their tummies each day? Who are these heroes, and where do they come from?

They are 28-year-old Kimsan Mao and his wife 26-year-old Bon Hem, owners of Donut Shop & Kolache, which resides in the little bright orange building on Main Street.

"We are from Cambodia," Kimsan said. "We lived in Boston before, where we met and got married. I decided to come to Albany to help my sister who lived here open a donut shop."

Kimsan's sister has since moved to Stamford to open another donut shop there, but he and his wife remain here, continuing to crank out donuts and pigs in blankets for the hungry breakfast-goers of Albany.

"So far, our plan is to stay here and grow our family for the rest of our lives," Kimsan said. "It's peaceful here, people are friendly and nicer than they were back in Boston, and it's very quiet. It's a nice town."

Kimsan and Bon met while surrounded by popcorn and soft drinks working at the concession stand of a movie theater together in Boston. They quickly grew to be close friends, having the common factor of them both being immigrants from Cambodia to bond them.

"A little while in, I asked her to watch a movie after work and she said yes, and that was our first date," Kimsan said. "The first one we saw together was *I Am Legend*. We just got to know each other over time, and there wasn't much change when we went from being friends to when we went to being something more."

The pair married in a traditional wedding on August 16, 2014, young, hopeful, and ready to take on the world.

"Soon after we married, we discovered we had a baby on the way, and had a little girl we named Ellee Mao," Kimsan said. "She's 11 months old, now."

Being a parent has its ups and downs, Kimsan explained.

"It is a lot of fun, but it's a lot of work, too," he said. "She's ten months old right now and we can never get her to stay still, but we love her anyway."

Bon agrees that Ellee is very lively, describing her as a "little monkey."

"But being a mother is the best feeling ever," Bon said. "It's the most amazing experience. I work so much and get so tired from working at the donut shop and cooking meals for my family at home, but whenever I see her all of my tiredness goes away. She is my energy."

Bon's mother watches the couple's daughter while they're working at the donut shop from two o'clock in the morning (or sometimes earlier) to noon.

"Everything for the first batch has to be ready within 3 hours," Bon said. "It's hard work. We usually have to go to bed at six or seven o'clock to get enough rest."

In Kimsan's opinion, the labor involved with owning a donut shop is not as much hard as it is lengthy.

"The work itself is easy and simple, but we've got such little time because

there are so many steps to making everything," he said.

Despite the hard work it takes, Kimsan and Bon are satisfied and proud owners of the donut shop.

"We like working here because we're in charge and we suit ourselves," Bon said. "It's better than having to work for other people, and it feels good to do – it's like we serve a good role in the community. We make sure the people of the town are not hungry, and I think we are both really proud of that."

Being from a foreign country, Kimsan said being able to own simple businesses like donut shops gives him and other immigrants money-making opportunities they might not otherwise have in the United States.

"You don't have to learn much English, which is very hard for some people, and the hours are good," he said. "We always have the rest of the day to do whatever we want."

Also, owning a donut shop does not require much of an education, which is important, because in so many places good educations are hard to get."

In some countries, such as Cambodia, a good education is almost impossible for most people, especially the poor, to come by.

"I left Cambodia when I was 15 and Kimsan left in 2003, because the United States held so much more opportunity when it came to school, jobs, and life in general," Bon said. "It still does. Cambodia wasn't safe for common people. Jobs were hard to come by there, and for someone to go to school and get an education like I want my daughter to have costed a lot of money – too much for most people to pay for."

In the Kingdom of Cambodia, Bon continued, life was not equal for all of its citizens like it is in the United States.

"The rich had access to everything and never had to wait in line to get what they wanted, while the poor had almost nothing," she said. "There was no in-between, and our families weren't rich."

But in the United States, Kimsan added, there is equal opportunity for all people.

"Freedom!" he exclaimed. "In America, there is freedom! Everyone is the same here. Everyone has the same chances."

Now, after living much of their young lives working hard to take advantage of the United States' opportunities, Kimsan and Bon have managed to find a nice balance between their careers at the donut shop and enjoying life outside of it.

"Sometimes we go to the mall in Abilene and have dinner and see movies over there, but most of the time we stay home with our little girl Ellee," Bon said.

The pair also take their daughter to the playground often, Kimsan added.

"She loves it," he said. "We can do that here and it's peaceful and safe, unlike in the city. In the big city, there are a lot of gangsters. Not here. It's a really good place for people to raise their kids."

Overall, Kimsan and Bon say they agree that their move to the United States from Cambodia and then their journey together from Boston to Albany was the best thing that has ever happened to them.

