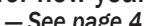




Football in December



— See page 7

Teachers Ricky Davis and Andre Raymond work to fill out evaluation sheets. These sheets are used to grade the teachers observed. PHOTO BY SHEILY BARTON

BY SHELBY BARTON
Staff Writer

Internal rounds allow the junior and senior high school teachers to visit core classes to observe the teachings of their colleagues for half of the class period.

"The main goal of the rounds is to help give teachers input and strate-

Teachers only report concrete observations about student engagement while participating in the rounds' process. After the internal rounds, teachers met during the afternoon classes for a debriefing activity with the help of a Region 14 consultant.

"We all meet to organize information gathered

Davis feels improvements could be made if the process continues in the future.

SEE OBSERVATION 1 PG 8

Students invited to explore culture, art

BY MELINDA PHILLIPS
Staff Writer

"We have a pre-Columbian collection which links to Dia De Los Muertos, and an Asian collection which links to Lunar New Year," Education Outreach Coordinator Mary Schrader said. "This is how we link the collections to the

"This festival includes games, story-time, art projects, refreshments like long-life noodles and good-luck oranges, and cellphone scavenger hunts with prizes," Education Director Erin Whitmore said. "Sometimes we even have performances, such as the one from the Dondoko



Festive dancers show off their skills as they put on a show at the Old Jail Art Center during the Lunar New Year. PHOTO BY PROVIDED BY THE OLD JAIL ART CENTER

There are also meetings open to the public held once a month to discuss events that took place around the world and the history of

SEE HOLIDAYS | PG 8

Community benefits from class volunteerism

BY LORI DAVIS
Copy Editor

"We are sometimes offered donations, and we receive a lot of thanks for

Recently, Ag students cut cane for the Chamber of Commerce to use for the town's fall decorations. "I request a certain number of canes, and if I need more they don't hesitate to provide it," Barton said.

These projects wouldn't

"People will call me with projects that they need help with, and if I think it will be beneficial to both the students and

SFF AGRICULTURE | PG 8



Sophomores Alex Faith and Drew Neece wrap a tree in Christmas lights in the Bank Park to prepare for the upcoming holiday. PHOTO BY LORI DAVIS

[illegible]

The fall semester exam schedule is set for Dec. 18-20. The following is the schedule:

Wednesday, Dec. 18:
8:00-10:00 – 1st period,
10:00-12:00 – 2nd period,
1:00-3:00 – 3rd period.

Thursday, Dec. 19:

19:8:00-10:00—4th period
10:00-12:00 – 5th period
1:00-3:00 – 6th period.
Friday, Dec. 20: 8:00-10:00
– 7th period 10:00-12:00 –
8th period. Students who
are exempt and do not
have a final on certain
days are still required to
sign in at the office by 9:30
a.m. Exempt students are
required to take tests in
two core courses.

The National Honor Society inducted eleven new members during a ceremony at the high school auditorium on Nov. 3. Senior officers Kathryn Hamilton, Madison Jones, Connor Wilson, Mati Rupp, and Autumn Owen conducted

the ceremony welcoming the new members who met the criteria in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service and character. The new members are Shelby Barton, Faith Brooks, Austin Edenfield, Chandler Fields, Michala Huckabay, Rachel Kitchens, Molly Lee, Dylan Petree, Sierra Price, Ruby Sanchez and Sarah Taplin.

Winter Formal will be held Saturday, Jan. 11, at the Whitney Theater starting at 7:00 p.m. The Student Council has put in an extra effort to make the event a night the students will never forget. Tickets can be purchased

from each class president for \$12 or two for \$20 in advance. Tickets at the door will be \$15. Juniors and seniors will be allowed to bring two extra guests to the event. Nominations for Prince and Princess for each class will be held in January, and the winners will be announced at Winter Formal.

The newspaper and yearbook staffs, along with journalism students attended the Interscholastic League Press Conference Convention (ILPC) in Austin every year on April 27-28 to learn from professional journalists and photographers, as well as find out about state contests.

Those attending went to six workshop sessions led by various professionals of the trade.

“The lectures expose you to different styles of writing that shows you what kind of writing they are looking for when they judge your work,” newspaper editor-in-chief Rob Montgomery said. “The lectures are very informational and really help improve our writing and photography skills.”

The school newspaper and yearbook staffs submit their work to be judged and have the opportunity to win awards for the quality of their publication.

“We won a Silver Star Award this year, which is the second highest honor our paper can get,” Montgomery said. “We are very happy with Silver Star Award, especially because we are one of the smallest newspaper staffs to be nominated for an award.”

