



THE LIONS ROAR

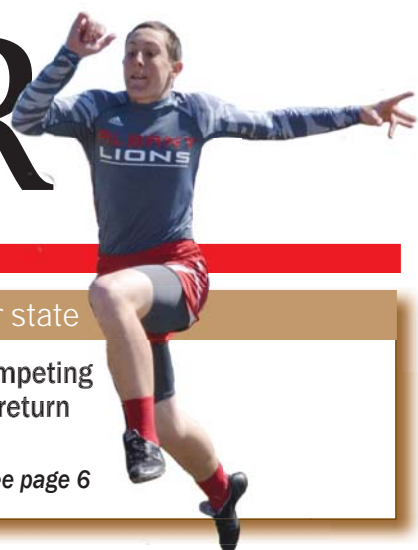
"Lion pride in print"

Friday, April 10, 2015

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 5



Kids debate Netflix/Hulu



Students voice opinions on streaming movie and TV show websites.

— See page 3

Teens find home in Boys Ranch



Ben Richey Boys Ranch provides a safe haven for students.

— See page 5

Track aims for state

Teams begin competing with the goal to return to Austin

— See page 6

Briefs

Journalism plans trip to ILPC in Austin

The annual Inter-scholastic League Press Conference is set for April 18-19 at the University of Austin.

Both the newspaper and yearbook staffs will be traveling to Austin along with sponsors and several journalism students who will be on staff next year.

Individuals and overall awards will be announced during the two-day event. Students will also be able to attend training sessions that are taught by national journalists, teachers, and photographers. Students will learn skills that will be helpful to staff for the upcoming year. The closing ceremony will be held April 19 in the LBJ library. Star Award winners will be announced, and both *The Lions Roar* and *The Lion* could be nominated for the award. *The Lions Roar* is competing for a tenth consecutive Star Award.

Cheerleaders announced

Varsity and junior varsity cheerleader try-outs were held March 6 in the high school gym.

Next year's varsity cheerleaders include Curry Wilson as head, Sydney Key, Kaleigh Clevenger, Alexis Munden, Kourtnee Waters, McKenna Thompson, Madison Ratliff, and Krysten Morris. Next year's mascot will be Felicity Coronado.

Junior varsity cheerleaders are Haley Stewart, Summer Wagman, Caroline Masters, and Maggie Karl.

Prom king, queen crowned

The annual Jr./Sr. Prom was held on May 21, at the Whitney Theatre. The nominees for Prom King were Blayne Cauble, Andrew Brown, and Dylan Petree. Queen nominees included Rachel Kitchens, Molly Lee, and Valerie Gandara.

After a vote from all of the juniors and seniors, Andrew Brown and Molly Lee were named Prom King and Queen.



Scan QR code to load the SchoolWay app which can be used for both iPhone or Android.

EOC testing begins for students

Exam season in full swing

BY LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor

Junior high students have already taken three STAAR tests, and freshmen took the English I EOC on March 30. The remainder of the EOC and STAAR tests will be given later in the month and the beginning of May.

Seventh graders are required to take the math, reading, and writing tests, while eighth graders take the math, reading, science, and social studies STAAR tests.

"If students don't pass their test the first time, they have to pass one of the retests in the summer or in December," principal Kevin Hill said.

High school students must take the Algebra I, Biology, English I, English

II, and U.S. History EOC's before they graduate.

"I am glad that I am taking my last EOC this year, because it will be one less thing to worry about next year," junior Cason Asher said.

Depending on students' academic tracks, the testing may be taken at different times.

"No one took the biology EOC last year because last year's sophomores took it their freshman year," biology teacher Andre Raymond said. "This year's sophomore class will be the first class to take it in two years."

Sophomores will take English II and biology EOC's this year.

"I think that biology will be more difficult for me," sophomore Emmy Shirley said. "English comes natural to me, whereas biology is a little bit more challenging."

Raymond is preparing his students for the biology



English teacher Jennifer Everitt helps freshman Krysten Morris prepare for her English I EOC by practicing the short answer portion of the test. The freshmen took the English EOC on March 30.

PHOTO BY
LORI DAVIS

test by making sure that they are very familiar with the material.

"I am teaching my subject according to the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), and pointing out what will most likely be on the test," Raymond said. "The test is on May 6, so we will review the

harder concepts, such as photosynthesis and cellular respiration before then to make sure that the students know the information."

The passing rates for the tests are set by the state after the testing is complete.

"To receive a passing score on the biology test in 2012 and 2013 you only had

to get 37 percent of the questions correct," Raymond said. "However, last year they increased the passing rate."

On the EOC and STAAR tests students can also achieve a "recommended" score, which is above average.

SEE "EOC" Pg 8

FFA competes in area contests



Ag teacher Chris Beard identifies a plant to a few of his students to help prepare them for the FFA competitions. The plant ID team competed on April 7. PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

Ag students show skills

BY LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor

A number of students recently competed in FFA area contests for the spring agriculture events. The plant ID area contest was held April 7, and the area competition for the career development events was on April 8.

Students were able to participate in events ranging from milk tasting to entomology.

"There are 80 schools in each area, and the top five teams advance in each event," agriculture teacher Chris Beard said. "There are ten areas, so there will be 50 teams at the state competitions."

The state competitions are scattered across the state. "The first state contest is on April 23 at Tarleton for the career development events," Beard said. "Other

state contests are on April 25 at Texas Tech, May 1 at Sam Houston State University, and May 2 at Texas A&M."

Beard coached students for most of the events, but science teacher Jennifer Edmison also helped to prepare for the competitions.

"I became involved with the entomology team because Mr. Beard found out that that is what my degree is in," Edmison said.

Edmison loves getting to share her knowledge of insects with students.

"Bugs are awesome!" Edmison said. "Just about every niche on earth has some insect that has adapted to it, and the diversity of bugs is amazing."

Edmison also helped with a few other events.

"I also helped with home site evaluation, land judging, and plant ID teams," Edmison said.

Junior Savannah Perez is on the entomology team.

"Ms. Edmison brought it up in class a couple of

SEE "FFA" Pg 8

UIL students advance to regionals

Play stops at district

BY CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

Ten UIL academic students advanced to regionals at the district competition in Haskell on April 24 and 25. The Regional contest will be in Odessa on April 25. As a whole, the school scored 278 points, finishing third behind Hamlin and Haskell.

"The computer science kids will compete on Friday April 24," UIL coordinator Rick Davis said. "Then the rest of the qualifiers will compete on Saturday."

From sports to UIL, it has been hard to find time to practice for an event.

"Because the class sizes have been small, we have had to share the students with the coaches for practicing," Davis said. "But we have coped well with what little time we've had."

The science team placed first and is advancing to Regionals.

"I like to compete in science because I have been successful in it," junior Newt Koemel said.

Freshman Natalie Hayner is also on the advancing science team.

"I got third as an individual in science," Hayner said. "But I also do social studies, and I placed fourth."

Carley Price was also one of the 10 that is advancing.

"I got first in Prose and was nervous about the event," Price said. "I was the last to perform in the first round, and I knew the people who were competing in front of me."

Price wasn't expecting the gold.

"The first thing I did was run and tell Mrs. Everitt," Price said. "I was so surprised."

Also advancing to regionals are Ryan Phillips, Genevieve Stunkard, Shelby Barton, Henry Kelly, Levi

Britting, and Dustin Arelano.

The One Act Play cast and crew drew the final curtain at the district meet this year in Stamford. The play placed fourth and will serve as the bi-district alternate.

"I was very disappointed with the results," director Chanel Hayner said, "The kids performed their best ever, and I wish everything turned out differently."

Cast members were not happy with the results either.

Natalie Hayner, a freshman, took home best actress award.

"I felt happy and sad," Hayner said. "I felt sad that only one other cast member won an award. I felt that we all deserved to win an award, and we especially deserved to advance."

Hayner said she will miss performing and the friends she made.

"I'll miss my friends the

SEE "UIL" Pg 8



Junior Tyler Miller portrays Reverend Hale in *The Crucible*. Miller is consoling sophomore Sydney Key who landed the part of Tituba. OAP will perform for the community on April 12 at 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium.

PHOTO BY CURRY WILSON

Editorials

Say no to alcohol

Signatures were gathered on two petitions to have the sale of alcohol to be added to the county ballot in May. If passed, beer and wine could be sold in grocery and convenience stores, and restaurants could serve alcoholic beverages without the current private club requirement.