"My life is so much better than it was in Cambodia," Bon said. "To get anywhere there, you have to have connections, and it's all so corrupted. Here, I can have my own business and buy everything I like, making a better life for myself. I'm really thankful for how nice and supportive the people of this town have always been towards us, because without them, we wouldn't be here."



In the top photo, Kimsan Mao and Bon Hem posed proudly for a picture in their donut shop. Since moving to Albany, the couple has had a little girl named Ellee Mao, who they can be seen grinning with for a family photo (middle). Kimsan and Bon have worked hard for much of their young lives in America. In the bottom photo, Bon can be seen preparing an order of warm pigs in blankets for a customer.

PHOTOS BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD

Lions experience late start to season

Practices missed due to springtime activities

BY CUTTER COWART
Staff Writer

After losing the regional final last year to Stamford, the Lions are motivated to return and finish what they started.

Brian Hamilton, a junior, doubts that a long basketball season will affect their baseball season.

"A long season won't affect us because, every other year we have gone right into district once basketball ended," Hamilton said. "UIL changed it to where we have 20 days before district. This UIL rule will benefit us because of our long basketball season."

Hamilton prepares himself for the season by playing baseball year round.

"I play for Team Rawlings Moulton year round," Hamilton said. "I constantly worked out to prepare for other sports as well as baseball."

Brian's goals this year are set on state.

"My goals as a team are to win state," Hamilton said. "My personal goals are to hit up to my potential as well as throw my pitches faster."

After losing in the regional finals last year Hamilton is motivated to make it back and finish what they started.

"Last year we were the better team, and we should have been one of the contenders for state," Hamilton said. "It sadly didn't work out that way,

but we're coming for it this year."

Adam Faith, a junior is focused on one thing; winning state.

"We all want to win state," Faith said. "The only way we're going to make it that far is by constantly practicing hard to better ourselves."

Faith doesn't believe that a prolonged basketball season will affect the team because of how long they've been playing together.

"It won't affect us," Faith said. "We've been playing for so long together that we have a good team chemistry. We will get back into the groove quite quickly."

Faith's offseason was playing all sports.

"I never really had an offseason," Faith said. "I was always playing a sport whether it be basketball or football. Therefore, I was constantly working out when I was playing other sports."

Adam has been playing baseball for Albany since he was a freshman.

"The best part of playing baseball is the satisfaction of walking off of the field with a win," Faith said. "My least favorite part is losing."

Head Coach David Fairchild has had a slow start to the season.

"We've had limited practices with my entire team there," Fairchild said. "We've had kids miss for mission trips and sickness."

The Lions have six returning starters from last year.

"We need to find three or four more kids to fill the shoes of seniors from last year," Fairchild said. "We're going to need to

find some pitchers. That's going to be a big gap to close and someone will need to step forward."

A long basketball season hasn't affected the team according to Fairchild.

"After basketball was through we jumped right into baseball," Fairchild said. "We're so used to going far in sports that we were able to adapt to our situation."

The Lions have a district of six teams including themselves.

"We lost two district teams," Fairchild said. "We're now down to six teams, so hopefully it will loosen up the district play."

Fairchild and the Lions are looking for another long run into the playoffs.