Teachers Donnie Lucas and Lauren Peacock lead the newspaper and yearbook staffs.

“Mr. Lucas is by far the best journalism teachers in class A

Editorials

Tis the season

Christmas is a wonderful time of year full of presents, delicious food, and quality family time. It is easy to become spoiled and caught up in all of the material items during the season and never think about the people who spend the holidays alone or in need. More of a selfless effort should be made to give or volunteer to help those in need this December.

One way to help young children in Albany is Toys for Tots. This program gathers toys for kids in the community who usually don't receive a present on the special morning of December 25. Drop boxes for toys are located in the high school, cafeteria, and the gym so students can help "make" someone's Christmas special.

Every year the Ministerial Alliance sponsors a program to provide food for people in town who need financial help throughout the holiday season. Families that struggle to put warm food on the table during these wintery months are blessed by this service. Donations are always welcomed to purchase food cards.

Another way to serve others this Christmas is simply spending time or helping people in the community. Raking leaves out of a senior citizen's yard or putting their newspaper on their doorstep doesn't take much effort and can put a smile on their face. Many older members of the community receive great joy when a student makes an effort to talk to them and show interest in them.

Some may think they don't have enough time in their schedule, so they don't try to make time for others, but it can mean so much more than just spending time with someone. Not only does it benefit them, but it also is a blessing to the helper. Make it a goal this holiday season to help someone in need.

Sometimes the best gifts are ones that you cannot see—the gifts of love and time. After all, this is the season of giving, not getting.

Community volunteerism

Year after year Chris Beard and his agriculture students go out of their way to help out the community in any way possible. For decades they have been going above and beyond to help out around town. The benefits of the hundreds of hours of volunteer labor helps keep Albany a special place to live and grow up in, and ag students and Beard should all be commended for their efforts.

At the end of the first semester, Christmas decorations are pulled out to be set up and displayed throughout downtown with Beard and his students setting up trees and lights to bring holiday spirit to Albany. The Bank Park just wouldn't look right at Christmas without the grove of lighted oilfield Christmas trees.

The ag class also assists the plant and soil class by helping with the upkeep of the garden. From tilling to watering, the ag students help out in any way possible to maintain the growth of the plants in the garden.

Distributing commodities is another way that ag volunteers help out in the community. Commodities are received from the food bank in Abilene and brought to Albany where the class unloads them, packs boxes for recipients, and distributes the products to Shackelford County residents who qualify.

Another holiday that the class helps prepare for is Halloween by setting up for the annual Fall Fest at the elementary school. The students arrange booths with games for the youth of the town to play at the festival.

Those who volunteer their time to help out the community are learning a valuable lesson of making a difference from these experiences. Doing this in high school will hopefully promote continued aid to others even after they move on to the next chapters in their life.



A time to remember in December

December 10, 2006. December 15, 2007. December 23, 2009. The dates of deaths.

Many people remember birthdays, anniversaries, etc; but for some reason those are not the days I easily recall. What I do recall are deaths.

Christmas is known as a time of joy, holly jolly spirits, and gracious giving, but it is also a time to mourn and remember lost loved ones. In my case, I lost loved ones in the heat of the holiday season, and I remember each instance vividly, which I find very odd.

On December 10, my grandmother, MeMe, died on a Sunday around 2:30 p.m., while I was at my little brother's soccer game.

The next year on the 15, my grandfather died on a Saturday around 5:30 p.m. I answered the phone that night, and when my aunt spoke and asked for my mom with a quivering voice, I knew he was gone. That phone call came 30 minutes before my first babysitting job, so focusing on the kids was not the easiest thing to do that night.

In 2009, my great uncle passed away on a Wednesday two days before Christmas. Later that afternoon, my mom broke the news to me as I ate a bowl of Frosted Mini Wheats at the computer desk.

I can't remember birthdays. I can't remember names.

But I have deaths down.

Part of me thinks this is morbid and strange. Actually, all of me thinks it is strange.

However, rather than the memories being morbid, they remind me of their lives.

When their days come, I remember the instance in which they died, but then I think of all of the wonderful memories I had with them.

My MeMe's always stocked Blue Bell Ice-Cream. My grandpa flinching at the camera whenever we tried to sneak a picture of him. My great uncle smoking his pipe and taking us on his ranch to fish whenever we pleased.

Even though it seems odd that many of my family members' deaths have impacted me around Christmas, I remember my lost loved ones and don't let that sadness bring down my entire holiday season.