If our town becomes wet, there will be many negative side effects that will accompany that decision.

The legal sale of alcohol will make it much easier for minors to drink illegally. It will make it very convenient and easy for them to send a buddy who is at least 21 into a store to buy some for them. Many parents move here to try and decrease the amount of temptation that their kids have to deal with, but this would make it much easier for teenagers to drink underage.

The crime and accident rate in town will also most likely increase if the sale of alcohol is permitted. There will be more cases of drinking and driving, and alcohol tends to lead to higher crime rates.

This is a unique, special town that is very different from many other small communities. If it becomes wet, it will lose many of the qualities that drew people here in the first place. This town is a place where families can feel safe and want their kids to grow up in. Part of this is owed to the fact that it is dry.

Some say that legalizing the sale of alcoholic beverages will benefit our economy. However, there is no real evidence to support this. Many locals already do their shopping out of town due to price and selection, and legalizing the sale of beer and wine won't change that.

Students 18 and over will be able to vote on the passage of alcohol April 25 through May 5, and the election will be on May 9. Voting against alcohol is the best thing for our town.

Changing holiday schedule

All of the winter fun of staying at home during snow days was nice while it lasted, but now it's time for the bad part. Snow days at Albany High School mean that we will have no days off in the spring.

Snow days are not as enjoyable when you start thinking about the days that schools will have to make them up. With the snow coming well into the second semester, the school holidays available for make-up days are slim. Schools are allowed to apply for a waiver to not make up the extra school days, but most schools still choose to make up the holidays before applying for a waiver for the extra school days. Albany should save the extra holidays we have for the spring.

The fall semester already is shorter and has two long breaks with Thanksgiving and Christmas, so the extra holidays that are added into the schedule should be saved for the holidays in the spring. This way, if snow days happen in the fall or the spring, there are extra days that can be made up in the spring.

The spring is also a more stressful semester that should be broken up with more days off than just spring break. The fall passes quickly between football season and the long breaks, so having the possibility of extra days off or not having to make up school days in June would be beneficial.

Some think that it doesn't matter when the school has holidays since snow and ice days are slim in Texas. Every year proves to at least have two, and with years like this with four, I think it would be beneficial to form a holiday schedule based around this possibility.

The school board and administration should look into changing the holiday schedule to be more lenient in the fall to allow for the possibility of weather days in the fall or spring and also allow for a break in a more difficult and longer semester.



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ILPC 2014 Gold Star Winner
ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

PO Box 2050 • 501 East South First Street • Albany, Texas 76430
Voice 325-762-3974 ext. 111 • Fax 325/762-3850 • E-mail lionsroar@albany.esc14.net

2014-2015 STAFF

Editor-In-Chief.....MOLLY LEE
Assistant Editor.....LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor.....CURRY WILSON
Photo/Layout Editor.....SHELBY BARTON
Features Editor.....KYLEA GARDNER
News Editor.....STEVE PHILLIPS
Sports Editor.....MICHAEL COTTER
Copy Editor.....RACHEL HILL,
Cartoonist.....MICHALA HUCKABAY
Adviser.....DONNIE A. LUCAS
Principal.....KEVIN HILL

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What we say is powerful

There have been a few moments for me over the past four years that lay heavy on my heart. All of those dreary moments have come from things people have said to me and even some regretful things I chose to say to others. Through those moments I have learned an important thing I need to live by:

1. If you don't have something nice to say, don't say it at all. And...
2. People always ignore rule #1.

And by "people" I mean my classmates, teachers, parents, and most importantly, myself. It has been evident to me that humans almost all the time feel the need to add input or a comment to everything someone chooses to do, and most of the time it's negative. I know we have all heard "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." And that couldn't be more wrong.

Our words have a lot of power and value, and we seem to use them more for hurtful things rather than encouraging each other. This might sound like a "preachy" message that you have heard hundreds of times, but I don't think most of us have let the truth of that sink in.

The worst part about this message is that I'm not just referring to drama or Twitter fights that are between students. Adults in our town post a lot of hurtful and mean

things on Facebook and say very crude things about students. I have witnessed adults gabbing in the grocery store about a student who doesn't fit into the norm of high school, and they were making fun of them and ridiculing their parents for letting their child dress a certain way and hang out with a kid from "THAT family..." It disgusts me that grown men and women who know how tough high school is for some people still choose to laugh and poke fun at kids who are trying to be themselves.

We need to be wise in what we say and how we act. The way we choose to speak to other people needs to be honoring to them. I know I have failed at this almost everyday of my life, but I'm starting to realize it, correct myself and apologize and have to choose not to say anything. This isn't a message scolding adults' actions or telling high school students that we need to learn when to shut up. It's a plea from someone who has started to realize the hurtful things people say. We should be discerning in how we treat other people and encourage the wonderful things about each other. Sometimes the hurtful things I say come through blind sarcasm or taking a joke too far, but that still doesn't give me an excuse to let those jokes make them feel bad about themselves.

Sometimes a silly joke can lead to long-term damage. Our words are more powerful than we realize. We should use them for good.



#blessed
by MOLLY LEE

Being last can be lonely

I absolutely hate being left behind. I hate being left behind in class, the latest gossip, sports, and especially when it comes to my sisters.

Now being a junior, I am the only child left in the house. Once my second oldest sister left for college, I felt like a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. No more sharing my clothes, waiting to use the bathroom in the morning, and no more being bossed at all the time.

Before she left, I was counting down the days and helping her pack just so I didn't have to deal with all the struggles anymore. And then school started.

The first part of the fall semester was a breeze without any siblings. I could go into my closet and find my clothes still there, take a shower whenever I wanted, and I didn't hear nagging in my ears the whole time.

By the time the holiday break came around, I knew my sisters would be coming back home. After

they walked through the front door, I realized how much I missed them. All of these emotions flooded over me, and I felt like my other halves were here with me.

During the break, we stayed up late many nights just talking and laughing. I never wanted them to leave. I was in heaven and nothing could bring me down. Except the spawn of Satan itself, school.

I dreaded going back, because I knew my sisters would be leaving, and I couldn't let that happen. Sadly it did. I felt lonely, and I had no one to talk to. My sisters mean the world to me, and I can't live without them. We have been through so much together, and nobody gets me like they do.

Now I talk to my sisters everyday. I can't wait to graduate and move in with them. I'd rather have missing clothes, wait hours to use the bathroom, or have somebody constantly nagging at me rather than being left alone without my sisters.



REDHEADED RANTS
by CURRY WILSON

Quarreling over quarterbacks

The NFL Scouting combine has come to a close, and now all of the NFL teams have seen or haven't seen what they were looking for.

Some players have amazed millions, while others (Jameis Winston) have proven their lack of athleticism. It is still in question who will be the first quarterback taken in the draft. Will it be the speedy dual-threat quarterback from Oregon, Marcus Mariota? Or will it be the troublesome young pocket passer from Florida State, Jameis Winston?

In my opinion Marcus Mariota is the obvious choice. You can trust him, you can turn him into a franchise player, and he will most certainly produce for you.

On the other hand, Jameis Winston has basically nothing to offer except for maybe a few illiterate conversations and some crab legs. This guy is good for nothing except for putting a team straight down the toilet and an entire franchise in jeopardy. If you watched the NFL

combine, this should be just a recap for you.

Lets put them into comparison. Jameis Winston ran a 4.97 40 at the combine, which is about as fast as a 300 pound lineman. It is exactly the same time that USC's 302 lb. defensive end Leonard Williams ran. Marcus Mariota, on the other hand, ran a 4.52, which was the best among all quarterbacks in this year's combine.

As far as each of their last college seasons go, Winston achieved just a 145.5 rating, 3907 yards of offense, and 25 total touchdowns. Meanwhile, Mariota was on his way to a Heisman-winning season, crushing all of Winston's statistics and awards. Mariota attained a rating of 181.7, 4454 yards of offense, and 42 total touchdowns.

If you're looking for a franchise quarterback, Mariota is your man. There is absolutely no reason for anyone to waste their time with Winston and his troublesome past, present, and future.



SPORTS WITH STEVE
by STEVE PHILLIPS



2¢ worth

What is your favorite TV series and why?

"NCIS because it keeps you guessing. I love trying to figure out who committed the crime before the cops do."

Parker Moon
Freshman



"Chasing Life because it's an inspirational story that teaches you how to live life."

Abbi Beard
Sophomore



"Breaking Bad because it's action packed and it keeps you on the edge of your seat. Walter White is boss."