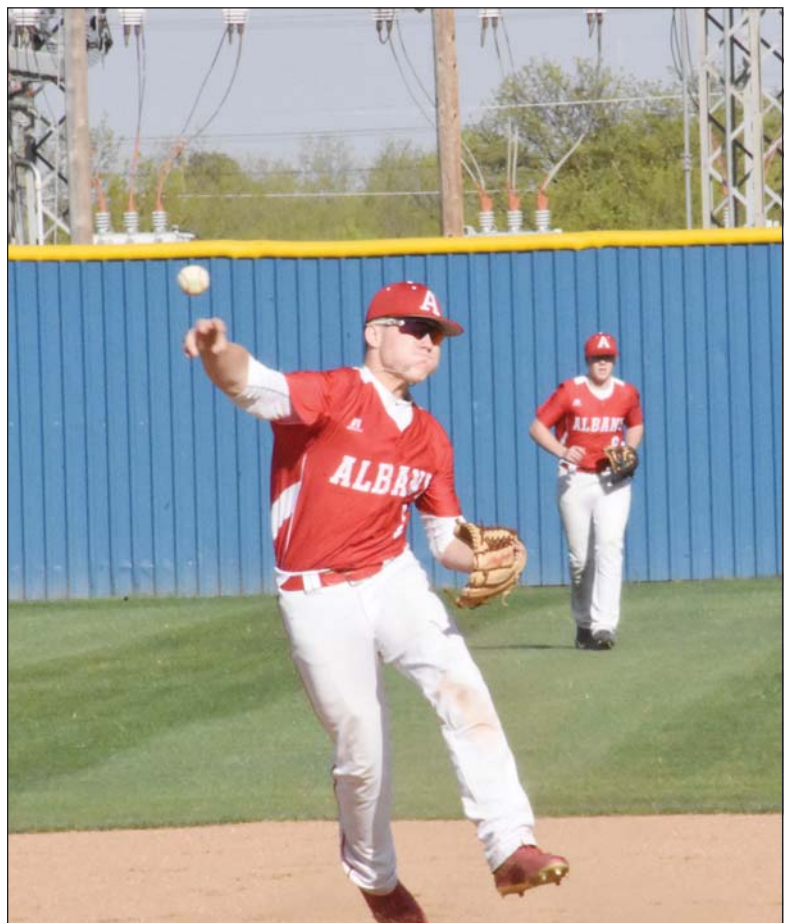
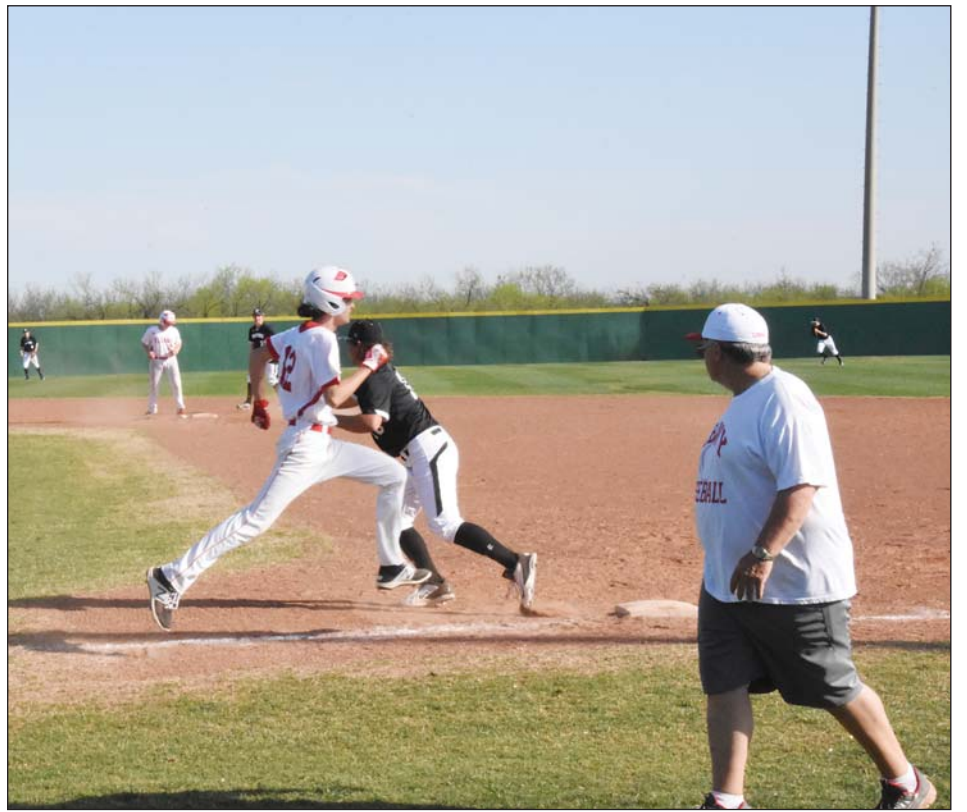
"My goal for them is to compete for a district championship," Fairchild said. "and be able to make a good run like we did last year. There are a bunch of determined players to get back there, but this is our first week together. We just need to get a few games under our belt before district."

Joshua Dyer, a sophomore, is eager to return after starting as a freshman in last year's season.

"My goals for this season are to return to the regional tournament," Dyer said. "Ever since we lost to Stamford, we have been motivated to go back and beat them and make it to state."

Dyer plays baseball year round for the Dallas Tigers.

"Playing for my travel team has gotten me prepared for this season," Dyer said. "I also hit and pitch every day with my coach in Abilene."



Junior Kelton Parker (top) charges to base to beat the throw to first during one of the Lions' pre-district games against Grafard. Sophomore Joshua Dyer grounds a ball while on the run to get the out at first during the Lions district opener against Stamford. The boys came out on top with a score of 8-2.

PHOTO BY
PARKER MOON

Athletes participate in select sports

Students train, compete year-round

BY RYAN HILL
Staff Writer

With spring sports in full swing, a few high school students have already been preparing for months. These select leagues don't end; they extend preparation for the fall and spring.

"I love the sport enough to play out of season," junior Brian Hamilton said.