Because Christmas is a time of joy, holly jolly spirit, and gracious giving.

As I take my last reflection on my family members' extraordinary lives, I realize that maybe it's not such a sadness they were lifted up in December. In fact, I hope I am too.

When I think about how I want my last days, I want them to be during my favorite time of the year. Christmas is "the most wonderful time of the year," so maybe it's a good thing that they were able to end their lives with Christmas spirits.

BY KATHRYN HAMILTON

Kats Meows

Crazy, stupid, teenage romance

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Almost two thousand years ago this verse was written in a book. This book was made for humans to follow and acknowledge so that they may learn right from wrong. Considering the fact that in today's society humans are more superficial, people do not get the concept of what love really means. I look around and see high school students completely change the way God intended us to love one another.

True love is not about the hugs and kisses or the "I love you's" or the "I miss you's." It is not about how you forgive, but how you forget; not what you see but what you feel; not what you hear but how you understand. Finding love is finding a person who brings out the best in you, someone who makes you a better person.

Teenagers can be in love. Of course when you're

dating someone, you have a feeling that is more than "liking" the other person. If you didn't, then what would be the purpose of dating them? You can like your friends, but there is something deeper for your significant other... a different kind of love. This is where teenagers get confused about the real meaning of love. When dating someone, you do love them because you care about them, not because you want

to marry them right off the bat.

Teenage relationships seldom last. They are simply here for us to see what we like and don't like so that we may find that specific person we can see ourselves spending eternity with. High school students have their whole lives ahead of them when they graduate to find someone who truly fits.

Teen relationships are a great way to help find what the real definition of love means. There are many types of love that people feel. One is for objects or needs that humans want. Another is love for family and friends. Last, but not least, there is love for your significant other. It is up to you to decide how you want to love your future spouse. Do you want to love them as an object, friend or a lifelong partner?

BY CONOR WILSON

Wilson Words

From college to NBA in one year

Almost every year the Kentucky Wildcat Men's basketball team begins the season with at least one freshman starter. This is because after one year, players like the first overall pick in the 2012 draft, Anthony Davis, decided to take their talents to the next level.

This year, the Wildcats are starting four freshmen and one sophomore. These four freshmen seem to have more hype than the returning players. Coach John Callapari seems to "start fresh" every year, but ends the season with a strong, balanced, mature club.

Although they have only won one championship in the last 10 years, Callapari has produced five of the top ten draft picks in the past three years. You may not think that is very many, but teams like Syracuse and Connecticut typically have two players drafted.

You may think that is absurd to just play one season and then leave your team to play professional ball. My explanation is simply, 'Why Not?' Why wouldn't you play under one of the most prestigious coaches in the game, and then go on to make millions knowing

you are prepared to play at the next level?

If you think that McDonald's All-Americans should stay in school and pass up millions, that is a joke. College basketball offers no guarantees. A degree isn't guaranteed, and neither is a scholarship on the team. There is no guarantee that your coach will stick around. In the NBA, first round money, in millions, is guaranteed.

If you're looking to blame someone, blame the NBA. Ever since they have implemented their free farm system, high quality players play one year and then enter the draft. If the NBA cared about the development of their players, they would form a better farm system similar to the MLB or NHL.

If you're against one-and-done players, you may be in luck. The Commissioner of the NBA, David Stern, has promoted a two-year out of high school policy. Although it has been proposed, not many managers and coaches have been supportive of it.

As of this year's draft, the one-year out of high school policy is still intact. So hang on college basketball fans; this may be a bumpy ride.

BY CHANDLER FIELDS

ChanChan



THE
LIONS ROAR
ILPC 2013 Silver Star Winner
ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

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2¢ worth

"Spending time with my family during the holiday season."

Alexis Munden
Freshman



"It's all about the presents - just kidding. Our family comes together and celebrates Jesus' birth."

Alex Faith
Sophomore



"Staying up late and trying to catch Santa, baking him cookies and serving him milk."

Stevie Phillips
Junior



"A time to celebrate the birth of Jesus. As a family we continue the tradition of going to a candlelight service on Christmas Eve."

Lexie Lee
Senior



Parents cautious about social media

Parents keep tabs on hi-tech communications

BY AUSTIN EDENFIELD
Entertainment Editor

Many students use social media. From Facebook to Twitter, to Instagram and Snap Chat, there are plenty of sites and apps for teens and adults to connect and share things with their friends.