Drew Neece
Junior



"One Tree Hill because it is a relatable show. I love to watch the twists and turns of the story and see how everything plays out."

Valerie Gandara
Senior



Netflix, Hulu entertain students

Teens share favorite movies, TV shows

KYLEA GARDNER
Feature Editor

When boredom sets in, teens look to various activities to keep themselves entertained. However, entertainment can be challenging for those who live in small towns, so students are looking to online sources to keep boredom to a minimum.

Netflix and Hulu are online websites that stream television shows and movies ranging from 1960's classics such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to Reality TV shows like MTV's *Jersey Shore*.

The majority of students find Netflix more intriguing than its competitor, Hulu.

"I definitely prefer Netflix over Hulu," eighth grade student Cutter Cowart said. "There's a lot more variety to choose from on Netflix."

Sophomore Sydney Key also thinks Netflix is better.

"Netflix would be my choice because it is a lot more user-friendly than Hulu," Key said.

Sophomore Grant Head agreed.

"I would pick Netflix because it's cheaper, and I'm too poor to pay for both Netflix and Hulu," Head said. "Netflix also has more TV episodes, so I can binge watch."

Another student also felt that Netflix was the better choice.

"I would pick Netflix, only because I have never heard of Hulu before today," freshman McKenna Thompson said.

Much like the other students, senior Molly Lee also decided in favor of Netflix.

"I prefer Netflix," Lee said. "I think that Hulu accommodates current TV shows, but I enjoy



Sophomore students gather around a phone to watch Netflix in their free time. Netflix and Hulu are not only available online, but are offered as apps for iPhone and Android for users to enjoy. Many students take advantage of being able to access these apps and watch frequently. PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

watching movies and TV shows that have been off the air for a while more. I also think that Netflix has expanded a lot, and they have original shows now that are really interesting."

There is availability to stream TV series and movies on both Netflix and Hulu, and the students shared the series that they would recommend to others.

"*American Horror Story* is my favorite show, and I would recommend everyone watch it, although it's a very weird show, so some people may not enjoy it," Thompson said.

American Horror Story is a chilling TV series that focuses on different characters and locations such as a haunted house, an asylum, a witch coven, a circus (freak show), and a hotel.

Cowart preferred the well-

known AMC series *The Walking Dead*, a series based on a group of survivors after a zombie apocalypse and their struggles to survive and maintain peace.

"I would tell people to watch *The Walking Dead* because it is non-stop action and every single episode is packed full of suspense," Cowart said.

Lee shared a number of different TV shows and movies that she enjoys watching.

"I never watched *One Tree Hill* or *Gossip Girl* when they were on TV because I was young when they started on the air, so it's nice to watch them now on Netflix," Lee said. "I also love to re-watch shows like *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. Most of the *Marvel* movies like *Captain America*, *Thor*, and *The Avengers* are on Netflix, so I

would definitely recommend watching those movies."

Key also shared her preference.

"*Once Upon a Time* is my favorite series," Key said. "I would recommend it because it gives you a sense of adventure and excitement, and it brings all your favorite childhood fairytale characters to life."

Once Upon a Time is set in a small town in Maine, where just about every fairytale character ever created was cursed and brought to life. Through the series the viewers see the characters struggling between living in Storybrooke, the town in Maine, or returning to their former lifestyle in the "Enchanted Forest" where they all formerly lived.

"I would definitely recom-

mend people watch *How I Met Your Mother*, because it is legendary," Head said. "It also has nine hilarious seasons."

All of the students agreed that the online sources are much more convenient than normal television.

"I don't like watching series on regular TV because only one episode airs every week, so you have to wait a long time to see the next episode. However, on Netflix you can just keep watching as many episodes as you want to," Cowart said. "I also like that there are no commercials on Netflix."

Thompson agreed.

"I tend to watch an entire season in one day, so Netflix is more convenient for me," Thompson said. "You don't have to wait more than a few seconds to watch the next episode."

Key also found the online source to be more helpful

"My schedule doesn't ever work well with the times the shows air, and I usually start the season late anyway, so the Internet is a better option for me," Key said.

Family had a big push on Lee's decision to start watching Netflix.

"My whole family shares a Netflix account, and we all watch very regularly," Lee said. "If I get really hooked on a show, I will binge watch and I will spend all of my free time watching it on my phone, computer, or even on my Apple TV. It's nice to be able to watch a large range of movies any time you want."

Cowart also was introduced to Netflix from a friend.

"One of my good friends recommended it to me, and I got hooked," Cowart said. "Now I watch it at least every other day."

As technology advances, entertainment is becoming easier to come across with the help of sources like Netflix and Hulu.



The Longest Ride
April 10, 2015 PG-13 139 min
Romance | Drama

The lives of a young couple intertwine with a much older man as he reflects back on a lost love while he's trapped in an automobile crash.

Director: George Tillman Jr.
Writers: Nicholas Sparks, Craig Bolotin
Stars: Scott Eastwood, Britt Robertson

Staff Review:

Furious 7
April 3, 2015 PG-13 137 min
Thriller | Action

Deckard Shaw seeks revenge against Dominic Toretto and his family for the death of his brother.

Director: James Wan
Writers: Chris Morgan, Gary Scott Thompson
Stars: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker

Staff Review:

Woman in Gold
April 1, 2015 PG-13 109 min
Drama

Maria Altmann, an octogenarian Jewish refugee, takes on the government to recover artwork she believes rightfully belongs to her family.

Director: Simon Curtis
Writers: Alexi Kaye Campbell
Stars: Ryan Reynolds, Helen Mirren, Katie Holmes

Staff Review:

Get Hard
March 27, 2015 R 100 min
Comedy

When millionaire James King is nailed for fraud and bound for jail at San Quentin, he returns to Darnell Lewis to prep him to go behind bars.

Director: Etan Cohen
Writers: Jay Martel, Ian Roberts
Stars: Kevin Hart, Will Ferrell

Staff Review:

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT BY RACHEL HILL

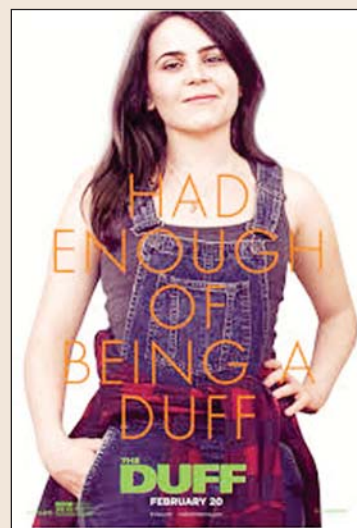
Kingsman: The Secret Service

Gary Unwin, whose late father was secretly involved in a spy organization, seems to be destined for a life behind bars. However, agent Hart notices the potential and recruits Eggsy to be in the secret service. In the midst of everything, villain Valentine plans to solve the problem of climate change by going on a worldwide killing spree. *Kingsman* is an upscale take on James Bond 007, but is extremely violent, with many politically correct, or incorrect, ideas and statements. The plot is simple enough to follow, and viewers won't be disappointed by the constant action. With its sexual content, violence, and profane language, *Kingsman* is a movie for much older, mature viewers.

The Duff

High school senior, Bianca, has a rude awakening when she learns that her classmates refer to her as a DUFF-designated ugly fat friend. Duffs serve as gatekeepers for their prettier, more popular friends. Desperate to reinvent her name, she gets help from life-long best friend and charming

jock, Wesley. In order to spare her senior year, Bianca must find the confidence to overthrow a judgmental student and change the school's social status. With sexual content and language that is expected in a movie about high-schoolers, smaller children may need to stay at home for this one. The story itself is a positive one, leaving the viewer thinking that everyone matters.



American Sniper

U.S. Navy Seal Chris Kyle takes his mission of protecting his partners to heart and becomes one of the most lethal snipers in American history, making him a big target. Kyle serves four tours in Iraq, and when he returns, he realizes he can never leave the war behind. With this movie being based around the war, the viewer can expect violence and

death. The movie is a great movie displaying heroism, sacrifice, duty and family.



Old Fashioned

Amber Hewson has a curious way of deciding her next home; every so often she packs up and drives until her gas gauge is empty. Amber meets Clay, who is completely devoted to God. Though they share different views, the two become close friends. Clay isn't much of a dating guy. He made a "promise not to be alone with any woman who's not my wife." But the physical distance doesn't keep them from talking. With few negative elements, wholesome spiritual elements, and a great story line, *Old Fashioned* is a movie that truly lives up to its name.