The traveling schedule for his select league uses up most of his free time.

"Almost every weekend I have camps or practice that take up most of my weekend," said freshman Aubrey Moon who plays select softball. "At the camps is where I get looked at for college."

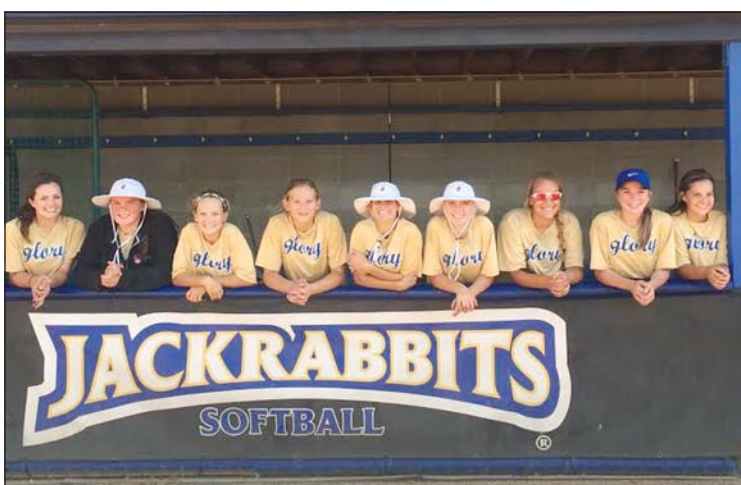
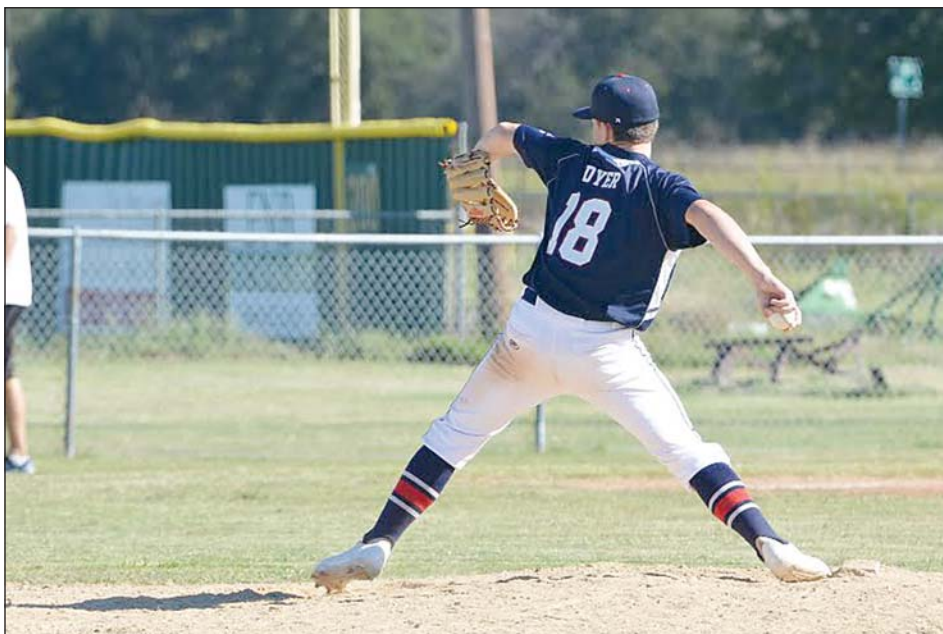
Moon plays for Texas Glory Naudin, a 16U team out of McKinney.

"The level of competition is very high," Moon said. "We play teams with opponents that are already committed or signed to play at a D1 school."

Hamilton plays for the Dallas Tigers.

"The competition that I play against is really challenging," Hamilton said. "Division 1 athletes and future collegiate athletes make up most of the teams we play."

Sophomore Joshua Dyer is also involved in



Sophomore Joshua Dyer (top) stretches toward home plate as he pitches for his select team. Freshman Aubrey Moon gathers with her team for a picture after a game.

PHOTOS PROVIDED

a select baseball league.

"Since baseball is my favorite sport, it's the one I want to play as much as I can," Dyer said.

The three play for one main reason; to get to the next level.

"I also play so that I have a better chance of getting noticed by bigger colleges and D1 scouts," Dyer said.

The athletes like the challenge that comes with trying to get noticed.

"I mainly play to get a college scholarship," Moon said. "Every weekend I have recruitment camps to play in front of college scouts and coaches."

Getting noticed by college scouts takes more than just playing in season.

"Playing just in season with the school doesn't get you enough attention to get noticed by scouts," Hamilton said. "Since I

want to play collegiately, I need to do anything I can to get more work in and attention."