"I'm on everyday several times a day, because I definitely don't want to miss anything," junior Rachel Kitchens said.

Sites like Facebook keep people connected. Photos can be uploaded instantly, and anyone can see what has been posted. Features such as liking, favoriting, following, and others keep people in the know about what their friends are doing.

Many teens use social media all the time, posting and chatting with their friends and posting pictures about what they're doing.

"I'm on at least once daily, just to update my status and stuff like that," sophomore Chelsi Freasier said.

Parents can follow their kids and see what they post and whom they're following and liking. They can keep tabs on their children as well as talking and chatting with them.

Parents have also become more and more involved in social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, but some are still "challenged."

"My mother gets on Instagram sometimes but not too often, because she doesn't follow many people and vice-versa," Kitchens said.

Some kids are fine with their parents being on social media, as long as they don't constantly have contact with them.

"I don't really mind my mother being on Instagram because she doesn't get into my

business. I do think it's good that some parents are on there," Kitchens said.

Of course, some parents are on sites like Facebook and Twitter just as much as their kids. They post things and follow people just as much as their kid. This can sometimes lead to a bit of resentment from the kid.

"My mom is on Facebook almost every minute of the day, liking people's statuses and stalking their pictures," Freasier said. "I would honestly like for her to not be on so much."

Some parents check their kids on social media just to make sure they're doing what is right. They want to make sure that they aren't doing anything dangerous or that could get them into trouble.

"I sometimes stalk my daughter, Sydney, and her friends just to see what they're posting," parent Nicki Leveridge said. "There are times when I talk to her about what she posts if I think it shouldn't be on there."

Sites like Instagram allow teens and adults to upload any photo they take instantly. They can also tag other people, add captions, and connect their friends to it. There are some parents who monitor their kids' photos just to keep them safe.

"I watch what Sydney posts, especially photos, and sometimes we'll talk about it, but for the most part she's pretty good about being safe," Leveridge said.

Like much of the parent and child relationship, much of it has to do with trust.

"I monitor Rachel sometimes, but there is a lot of trust involved," parent Jana Kitchens said.

"Sometimes she'll post things that mean one thing but can be taken a completely different way. I just want to make sure she doesn't offend anyone and that she stays happy."

However, even while respecting boundaries, some monitoring can be a good thing.

"I think that parents should be involved in their kid's social media but to an extent," Jana

Kitchens said. "It's an individual thing, and there is a lot of trust involved. If you can trust your kid, you don't have to be completely involved in their Facebook or Instagram."

But trust can only go so far. Some think parents should definitely be involved.

"I think parents should be very involved," Leveridge said. "If a kid won't let their parent see what's on their social media, that could be a sign that their kid shouldn't be on there."

Social media is accessible to anyone, and things people post are up for anyone to see. Most parents realize that and try to teach their kids to be safe.

"Once something is up, it can be erased, but it's still there. Anyone can access it if they want to see it," parent Regina Fraesier said. "I try to teach Dylan and Chelsi that."

Kids and parents alike will continue to use social media and stay connected with family and friends. Parents can keep their kids safe by teaching them how to responsibly use social media.



Junior Rachel Kitchens teaches her mother, Jana Kitchens, (top) how to maneuver her way around Instagram. Jana Kitchens is one of many parents to monitor the social media phenomenon. Sophomore Chelsi Freasier (right) takes a silly "selfie" with freshmen Sydney Key and Abbi Beard before a pep rally.

PHOTOS BY AUSTIN EDENFIELD



Thor
November 8, 2013 PG-13 112 min
Action | Adventure
Faced with an enemy that even Odin and Asgard cannot withstand, Thor must embark on his most perilous and personal journey yet, one that will reunite him with Jane Foster and force him to sacrifice everything to save us all.
Directors: Alan Taylor, James Gunn
Writers: Christopher Yost, Christopher Markus (screenplay)
Stars: Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston

Staff Review:



Best Man Holiday
November 15, 2013 R 123 min
Comedy
When college friends reunite after 15 years over the Christmas holidays, they will discover just how easy it is for long-forgotten rivalries and romances to be ignited.

Director: Malcolm D. Lee
Writer: Malcolm D. Lee
Stars: Monica Calhoun, Morris Chestnut, Melissa De Sousa

Staff Review:



The Hunger Games: Catching Fire
November 22, 2013 PG-13 146 min
Action | Adventure
Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark become targets of the Capitol after their victory in the 74th Hunger Games sparks a rebellion in the Districts of Panem.