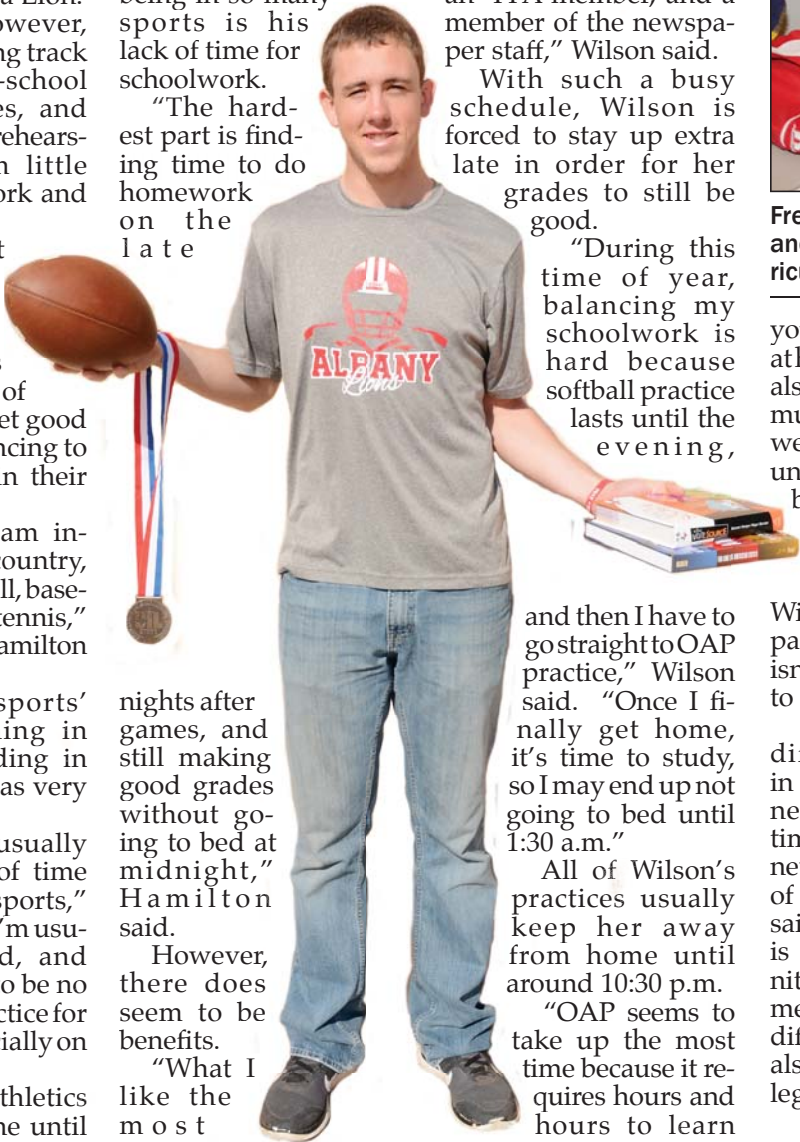
Balancing grades, medals tough

Students share struggle for extra time

SHELBY BARTON
Photo Editor

With an enrollment of only 135 students, Albany High students have more options than most high schoolers to be involved in every aspect of student life as a Lion. For many, however, balancing morning track workouts, after-school softball practices, and late One Act Play rehearsals leaves them little time for homework and studying. Because most are so involved in multiple events and activities, students share the struggle of making time to get good grades and advancing to the next round in their competitions. "This year I am involved in cross country, football, basketball, baseball, track, and tennis," freshman Brian Hamilton said. With these sports' seasons beginning in August and ending in May, Hamilton has very little free time. "My grades usually reflect my lack of time due to all my sports," Hamilton said. "I'm usually pretty tired, and there just seems to be no time left after practice for homework, especially on game days." Students in athletics may not get home until

three or four hours after school, or even 9:00 p.m. or later, depending on their game and practice schedules. "Most of my practices all year let out around 6:00 p.m.," Hamilton said. "For me, I think basketball was the most time-consuming sport because there were more games to play each week and getting back late on Tuesdays was hard." Hamilton believes the most difficult problem of being in so many sports is his lack of time for schoolwork. "The hardest part is finding time to do homework on the late



and then I have to go straight to OAP practice," Wilson said. "Once I finally get home, it's time to study, so I may end up not going to bed until 1:30 a.m." All of Wilson's practices usually keep her away from home until around 10:30 p.m. "OAP seems to take up the most time because it requires hours and hours to learn



Freshman Brian Hamilton (above) organizes his uniforms and equipment from track and baseball. Many students find themselves juggling school work and extra-curricular activities. PHOTOS BY SHELBY BARTON

your lines at practice and at home," Wilson said. "It also feels like I spend so much time there because we don't start rehearsing until a little after 8:00 p.m. because of all the other things the cast is busy with before then." Unlike Hamilton, Wilson thinks the hardest part of so many activities isn't a need for more time to study. "What I find that is difficult about being in so many activities is never having enough time to sleep at night and never having a little bit of a social life," Wilson said. "But the best part is having the opportunity to create so many memories with so many different people, and it also looks good on a college resume." Senior Dylan Petree

spends his time participating in football, basketball, and National Honor Society. "From my athletic perspective, sports have been what I usually am thinking about. Whether I am in a game, at practice, watching film, or just thinking how I am going to prepare for the next opponent, that is all that is on my mind," Petree said. "Because of this, I have to focus extra hard on my school work." Petree agrees with Hamilton about late night game days and basketball being the most time-consuming activity. "I have to spend most of my time during basketball practicing because that is key if you want to be good and score points, and you have to really work on it," Petree

said. "Repetition has been what has worked for me, whether it's just me in the gym by myself or the rest of the team up there playing a pick up game," Petree said. "Definitely lots of time must be invested to be a successful team and individual player." Although it seems like a struggle, most Lions wouldn't want to be any less involved. "The hardest part is remembering to do and actually doing the things I have to get done, like homework and studying," Petree said. "The best part is that I am able to be a part of so many different things, and I am never bored. I am able to experience different things that high school has to offer, so I know I am never missing out."

Boys find home at Ben Richey

Boys Ranch expands to provide more opportunities

RACHEL HILL
Copy Editor

When life seems like it's too tough to handle, Ben Richey Boys Ranch parents and administrators step in to give the boys at the ranch a sense of security, home and love. The original campus is in Abilene, but it was expanded to Albany 11 years ago. "The Boys Ranch was started in 1947," Albany Campus Director Mike Bean said. "It was initially named the Abilene Boys Ranch, but after Ben Richey, a police commissioner and supporter of the home died in 1975, they renamed the ranch after him." Bean's family consists of his wife, who is the administrator's assistant, and his 8-year-old adopted daughter Jade. It's been good to get Jade out of the house and away from the boys as she gets older," Bean said. "She saw them as her brothers until recently when one of the elementary boys started having eyes for her." The Beans first served as house parents in the first house built in Albany, but they are moving to a newly acquired home to serve solely as administrators of the campus. The doors at the Albany campus officially opened in 2004 with eight hand-picked boys.

"The last three years I have been full-time administrator, and part-time house parent," Bean said. "Three years ago, I finished my college degree, took the state administrator's test and became a licensed administrator."

The Albany ranch has helped about 35 boys back on their feet in its ten-year history. "I came to the ranch at the beginning of my eighth grade year," Joe Strickland, senior at Albany High School said.



Marquis Thurman (top) makes his bed in his room at the Ben Richey Boys Ranch. Several of the boys (bottom) say a prayer before their meal with house parents Thomas and Amy Chapman. PHOTOS BY RACHEL HILL

Thomas Chapman, a boys ranch alumni and Albany graduate himself, and his wife Amy Chapman, are now his house parents. "My wife and I moved to the Albany campus in June," Chapman said. "We had been driving back and forth from the Abilene campus." The Chapman's are house parents for six boys. "I never knew how much boys could eat," Amy Chapman, Thomas's wife said. "Our pantry and fridge has huge containers of food, and we go through a gallon of milk a day." The boys have chores that they are expected to get done around the house, along with extra-curricular activities and schoolwork. "The ranch has taught me so much and helped me through many problems I didn't think I could overcome," Joe Strickland, senior at AHS said. The Ranch also offers

the boys a scholarship for college. "I plan to go to Cisco College in Abilene and live in the independent living quarters on the Abilene campus," Strickland said. "I will major in welding, which means school for two years. Then I will possibly go to Florida to find some welding work there." Marquis Thurman is also a senior at the ranch. "I came to the Ranch in my eighth grade year," Thurman said. "I've learned a good work ethic and to put my heart into everything I do." Thurman has a different plan for his future. "I am planning on going into the Marines," Thurman said. "I have been training since August, and I fight the younger boys every now and then for some extra practice." With so many new boys coming in, the ranch has expanded. "We initially opened with one house, which had rooms for eight boys and an apartment for the house parents, and an apartment for relief parents," Bean said. "The plan was to add eight more rooms onto the relief house, but we modified the relief house into the office and built another house for six boys and house parents and then a separate relief house for boys and staff."