Select league takes up almost every weekend.

"Every weekend I spend the two days at recruitment camps and practicing with the team that I am on," Moon said.

"This summer will be a big one for me. I hope to be recruited by the fall, same for my other teammates. We all plan

on being recruited early in the fall."

When the summer time hits, select players are to get even more busy with practices and tournaments.

"We practice at the beginning of summer, but once tournament season starts, we only practice on our off weekends," Moon said. "I will be gone the majority of the summer traveling and playing at different tournaments around Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Kansas."

The trio all stay busy during the summer months.

"Once summer hits, I will be gone almost every weekend with tournaments," Hamilton said. "Practices are scattered throughout the week in the Metroplex."

Dyer said that his team has games scheduled every weekend for nine weeks straight, with practices on Mondays and Wednesdays.

With all the traveling, tournaments, hotel stays and team membership, select ball comes at a price.

"There are a lot of fees," Dyer said. "I pay for pitching and hitting lessons that are with a private coach."

Tournament fees also have to be paid by the players.

"When I first sign up, we pay for the whole summer," Moon said. "That includes tournament fees, uniform payments, and equipment."

Moon also said that hotel and travel fees are also on her own, so if she

wants to stay at a hotel, it comes out of her pocket.

The athletes all like to play to get noticed, but it's bigger than that.

"I play to get recruited," Moon said. "But, I also play to have fun and meet new people. I have met a lot of girls from tournaments, and I play with some of my best friends."

Dyer said that he likes meeting new people who he becomes friends with at the end.

"I like seeing all of the good players show out," Hamilton said. "I also like making big plays to help my team out and shutting up the heckling loudmouths on the other teams."

Despite the benefits of playing, some cons exist.

"The recruiting aspect is challenging," Moon said. "It's hard always having to do your best with pressure being put on you with all of the college scouts at tournaments."

Moon said that the pressure helps her push herself to perform every week at a high level.

"The competition pushes me to always be on my toes and to be ready for anything that comes my way," Moon said.

Moon already has a plan of what she wants to do for college.

"I have my eyes set on Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas," Moon said. "I like that it is Christian based, and how their priorities are set. It's not a huge university, but it isn't too small either. It's a perfect fit for me."

Track cruises into area meet

Runners to compete at McMurry Wed.

BY RYAN HILL
Staff Writer

The Lion and Lady Lion track teams hosted the District 8-2A track meet yesterday, hoping to send a whole host of athletes to the area meet, Wednesday, April 12 in Abilene at McMurry University.

Results of the district track meet were not available at press time, but the top four places in each event are able to move on to the area meet, to qualify for the regional meet.

Due to the late playoff runs in basketball and spring break, the track teams got a slow start on running this year.

“Hopefully our boys will work hard enough that we can catch up and be able to compete well at district,” said Rod Britting, head boys track coach.

Not only the boys got a late start.

“We all don’t really start running together until we get back from spring break,” Ginger Nor-

ton, head girls’ track coach said.

The varsity boys have won district the last two years and are hoping to repeat this year.

“The most important thing to do is make sure that every athlete is placed in a good race for him to run,” Britting said. “Not only that, but that he will be able to score good points for the team.”

The coaches believe that the majority of Albany’s competitors will advance to the area meet.

“We have a really good chance to advance in a lot of events,” Norton said. “The 300 hurdles, the 100 hurdles, the 4x4, the 4x1, and some other individual events should be strong for us.”

The boys have the same hopes.

“We graduated two seniors who were both strong legs on both the mile and sprint relay,” Britting said. “But there are a few coming up with a lot of speed to choose from.”

The coach said that he expects to qualify a large contingent for area again.

“We should have almost all of our events to the area meet,” Britting said. “Ethen Bernstien, in my mind, will definitely go all the way back to state and compete well in Austin.”

The athletes have set high



Junior Dax Neece leaps into the air as he tries to get as far as he can in triple jump at the Eastland track meet. Neece ended up getting first in the event for varsity as well as first in the long jump. PHOTO BY RYAN HILL

goals for the season.

“I hope to set a new personal best in the discus,” said Grant Head, senior thrower. “I also want to make memories with my best friends as we go into the meets competing with all our strength.”

Some athletes have had major setbacks to overcome this season.

“My surgery, last summer, put me back in all of my training this year,” senior hurdler Rachel Hill said.

“I am having to re-teach my new ACL how to run the hurdles correctly. Not only is it a physical thing, but in my mind I have to train myself to trust my knee.”

The slow start to the season

seems to be the biggest challenge the athletes have had to overcome this year.

“I’m behind in my hurdle training because I started two weeks before district,” Hill said. “But I am very confident that I can make it back to state for my third year in a row.”