Director: Francis Lawrence
Writers: Simon Beaufoy, Michael Arndt
Stars: Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, and Liam Hemsworth

Staff Review:



The Delivery Man
November 22, 2013 R 103 min
Comedy
An affable underachiever finds out he's fathered 533 children through anonymous donations to a fertility clinic 20 years ago. Now he must decide whether or not to come forward when 142 of them file a lawsuit to reveal his identity.
Director: Ken Scott
Writers: Ken Scott, Martin Peti
Stars: Vince Vaughn, Chris Pratt, Cobie Smulders

Staff Review:



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT BY AUSTIN EDENFIELD

Top Nine Christmas Movies

1. Elf

Elf is a movie about a human boy named Buddy who believes he is an elf. He was a baby in an orphanage who stowed away in Santa's sack and ended up at the North Pole. Later, as an adult human, Santa allows him to go to New York City to find his birth father, Walter Hobbs. Hobbs, on Santa's naughty list for being a heartless jerk, had no idea that Buddy was even born. Meanwhile, Buddy experiences the delights of New York City and human culture as only an elf can. When Walter's relationship with Buddy interferes with his job, he is forced to reevaluate his priorities.

2. Grinch

We all know the Dr. Seuss story about the mean-hearted green man called The Grinch. On Christmas Eve, he steals all of poor Who-ville's presents, and every Christmas decoration he can lay his dirty hands on. But, thanks to little Cindy Lou Who, he has a change of heart.

3. Nightmare Before Christmas

Tim Burton's *Nightmare Before Christmas* is set in the Halloween dimension, following the story of Jack Skellington, the pumpkin king of Halloween town. When he accidentally stumbles into the Christmas dimension and Toy Land, his entire perception of the holiday season changes. Hilarious preparations for Halloween/Christmas ensue.

4. Santa Clause 1, 2 & 3

The *Santa Clause* movies follow the life of Scott Calvin, a divorced father who doesn't give much attention to Christmas. When he accidentally knocks Santa off his roof and slips on the coat, he takes on a whole new set of responsibilities up at the North Pole. Problems arise later on with both a robot Santa and Jack Frost.

5. A Charlie Brown Christmas

A *Charlie Brown Christmas* is a movie that has lasted through generations and is still funny and popular today. Following the adventures of Charlie Brown and his pals, as well as Snoopy and Woodstock, Charlie Brown covers many of the holidays, with the Christmas special being one of the most heart-warming. Being family-friendly for all ages, this is a family movie that will last for years to come.

6. Gremlins

Claiming the title of one of Christmas's only scary movies, *Gremlins* covers the story of a boy who receives a strange animal as a Christmas present. He proceeds to break one of the most important rules set down for its care at which point it turns into a devious, evil monster, and multiplies, destroying most of the town.

7. The Polar Express

The *Polar Express* is one of the best-known kids' Christmas movies which follows the story of three kids as they take a train to the North Pole. The true meaning of Christmas is evident throughout this entire movie as the kids meet Santa, face magic ghosts, and drink amazing hot chocolate.

8. Miracle on 34th Street

Miracle on 34th Street tells the tale of a man who volunteers in a Macy's Christmas Parade, and does so well he's hired by the store as Santa. He amazes everyone with how well he fits into the job and actually tells people he's Santa, which turns out to be the truth later on. A lawsuit against him follows, and throughout the movie people's faith in Santa and Christmas is tested.

9. It's A Wonderful Life

George Bailey has always been a giver and stops the town of Bedford Falls from falling into the hands of an evil rich man. When his uncle loses money from the family business, George realizes he will be blamed and plans to kill himself. The prayers of his family are so strong that an angel named Clarence comes down to show him that life isn't so bad, and there are things that are worth living for in the Christmas season.

Students share holiday gift stories

Presents can delight, dismay recipients

BY CURRY WILSON
Staff Writer

Gift giving is an important part of the Christmas celebration. Its origins date back to the wise men bringing presents to the baby Jesus.

Finding the perfect gift for someone can be difficult. When it works, everything is great. When it doesn't, it can be comical or confusing.

Christmas presents can range from old socks to a shiny new sports car, and some people are luckier than others because they receive what they have always wanted.

"My best gift was a John Deere BMX bike," eighth grader Harvey Hinkle said. "I was so excited that as soon as I got it, I rode it on our frozen basketball court."

Even though kids typically want bigger presents, some of the best gifts come in small packages.

"My best present was a softball bat I got when I was 14," sophomore Kelsey Tollett said. "I didn't expect my parents to get it even though I wanted it."