The final plan is to add one more house with room for six boys. The Ranch recently purchased the Wafer home to be the director's house. "Running the ranch compared to being house parents is kind of like being grandparents, minus spoiling the boys," Bean said. "It's different being

an administrator. I know what the house parents go through, so we can give advice from our past experience. I have a vision of how I want the boys and the campus to be presented." Running a family and running a ranch can be tough. "Scheduling is the toughest challenge," Bean said. "Trying to juggle mandatory ranch business, school, church and extra curricular activities is difficult."

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

10- Day 2 District Tennis

10- Varsity SB vs. Anson @ 5:00-here

10- Varsity/JV Bsb vs. Anson @ 5:00-here

10- Jr. High dDistrict track-here

11- Buyer Seller Banquet

13-14- Girls Regional Golf

14- Varsity SB vs. Eula @ 5:00-here

14- Varsity/JV Bsb vs. Eula @ 5:00 & 6:30 p.m. here

15-16 Boys Regional Golf

15- Ag Region 5 Wildlife Contest

17- Varsity SB vs. Hamlin @ 5:00-here

17- Varsity Bsb vs. Hamlin @ 5:00-here

17- JV Bsb vs. Hamlin @ 7:00-here

18-19- ILPC State Convention

20-21 Tennis Regional Meet

20- 8th grade EOC-math

21- 8th grade EOC-social studies

21- 7th grade EOC-math

21- Varsity SB vs. Hawley @ 5:00-here

21- Varsity/JV Bsb vs. Hawley @ 5:00-here

24- Varsity SB vs. Baird @ 5:00-here

24- Varsity Bsb vs. Baird @ 5:00-here

25- Regional Academics

28- Varsity/JV Bsb vs. Stamford @ 5:00-here

29- Band concert contest

MAY

1-2- Regional Track-Odessa

5- EOC, US History, Alg I, Biology

5- AP Calculus exam

12-13- Tennis State Meet

14-16-Track State Meet

17- Bible presentation

17- Senior progressive dinner

18- Academic Banquet

19- Athletic Banquet

20- Sr. Breakfast

20- Sr. Six Flags

24- Baccalaureate

26-28 Academic State Meet

29- Graduation

Students perfect 'prom-posals'

Prom pushes students to become more creative

KYLEA GARDNER
Feature Editor

The Junior-Senior Prom is something that all students look forward to for the majority of their high school career, but recently coming up with a good "promposal" or finding a clever way to get a date has become a must.

This year's event held March 21 was no exception with students planning extravagant ways to ask their dates to spend the night on the dance floor with them.

"I waited until I knew she was asleep, then I tossed rocks at her window until she looked out, and I was holding a sign that said, 'Will you be my princess at prom?'" junior Alex Faith said.

For his last prom, Senior Colin Reed decided to take part in a promposal himself.

"I had my friend Valerie pick my date up from her house and blindfold her and take her to the football field where I was standing in the end zone wearing my football jersey and holding a sign saying, 'I know I'm a has-been, but...will you tackle prom with me?'" Reed said.

Senior Steve Phillips also asked his long-time girlfriend to attend prom with him with a twist to the usual promposal.

"I bought several bags of flour and presented them to her saying 'Now that I brought you flours, will you go to prom with me?'" Phillips said.

Contrary to Phillip's idea, flowers were just right for sophomore Alexis Munden's promposal.

"There were flowers delivered to me that had a card that read 'Prom?' on the inside," Munden said.

Junior Sarah Rogers asked a fellow classmate to accompany her to prom.

"He is into pole vaulting, so I made a poster that said, 'Let's pole vault our way to prom!' and I had a friend drive him to the pole vault mats where I was waiting," Rogers said.

Junior Kyler Conde took a traditional approach to inviting his date.

"I texted my friend from out of town and asked her if she was busy on March 21st," Conde said. "She said she wasn't, so I just told her that I didn't have a date, and I was wondering if she would



Senior Steve Phillips asks his girlfriend, Sierra Price, to prom by bringing her "flowers". Many other students thought outside of the box when asking their dates to prom held on March 21 at the Whitney. PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

be interested in being my date, and she agreed."

Junior Tobin Nall did the same.

"I asked my boyfriend, but not in any special way," Nall said. "I wanted to ask him in a cute way, but he already knew he was going to be my date since he is my boyfriend, so I guess I don't feel like it is necessary to ask him in an extravagant way because we have been together for a long time."

Everyone agreed that the reactions that went along with the promposals were just as good as the invite itself.

"All she could do was yell 'Oh my gosh, yes!' really loud, and then she came and gave me a hug," Reed said.

Faith's date also gave him an interesting reaction.

"She was so surprised, but she was mostly scared because she had no idea what was hitting her window," Faith said.

Rogers's promposal had a positive effect as well.

"He just said yes and that he would love to," Rogers said. "He also said that on the way there he was trying to figure out who was asking him, but he was surprised to find out that it was me," Rogers said.

Over the course of the last few years, promposals have evolved into a tradition in high school society, although the origin is unknown.

"I think that promposals have become so important because one guy did it and he set the bar high for every other guy,

and now it's just set a standard for guys everywhere," Phillips said. "If you don't live up to it, you are in a world of hurt from your girl."

Faith felt it was a way to express your feelings for the other person.

"I think promposals are important because they show how much you care about the person you ask to Prom," Faith said.

Rogers agreed.

"Honestly don't quite know why they are so important," Rogers said. "I think it's just a cute way to get a date, but I also think some people think the more work you put into the promposal shows how badly you want to go with the person that you are asking," Rogers said.

Reed felt positively toward the idea of promposals.

"It's a great way to get creative, and it's way better than just walking up to or texting someone or asking them without doing anything special," Reed said.

Although the thought is nice, some promposals are less about flattery and more about publicity in the eyes of some students.

"I mean, I think it's a sweet gesture, but I think most people just want something to post on social media, because nowadays if you don't add a picture of it then apparently it didn't happen," Nall said.

Munden felt the same way.

"I think that in some cases, girls are more into how much time and money the

boy spends on the promposal than they are on the boy, and I don't think that's fair," Munden said. "Aside from that, I love the idea of promposals. I think it is great to get creative and do something for someone to show how much you care about them."

Conde also shared his opinion.

"It's important because girls like cute stuff, and they enjoy the free food that generally comes with a 'cute' promposal," Conde said. "If someone were to ask me to prom, I would say yes, too, regardless of who it was."

While technically prom is for juniors and seniors, underclassman can attend if they are invited by one of the upper-classmen.

"I think prom is just so exclusive," Key said. "You can only go if you are invited by an upperclassmen, and I just think that is a cool thing that everyone gets excited about."

As Key said, it is special for underclassmen to be invited to prom, so they get very excited about the prospect.

"I attended prom last year as a freshman, and it was a great experience getting to be around all of the upperclassmen," sophomore Michaela Reames said. "There was a photo booth, and you could make your own bag of candy on your way out, so that was really fun."

Another sophomore class member was also looking forward to dancing the night away at prom a year early.

"I was not really sure what to expect as a sophomore at prom, but I had fun sharing the night with my date," Key said. "From hearing stories of past proms, I had high expectations going into it."

Munden was also eager to go to prom.

"I'm excited that I got to experience everything that prom has to offer more than two nights out of my high school career," Munden said. "I also had a great night with some of my closest friends."

Freshman Rylie Scott felt the same way.

"I was looking forward to going to prom," Scott said. "Since I went with one of my best junior friends, it wasn't that awkward being a freshman. It was great to just have a fun night with my friends."

The elegant dresses and the slow dances are a definite part of what goes on during prom, but the part that people focus on more than anything is the promposal, and through the last few years the importance has become more and more, making this time of the year even more stressful than it was before.