Lady Lions compete in tough district



Freshman Aubrey Moon sacrifices her at bat with a bunt to help move base runners into scoring position. The Lady Lions blew away the Stamford Bulldogs with a n18-1 win. PHOTO BY PARKER MOON

Softball girls battle for position in playoffs

BY PARKER MOON
Sports Editor

The Lady Lions started the softball season off strong by participating in area tournaments to gain experience in preparation for a tough district schedule.

“The tournaments have gotten us a lot of playing time,” head coach Jimmy Fuentes said. “With our district being tough, we need to get all the pre-district game experience in that we can.”

The team has played in three tournaments throughout the past couple of months.

“The tournaments helped us grow together,” freshman Aubrey Moon said. “It leads to better communication on the field. We played multiple games a day and that will help us gain mental toughness and more playing time to prepare for district.”

The Lady Lions will face Haskell, Hawley, Stamford, Hamlin and Anson.

“Our district is definitely one of the toughest districts,” Fuentes said. “We made it into the playoffs last year, but got beat by Windthorst who went on to the state tournament.”

The girls ended up fourth in district last season, losing to Windthorst in the first round.

“Hawley and Haskell have been the two toughest teams for the past couple of years and are supposed to be good again,” Fuentes said. “Stamford is good as well. They seem to always play us well, but they lost quite a few seniors, so they are going to be a younger team like us. Haskell is kind of young, but they did have some kids move in.”

Like most teams, the Lady Lions were struggling in certain areas at the start of the season.

“We need to have more consistency from our pitching staff,” Fuentes said. “Every tournament we’ve played in, we have improved in certain areas. We just need to gain experience due to us having a lot of young players.”

Moon agreed that the team needs to improve.

“We need to get past the basic fundamentals of the sport in practice because it can get to where it holds the rest of the team up,” Moon said. “We need to find

more consistency, communicate with each other better, and find some people to step up in the outfield who aren’t afraid to make plays, even if they might mess up. We are also struggling at the bottom of our lineup, so we need some improvement there.”

Thanks to the number of games early in the season, the Lady Lions have been improving.

“I have seen some improvements from some of our younger kids who stepped up when they were thrown right into important positions,” Fuentes said. “Overall, I feel like we have definitely improved since the start of the season because we have consistently improved after each game.”

Senior Kaleigh Clevenger has high hopes for the season.

“This season has been going a lot better than I thought it would,” Clevenger said. “I wasn’t expecting us to be very good because we are so young, but we are filling the holes well.”

Junior Reyna Garcia thinks the season is improving.

“This season has gone good,” Garcia said. “We are going to need to step up our game against Hawley and Haskell, though, if we want to place high in the district and go far in playoffs.”

Tennis, golf seek success in season

Students look to advance past district

BY BRIAN HAMILTON
Staff Writer

With tennis district held earlier in the week and golf coming up next week, local participants are hoping to advance to the regional level.

The tennis team had a strong tournament season, but results of the district tournament were not available at press time.

“We have had three tournaments and one dual meet to prepare,” tennis coach Sarah Wilson said. “I feel like we are improving each meet.”

The beginning of the season saw some conflict.

“There were some adjustments we had to make early on in the season,” Wilson said. “With a few players still in basketball, we had to shift around.”

Overall the team has performed well.

“At the Jim Ned tournament our girl’s doubles teams placed first and second,” Wilson said. “We were in a good position for district.”

Tennis players also performed

well at the Throckmorton meet.

“The mixed doubles team of Steven Ford and Abbi Beard placed first, along with Aaron Schwark winning boys’ singles, and Kylea Gardner and Chloe Fields winning girls’ doubles,” Wilson said. “Seleste Martinez and Madison Russell also won third place at the meet in girl’s doubles.”

Wilson still feels they have ways they can improve.

“Strategy and shot placement are two very important parts of the game,” Wilson said. “They will be important in tough matches.”

Luckily, Wilson feels the number of obstacles the team faces are slim.

“I don’t think we’ve had any real challenges so far,” Wilson said. “But there is always concern about grade checks and how they might affect some players.”

Seniors are playing a big part in the tennis team’s success this year.

“Our biggest strength without a doubt is having seven seniors,” Wilson said. “They have all played four years of high school tennis.”

Wilson feels that there is always room for improvement.

“There is no room for complacency,” Wilson said. “We can always improve on every aspect of our game.”

Strong tournament play looks to help the athletes get ready for district.

“I’ve tried preparing the athletes for district this whole season,” Wilson said. “The competitive tournament season will hopefully help us perform well at the district meet.”