Students venture out on spring break

Teens enjoy vacation from school activities

KYLEA GARDNER
Feature Editor

With the school year winding down, and the work piling up, a little piece of heaven shines down and lends its grace to every student and teacher.

This year, the school's doors closed for Spring Break from March 9 through March 13.

"This year for Spring Break, my friend and I were invited to travel with a few families to babysit their children during their vacation in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico," sophomore Michaela Reames said. "We were in charge of taking care of the kids for the majority of the day."

Senior Rachel Kitchens also took a trip over the holiday.

"Over spring break my mom and I took a girl's trip to New York," Kitchens said. "We had been planning on taking it for a while, but we finally decided that we would go for my senior year."

Freshman Madi Ratliff also took a vacation.

"I went to Dallas first for a Miranda Lambert concert," Ratliff said. "Blake Shelton showed up at the concert a little while into the show, and watching them together was my favorite part."

Unlike the others, eighth grade student Cutter Cowart stayed in the comfort of his home.

"My grandpa passed away over spring break, so I didn't get to do much other than watch movies the whole week," Cowart said. "Although, one day there was a big group of college students from Beltway's College Ministry that came and hung out with us for a few hours at the Feed Store, and that was really fun."

Junior Levi Britting took a trip



Sophomores Michaela Reames and Emmy Shirley (above) play in the sand on the beaches of Playa Del Carmen, Mexico. Senior Rachel Kitchens (right) poses for a picture with her mom in front of the Statue of Liberty. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY GINNY IVY AND RACHEL KITCHENS

that didn't require flying out of state.

"My mom, step dad, brother, and I all spent two days in San Antonio and went to the river walk and the Alamo," Britting said. "After that, we spent three days in Galveston and went to Moody Gardens. The beach was too cold to visit."

Fellow junior Tyler Miller spent time with family.

"All I did was go to my dad's house in Graham over the break," Miller said. "Since he lives so far away and I am involved in so many activities, I don't get to see him much. My dad, brother, and I all went fishing with some of my other family members, and we went to Dallas a couple of days as well."

Sophomore Emmy Shirley accompanied Reames over spring break.

"My favorite part of the week was getting to know the kids we were babysitting," Shirley said. "All of the kids were very sweet; however, it was a really big challenge to keep them entertained."

Kitchens also shared some of her memorable experiences from her trip to the Big Apple.

"We got to stay in a hotel in Times Square," Kitchens said. "My favorite part was going to watch *Mama Mia* and *Chicago* on Broadway. We also went to the Empire State Building, the 9/11 memorial, the Statue of Liberty, and to China Town."

The tropic feel of Mexico was what hooked Reames's attention.

"There would be random animals running around, and I loved that," Reames said. "We got to drink out of coconuts and build sandcastles on the beach. It was a

very cool experience."

The social aspect of Britting's trip was his favorite part.

"I really enjoyed hanging out at the resort with all the people that I met there," Britting said.

For most of the students, this year's trip was a special occasion.

"We usually don't go on a vacation over spring break," Kitchens said. "If we go anywhere, we usually go to the Metroplex area for a few days to go shopping, but this was our first big trip and our first time to fly together."

Shirley agreed.

"The vacation that I got to go on was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing," Shirley said. "The flight to Mexico was the first flight I had ever been on, and I had never been out of the country either."

Britting explained that spring break vacations aren't a usual thing

for him.

"I don't usually go on a spring break trip, other than when the band goes somewhere, but this year wasn't trip year," Britting said.

Much like Britting, Miller usually spends spring break with the band.

"Every other year, the band takes a trip over Spring Break, so I travel with them," Miller said. "This year wasn't trip year, so it was nice to be able to spend quality time with family."

On the contrary, Ratliff usually spends the break out of town.

"The Houston Stock Show is almost always over spring break, so I am usually there every year," Ratliff said.

Although school work is again piling up, students can still look back on their experiences from the break.



Lions fight to return to state

Team works towards Austin

STEVE PHILLIPS
News Editor

Track season is now in full swing and the Lions have been working towards a district title.

The Lions have completed six track meets for the year finishing up the district meet just three days ago. Results were not available at press time.

"We are finally getting things rolling on a consistent basis," head track coach Rod Britting said. "It seemed like getting things started was the hardest part with everything else going on."

Due to pre-existing injuries, some athletes were not able to compete at a high level early in the season.

"We've had a couple of guys that had some speed, but are now out," Britting said. "I feel like our depth this year is the best it has been in a while."

The Lions depth plays a big part in every event.

"We are solid in the jumping events, and we have good depth," Britting said. "We have enough guys that each one only has to run one or two events which keeps everyone fresh."

Although the Lions may look good, they are still not perfect in their coach's eyes.

"We don't really have any distance runners, so we are losing points in the distance races," Britting said.

The Lions, who placed in the top four at district, will be competing in the area track meet on April 22.

"All of our relays and jumping events have a chance to move past area," Britting said. "As well as several individuals in running events."

A returner from last year's team, Caleb Masters, went



down in August with a knee injury, but he has now been cleared for sports.

"Caleb is a hard worker and is very resilient," Britting said. "He is tough-minded and that rubs off on people."

Masters returned to sports during Spring Break.

"It's rough jumping back into a sport as demanding as track after six months off," Masters said. "But it feels good to be competing again."

Masters is also a prospect to return to state along with fellow juniors Levi Britting and Michael Cotter.

"All three have a very good chance at returning to state again if they put in the work and stay healthy," Rod Britting said.

Cotter feels his chances are high to return to state. He placed third in the state meet last year with a jump of 6-4.

"I feel pretty good," Cot-



Sophomore Ethen Bernstein whisks himself over the bar during the high jumping event in Cisco. Senior Steve Phillips races a competitor to the finish line in the 100 meter dash. The boys track team competed on Tuesday in Stamford at the district track meet. The area competition will be at McMurry University in Abilene on April 22. The top four finishers at district are advancing.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL HILL

ter said. "Even though this year's competition from our region is harder, I am already jumping 6-2."

Cotter credits his jumping skills to his coach, Ryder Peacock.

"I can jump pretty well, but my greatest strength is my coach," Cotter said. "It's very helpful having a 7-foot jumper who knows what he's doing as your coach."

Although the athletes are inching closer, there is still a long road to state.

"I have to keep my legs fresh throughout the post-district meets," Cotter said. "I also have to be on my game even when competition is high."

Levi Britting also feels he has a good chance to return to the state meet. He placed sixth out of nine with a height of 14-0.

"I think I have a pretty good chance since we moved to Region I," Levi Britting said. "Both of the state pole vault athletes from Region I graduated last year."

Levi feels there are more mental roadblocks than physical involved in vaulting.

"I think the biggest challenge of returning will probably be the mental pressure," Levi said. "There are a lot of things that can go wrong in pole vault, and I can't afford to have a bad day late in the year."

Levi knows exactly what is needed for him to make it back to the big dance.

"My willingness to put in extra time and work hard are my greatest attributes," Levi said.

Fellow pole-vaulter Masters knows it will be more difficult for him.

"I'm still trying to get back in the swing of things," Masters said. "I think if I keep improving I will have a chance at making it back to the state meet."

Masters was fifth out of nine and also jumped 14-0 at the state meet.

Girls' team sets eyes toward district

Lady Lions prepare for tough teams in new region

MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

The Lady Lions track team had a hard time getting in practice time this season, but that didn't dampen their spirits or expectations.

"Our practices have been going very well considering we didn't get to start running on the track until our first meet," head track coach Ginger Norton said. "When the weather permitted, our workouts became more productive. We did have to cancel our first track meet due to weather, and that was a bummer. However, we did get to put in good work that week on the track."

Despite the weather conditions and shortened practices, the runners still worked hard.

"The practices were pretty tough when we first started," sophomore Rachel Hill said. "Once we got in shape, they became easier to handle."

Despite losing a few seniors, the team has grown in size since last



Sophomore Rachel Hill (above) launches over the bar during the pole vaulting field event competition. Senior Sarah Taplin races against competitors at the Cisco track meet. The girls' team competed on Tuesday in Stamford. The results of that meet were unavailable at press time. The advancing competitors will show their talents at the area meet on April 22 in Abilene at McMurry University.

PHOTO BY STEVE PHILLIPS
PHOTO BY MICHAEL COTTER



year.

"We have a total of 16 runners and four throwers," Norton said. "I knew several would be promising out of a large freshman class, and a few others have stepped up, to fill the gaps. They surprised me, and I am proud of those who advanced, and those who didn't."

Despite the younger girls stepping up, the team lost a very important runner in Kami Norton.

"Kami kind of set the pace for us last year, and motivated us in practice," Hill said. "I am glad that Valerie has stepped up to fill that role this year and is doing a good job."

The players and coaches plan to ride off the success of getting second at the state track meet last year, as well as doing well at the regional meet.

"Last year was a very successful year, not just for Kami but for the team," Norton said. "Our goal this season was to be district champions and then take it from there one goal at a time."

Besides fielding a solid team, the girls still have things they need to work on.

"With all the new runners this year, the team chemistry is a little off," Hill said. "It will take time for all of us to start pushing each other at a good pace and get on the

same page, especially when it comes to the relays."

Part of having a young team is teaching them how to run with confidence.

"This year is my first year of high school track, and I was a little nervous," freshman Rylie Scott said. "The good news for me is I played varsity volleyball, so I know what it takes; also, the track upperclassman are really encouraging and boost my confidence."

The new District and Region brings challenges with them.

"We had the same district as basketball, so teams like Hamlin, Stamford, Roscoe, and Anson were there," Norton said. "It was a very competitive meet. The Area and Regional meets just get tougher, so we will have to be competitive and on our A-game if we want to reach our goals."

The team knows what it's like to go to the post-district meets and plans to return to them.

"Last year was a fun year for me. Being my first year on varsity track, it was exciting," Hill said. "However, I came up just short at the regional meet. This year I plan to finish what I started and compete at the state meet."

The girls were running well during the pre-season, and the district results were not available at press time.

Tennis, golf prepare for district

Weather delays cause issues for both sports

MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

As the tennis and golf teams move into their seasons, both are improving and looking to develop younger players. Due to weather changes, the tennis team has been forced to cancel several practices and one meet. "We've missed a ton of practices this year," head tennis coach Sara Wilson said. "It feels like the season hasn't even started yet." The players also feel that there has been a lack of preparation. "We really haven't been out to practice much, and we've had to miss a meet," junior Savannah Perez said. "However, with the practices and the meet we have had recently, I feel that we all have improved greatly from last year." Despite the weather, the team felt like it benefited greatly from

the Hawely meet. "Due to weather, again, the meet was changed from an eight set match to a six-set format," Wilson said. "However, I felt like we really got to play a lot of matches and got a lot of practice in. For the first meet of the year, we did really well." With 12 freshmen on the team, the returners are asked to step into big shoes. "I am very proud of our returners; they are really the strength of our team," Wilson said. "Abbi Beard and Steven Ford look strong for the mixed doubles, as well as Xavier Coronado in boys' singles, and Michaela Reames and Kylea Gardner are also experienced players and should do well this year." The team has high goals for this year. "My goal is to advance as many kids as we can to regionals," Wilson said. "However, we really need to work on all aspects of our game." Like tennis, golf has also been delayed by the weather. "We really hadn't all been able to have an organized practice for

a good while," head golf coach Ryder Peacock said. "I know a few of our players went up there to knock the rust off, but that's about it." Because of the wait, the team isn't quite sure what the season holds. "I'm really excited we finally started," senior Chandler Fields said. "We have some good youth coming up, and I really think the potential for this year is high." The girl's team also has new members. "I am really pleased with how our team has been playing so far," senior Molly Leesaid. "Last year we barely had enough for a team, so to have 3 more girls is really nice." Lee believes the team had a slower start as well. "We had a slow start between basketball playoffs and weather problems, so it's nice to finally be in a routine of having practice and golf meets," Lee said. With the number of players the team has this year, the hopes for advancing are high. "We are returning three boys as well as three girls who have some key experience," Peacock



Senior Xavier Coronado serves the ball during a practice meet at Albany. The tennis and golf teams are preparing for their district meets in the coming weeks. PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

said. "With the smaller district this year, I really think we will be able to compete. We also have five new freshmen as well as a new sophomore." The girls' team is looking to advance to the next round of play.

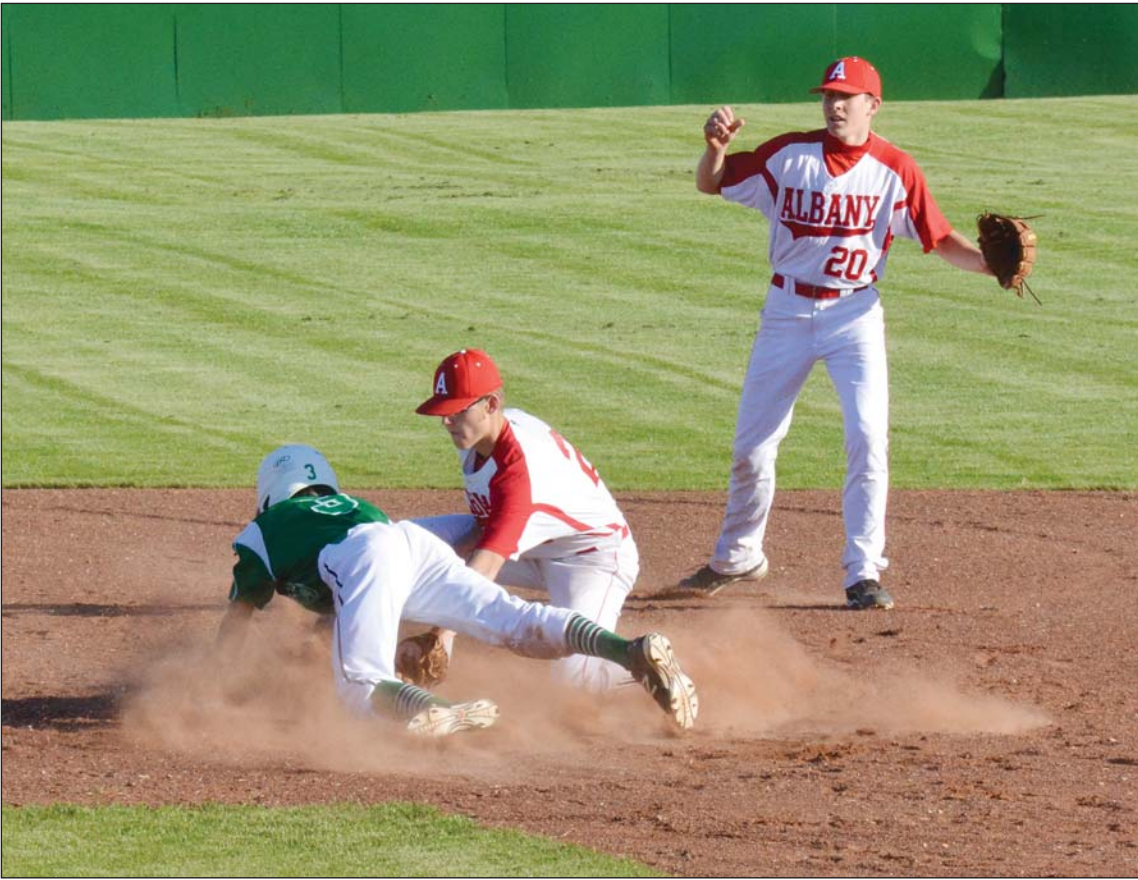
"Our biggest competition is probably Hamlin, and they always produce really low individual and team scores," Lee said. "We have a good shot at getting out of district as a team, so I know all of our eyes are set on advancing."

Baseball begins short season strong

Lions compete in tough new district

CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

With baseball season in full swing, head baseball coach David Fairchild and the Lions started the district season looking strong. The Lions tallied a 3-0 record through the first half of district last week. "We are in a new and competitive district this year," Fairchild said. "Stamford, Anson, and Hawley are going to be the top three teams that we will compete against." Losing four seniors this year who played in critical spots, this year's team had to step up to the plate. "We lost two pitchers and a catcher, but the boys have really stepped up and filled those positions well," Fairchild said. Taking over the catcher's position is freshman Adam Faith. "I have played catcher since Little League. I kind of feel pressure being the catcher because if a ball gets past me, Coach Fairchild gets pretty mad," Faith said, "But I love throwing people out."