The ultimate goal is to advance.

“I’m shooting to have as many individuals and teams to the regional tournament as we can,” Wilson said. “That’s the main goal I have for the team.”

Sophomore Ryan Hill is also hoping to advance beyond district.

“I want to get to regionals and be able to compete with some of the best players in the state,” Hill said. “But I hope to get a good feel of what it’s like playing on the big stage in front of a crowd like at the regional meet.”

The golf team is also preparing for their district meet on April 10-11, and golf coach Tate Thompson feels they have done well, but still need to improve.

“I think we have performed well so far and are getting better from week to week,” Thompson said. “However, some of the kids are having a hard time being able to perform in the meets like they do in practice, but some are doing well.”

Thompson thinks the team’s familiarity with the district course at Shady Oaks in Baird will help them perform against stiff competition.

“Our district will have very tough teams,” Thompson said.



Sophomore Cutter Cowart returns the ball at a practice meet in Seymour last Wednesday. Cowart competed in mixed doubles with his partner, Rachel Hill. District was held earlier in the week, and those who advanced will play in Regionals later this month. PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

“But we are playing the district course twice before district so that will help us.”

He feels that mental fortitude is something that the athletes might need to work on.

“Golf is a major mental game and it’s something that everyone has to overcome,” Thompson said.

“So being able to keep it together mentally is going to separate the good players.”

Senior Tristan Cauble is shooting for the big stage.

“It would be nice to make it to the regional meet,” Cauble said. “But my main goal is to make it to state.”

"DOI"

Continued from | PG 1

will give students more tools they need to be successful when they graduate."

The elementary campus will also be able to utilize the Makerspace lab from time to time.

"Students will be bussed to the lab for the opportunity to use the area and equipment," Scott said.

Stepping down from the principal position, Hill will be the new Makerspace coordinator next year.

"I'm certified to teach a lot of different Career and Technology courses," Hill said. "We're not exactly sure what it will look like from the beginning, but the idea is to be able to schedule kids in there that are interested in those career fields or who need time to create a video, audio file, or 3D image for a project they're working on."

Through the District of Innovation plan, the Board can certify Hill to teach new courses without having to go to the Commissioner of Education to make that decision.

"One Act"

Continued from | PG 1

practiced with all the cuts, and every run-through was usually over the time limit. So when we finished at the competition and had several minutes left, I was

relieved."

Several props were misplaced or forgotten on the day of the play.

"I wish we had more clarity on the positioning of our props," Masters said. "I think we could have put on a better performance if everything would have been in order."

Even though the students didn't place as high as they wanted, they gained experience and learned a lot.

"I definitely wished we had advanced, but I understand that the scores and judging for One-Act is very subjective," Masters said. "Through my experience I have learned that even if you do good you don't always advance."

This year's One-Act play was one of the "most enjoyable" according to senior Kylea Gardner.

"As upset as I was about not advancing, I don't think I would've changed a thing," Gardner said. "I think that we performed well and we all really bonded, too. I came out of this year really happy with every aspect of our play, cast, and crew."

Participating in one-act has taught students skills they can use for the rest of their lives.

"Throughout the last five years of one-act, I've learned a lot about patience and team work," Gardner said. "There are some days that I would rather have done anything else in the world than go to practice. But if one person doesn't

go, it affects the whole cast, so it taught me a lot about accountability, too."

"Cheating"

Continued from | PG 1

Davis expects a good performance at the Region I meet set for tomorrow, April 8 in Odessa.

"I think we've got some kids that will make it on to state," Davis said. "The writers have a very good chance and our lone speaker has a good chance as well. I would encourage the spelling team and the science kids to really work hard. They are going to have to step it up because regionals are going to be tougher than district was."

Even though the science team is not moving on, science coach Andre Raymond was pleased with the team's performance.

"We did not miss out on regionals by that much, so you just never know," Raymond said. "For example, there is always an unknown when you go in. So in the case of what happened Saturday, the kid from Anson had probably not gone to either of the practice meets, so we didn't have a chance to see what he could do."

The science team placed second behind Anson.

Senior Hunter is just one of two students advancing in science individually, after he placed second overall.

"I am hoping to go back to state this year individually," Owen said. "I want to be able

to test my knowledge on my own and not have to rely on other teammates to get me there."

Owen said that UIL gives a student a chance to test all of the knowledge that he or she may have learned and push them to learn more.

Senior Aaron Schwark, who competed for the first time in UIL this year, felt that competing helped prepare him for college.

"It prepares you for college by putting your academic skill on a competitive level, going against all of the other students across your district," Schwark said. "It challenges us on a higher level like college."

Schwark advanced to regionals in Current Issues and Events by placing second at the district meet.

Spelling and Current Issues and Events coach Karen Noble was pleased with her teams.

"Aaron did really well; he is really good on the national news," Noble said. "He told me himself that he was not up on what happened in Texas because he is not from Texas. I tried to find him review materials that could get him up to date on the Texas legislature and what's going on in Texas. I am very proud of him."

The spelling team, consisting of Rylie Scott, Natalie Hayner, Cutter Cowart, Taylor Scott, and Ryan Phillips, placed second and will also be advancing to the regional meet. Scott placed first individually, while Hayner placed third.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

8 HS Tennis District Day 2, 3:00pm
8 JH District Track Meet @ Albany, 3:00pm
8 JV & Varsity Baseball vs. Anson @ Anson, 5:00pm
8 Varsity Softball vs. Anson @ Anson, 5:00pm
8 End 5th Six Weeks
9 Buyer Seller Banquet @ Elementary Cafeteria, 6:00pm
11-12 Varsity Golf Boys Regional Tournament, 8:00am
12 Varsity Softball vs. Eula @ Eula, 5:00pm
13-14 Varsity Golf Girls Regional Tournament, 8:00am
15 HS Track Area Meet @ McMurry, 10:00am
15 JV & Varsity Baseball vs. Hamlin @ Home, 5:00pm
15 Varsity Softball vs. Hamlin @ Home, 5:00pm
16-17 ILPC State Convention @ Austin
18-19 Varsity Regional Tennis Meet
19 JV & Varsity Baseball vs. Hawley @ Hawley, 5:00pm
19 Varsity Softball vs. Hawley @ Hawley, 5:00pm
21-22 Regional UIL Academic Meet @ Midland
22 JV & Varsity Baseball vs. Baird @ Home, 5:00pm
22 Varsity Softball vs. Baird @ Home, 5:00pm
25-29 Golf State Tournament
26 JV & Varsity Baseball vs. Stamford @ Stamford, 5:00pm
29-30 HS Track Regional Meet @ Odessa, 5:00pm

MAY

2 EOC US History, 8:00am
3 EOC Biology, 8:00am
4 EOC Algebra I, 8:00am
9 STAAR 7th Grade Math, 8:00am
10 STAAR 7th Grade Reading, 8:00am
11 STAAR 8th Grade Science, 8:00am
12-14 State Track Meet
12 Physics to Six Flags, 8:00am
12 STAAR 8th Grade Social Studies, 8:00am
16 Academic Banquet @ New Gym, 7:00pm
17 Tennis State Meet
17 Athletic Banquet @ New Gym, 7:00pm
23-24 UIL Academics State Meet @ Austin
23-25 One Act Play State Meet
26 Graduation Practice, 10:00am
26 End 6th Six Weeks
27 Graduation, 7:00pm

Uganda Mission Trip

Over spring break, nine high-schoolers travelled across the pond to Uganda, Africa on a mission trip with the local First Baptist Church ministry. The ministry paired with two other churches from Brownwood and one church from Early.

The local ministry took 27 team members, ranging from senior adults to freshmen in high school.

The trip focused on the students walking through the streets and evangelizing to the locals. They also spent a few hours

each day in different classrooms, teaching the kids songs and words. The team worked with a pastor named Deo, who has known Thomas Aly, the FBC youth minister, for about 8 years.

During the trip, the team helped Deo purchase a plot of land to build a secondary school and also purchased a plot of land on which he will build a new church.

The team plans on going back to this area to assist with the work Deo has started. **PHOTOS AND STORY BY RACHEL HILL**



Several church members (far left) drum along to traditional African singing during Sunday's church and worship service. The services are held at the school until the new church, which is about 1/3 of the way built, is completed. These church members also served as a few of the team's translators throughout the week. Senior Grant Head (middle left) laughs with several kids during a welcoming hosted by the teachers and staff of the school. The welcoming consisted of performances by the children and was designed to give the Americans a warm welcome. Junior Xavier Carrillo (left) dances with a child from Heritage Junior School. The school consists of six grades containing around 200 kids. The school hopes to expand, and with a land purchase made over the spring break trip, the chances of that expansion are very high. Out of the nine high school students who went on this trip, eight of them were first-time travellers.



Senior Hunter Owen (top left) holds a child during the school day. Several school children (above) look out the classroom door in awe of the white visitors. The school has their own uniforms, but many students cannot afford them. Senior Roman Fuentes (far bottom left) greets a young girl as he steps off the bus. Senior Caleb Britting (right) breaks up brick in order to create a smooth foundation for a new water tank that was placed in the school courtyard. This was one of many additions the team constructed while at the school.