Teagan Brandon makes a play at second base in the game against Hamlin. The Lions are hoping to repeat as district champions this year as the district rounds of play are coming to a close. PHOTO BY MOLLY LEE

Being one of only two freshmen on the team, Faith has his older brother to help him through the season. "I like playing with my

brother," Faith said. "He pushes me to be my best and gives me advice on what I need help on." Faith has set high goals for himself

"I want to win district this year, and I know that we can do it," Faith said. Fairchild isn't worried about the team's experience level.

"I don't think we have a young team because of the juniors who started their freshman year," Fairchild said. "So I think that they, and the seniors, will be our strength because of their experience." The team has had a slow start getting into the season. "We weren't able to practice much because of the weather and the rain," Fairchild said. Baseball has been part of senior Xavier Coronado's life since he was four, and he has been training for the season since school started in August. "Once school started, I've been doing drills to improve my game with a few other seniors," Coronado said. Last year the Lions ended their season against Valley Mills in the area playoff with a one-run loss. "My goal this year is to try to win as many games as possible and try to go deep into the playoffs," junior Drew Neece said. Junior Alex Faith not only plays baseball, but runs track as well. "It is sometimes hard playing two sports," Faith said. "But by the time track practices end, baseball practice usually starts. So I don't miss a lot of baseball practice." The Lions play tonight against the Anson Tigers in Albany at 5:00 p.m.

Softball bounces back from slow start

Lady Lions look to playoffs

STEVE PHILLIPS
News Editor

The Lady Lion's softball team is entering the second half of district looking to take their intensity to a whole new level.



Junior Tobi Nall knocks the ball into the outfield in the Lady Lion's victory over Hamlin. PHOTO BY MOLLY LEE

"Right now we are close to last place," head softball coach Jimmy Fuentes said. "We need to understand we can't give up games that we need to win." Due to Texas weather, the Lady Lions entered district with a shortened preseason schedule. "It's been pretty frustrating," Fuentes said. "We are supposed to play three tournaments the

first three weeks of the season and we only played one." The Lady Lions' second tournament was cancelled altogether, and the third was condensed to just one day. The team has also had minimal practices. "Most of our practices early in the season were indoor, so we didn't have many full-out practices," Fuentes said. Fuentes knows he has players with the potential to be great, but he just hasn't seen them put together a flawless performance. "We are up and down and a little inconsistent," Fuentes said. "We haven't been able to piece together a complete game yet." The Lady Lions scored 15 runs and allowed 27 through the first four games of district. "We haven't been on all phases at the same time," Fuentes said. "Our pitching will be good, but we can't take care of it at the plate, or we hit the ball well but our defense is off." Although they aren't fulfilling their entire potential, Fuentes knows what his team needs to work on. "Consistency is the biggest deal and playing with more intensity," Fuentes said. "They know how to play, but they won't let loose. They practice hard, but they just need to play that same way."

Fuentes believes his team's work ethic is one of their better qualities. "Our kids want to prepare and work to get better," Fuentes said. The Lady Lions entered the year losing their entire infield to graduation, and there are no seniors on the roster this season. "It's hard to talk about leadership because we have no seniors and our juniors are just now getting into that role," Fuentes said. "We are still looking for that one person to step up into the leader position." There are two returning starters from last year's team, and both are juniors, Lori Davis and Tobi Nall. Davis agreed with her coach on their consistency problems. "We need to become more consistent," Davis said. "So far we've either hit well or played good defense, but we haven't put them together yet." The Lady Lions won the district title last year even considering a slow start. "We haven't started off as well as we would've liked," Davis said. "But we also did that last year and we were still able to win a district title, so we just have to work hard." Nall knows what has to be done to capture another district title this year. "We would have to win from

here on out," Nall said. "We need to start off strong instead of slow each game." Nall, too, agrees with her coach and teammate on the consistency problems. "We need to work on being consistent offensively," Nall said. Being the only two returning starters from last year, Nall and Davis are automatically in a leadership role without any seniors on their roster. "I know the younger kids look to me for leadership," Nall said. "So it is my job to fill that spot." Davis also knows exactly what she needs to do to better her team. "I need to keep everyone positive when we are down," Davis said. "The younger kids have never played games that matter this much, so they aren't used to the pressure yet." Nall and Davis contribute to their team in various aspects. "My biggest contribution would be pitching," Davis said. "If I can keep the ball low and throw strikes, that will help the defense a bunch." Nall is also defensively savvy. "Staying solid defensively is probably my biggest contribution," Nall said. The Lady Lions will face Anson tonight at 5:00 pm at home.

"EOC"

Continued from | PG 1

"In the past our school has usually scored above the state average, but we are starting to get closer to the average than we used to be," Raymond said. "If we don't make the adjustment to the EOC, then we will continue to have an increased number of average scores instead of recommended."

Raymond was a member of the committee that reviewed the question bank for the biology test.

"After reviewing the questions, I know the level and rigor of the test," Raymond said.

The English tests consist of reading, revising and editing, short answers, and an essay.

"In the past, the short answers have been the

most difficult for students," English teacher Jennifer Everitt said.

Freshman Rylie Scott, who will take the English I EOC, feels that the essay might be difficult.

"It might be challenging just because of the short amount of time that we have to write," Scott said.

Asher is not worried about the U.S. History EOC, which is given to juniors.

"I am confident because Mr. Lucas has prepared us well for the test," Asher said.

According to Everitt, the EOC tests are used to determine if students are mastering the minimum level of education.

"I think our whole goal is to make sure that everyone is at the minimum, but then to go above that," Everitt said.

Raymond agrees with her.

"If you only need

to know the minimum knowledge, then it isn't helping you," Raymond said.

Scott does not think that the EOC's are beneficial.

"I feel like they are a hassle," Scott said. "You have to gather all of your learning throughout the year and use it on one test."

"FFA"

Continued from | PG 1

years ago, so I decided that I wanted to try it," Perez said.

"I like getting to learn about different bugs that I haven't seen before."

The teams began practicing for the events in February.

"All of the events require a great deal of practice to be good," Beard said. "There are a lot of questions in each event and a lot to memorize."

The entomology team prepared for their competitions by memorizing the order, common name, metamorphosis, mouth parts, and the significance of many different types of insects.

"I have a packet of information that I gave to the team to look at, and we studied flashcards on Quizlet," Edmison said. "I also have my own small insect collection that we looked at."

Beard used written material, as well as hands-on activities to help the students learn the information required for their contests.

"We have studied books, videos, and grass mounts, and looked at live grasses out in the field for plant ID," Beard said.

Some of the events don't require as much memorization.

"To do well in livestock judging, you need to have a good eye for animals," Beard said.

Junior Kyler Conde participated in plant ID, horse judging, and home site evaluation.

"I have done horse judging and home site evaluation before, but this was my first year to do plant ID," Conde said.

Conde's favorite event is horse judging.

"It is the easiest for me because I grew up around horses," Conde said. Conde enjoys going to the competitions.

"I love getting to learn more about FFA," Conde said.

"UIL"

Continued from | PG 1

most," Hayner said. "I just got into such a routine seeing them everyday, and it's going to be weird not working with them."

First-time actor Allen

Granville landed the leading role.

"It took a lot of responsibility, but I like the challenge," Granville said. "My favorite part was in the last scene where John Proctor stands up for what he believes."

Not only was this his first performance, it was also his last.

"I will be too old next year," Granville said. "I am trying to get a wavier for football, but I have been told they probably won't give me more than one. I'm going to miss it. I really wanted to try my talents at a comedy being the natural goofball that I am."

The cast will perform the play one last time on Sunday, April 12, at 2:00 pm in the high school auditorium.

STUDENT WORK FORCE

With the little time they have after school, many students find themselves working around town not only to earn money, but to gain valuable experience in knowing how to handle workplace situations responsibly.

Through these jobs, students are able to better prepare for their lives ahead.

**Photos by
Shelby Barton and
Molly Lee**

**Story by
Shelby Barton**



Junior Sarah Rogers (above) organizes various products along the isles in Brookshire's to create the best display. Junior Jenna Phillips (right) works the cash register during her after-school job at Blanton-Caldwell.



Senior Kaylee Waters (above) coaches a tumbler at the Albany Sports Center. Senior Rachel Kitchens (right) demonstrates the next move at the Albany Dance Theatre and overlooks a group of young dancers.



Senior Molly Lee (far left) unloads boxes of paper at the front of *The Albany News*. Senior Sierra Price (left), also working at the Albany Sports Center, spots McKenna Thompson on her back tuck. Sophomore Sydney Key (above) dances with a group of girls at the Albany Dance Theatre to prepare for their upcoming recital this June.