A sport-related gift is great for young kids because it might spark their interest to become something extraordinary.

"When I was younger, my best Christmas gift was a football, and that's when

I finally started to get serious about the game," senior Javier Rocha said.

For some, the best present may come as a surprise.

"My little sister would have to be my best Christmas gift," eighth grader Krysten Morris said. "Her due date was supposed to be December 25, but the doctors had an emergency C-section on December 8."

Sophomore Chelsi Freasier has also been surprised at Christmas.

"I got a horse when I was five," Freasier said. "I didn't think that I was going to get one because I really wanted a donkey."

Some of the best presents are ones that remind people of their childhood.

"My best gift was last year when I was 14. I got a bunch of movies including my favorites, *Aristocats*, *Lady and the Tramp*, and *The Notebook*," sophomore Kimberly Vickers said. "I was expecting to receive them because I asked everybody to get them for me."

Presents don't just make other people happy, they also make families come together more often.

"When I was 14 I received a .22 rifle. When I opened, it I was squealing like a little boy saying 'This is awesome!' I loved it so much because I could finally spend more time with my dad because I never really got to see him much," sophomore Zeke Martinez said.

Dreams can come true through gifts.

"When I was five my mom gave me a princess



Eight grader Harvey Hinkle (top) at five years old helps his dad put together his brand new bike from Santa on Christmas morning. Freshman Sydney Key (bottom) shows off her sparkling princess accessories back in 2005 when she was five.

PHOTOS PROVIDED



outfit, and I wouldn't take it off," freshman Sydney Key said. "I wanted to be a princess, so it kind of was a dream come true."

Receiving can be a risky business, even to the point

of having to act happy about what may be the worst gift ever.

"My worst Christmas present was when I was 11 and I got a shelf from my grandfather. I was trying to

smile and to not upset him," freshman Kylea Gardner said.

Everyone knows that paper is supposed to go around the present, but some people just didn't get the memo.

"I was not expecting to get paper as a Christmas gift. The box was big so I thought I would get a laptop," eighth grader Emma Hart said. "I think that the present was a joke because I got a better present after that."

Everyone has experience with receiving a bad gift occasionally. The trick is to see the good in it, even when it may not be there.

"When I was 12 I got a feather from my grandmother. At first I thought it was for my sister, Lori, because it was a feather that was supposed to go in your hair. I had to act happy and tried to look like I loved it,"

eighth grader Nolan Davis said. "I hated it because I couldn't use it at all, and it was girly."

Sometimes it is hard for parents to decide what to get their child for Christmas.

"For Christmas one year I got a Twilight 'Team Edward' shirt from my mom," junior Sierra Price said.

Parents may have the best intentions, but the gift may come across as an unusual surprise.

"I got a coffee maker last Christmas. I wasn't expecting to get it because I already had one, and I had already told my mother what I wanted," sophomore Jenna Phillips said. "I hated that all I got was a coffee maker, but I love it because I use it to make hot chocolate."

Presents don't have to come with a price tag all the time. Some of the best gifts are the ones that come from the heart.

"My best friend and I didn't want to spend much on each other so she wrote me a long, sweet note and made me things I love," junior Molly Lee said. "It meant a lot to me being encouraged by someone that means so much to me."

Picking out that "just right" gift for friends and family can seem much harder than picking out presents for a king. The easiest way to select a gift is to find what that person loves or something they like to do. Though it might be difficult, in the end, it will be worth it to see the look on their face when they open that "perfect" gift.

Commitment hinders resolution plans

Students struggle with commitment to resolutions

BY SHELBY BARTON
Staff Writer

Just as the ball drops, firecrackers shoot off, confetti is released, promises are made, and unwanted habits are proclaimed to soon be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, plans to reform a bad habit can quickly be dismissed and forgotten until the next New Year's Day.

A survey of students found the most common, and least successful, resolutions involved eating healthier foods in order to lose weight or to improve athletic performance.

"I always say I'll go on a healthy diet but I never stick to it very well," sophomore Nita Perez said.

Another sophomore, Kelsey Tollett, began the year with the goal of becoming stronger by only drinking water and is finding unexpected benefits with her resolution success.

"This year I've only drunk water and Powerade for working out. I always feel hydrated," Kelsey said.

Others may be setting the bar too high.

"I've been unsuccessful at keeping resolutions because my resolutions are just too hard," junior Sierra Price said, whose goal was to "get skinny."

Another popular resolution found among students was to treat others better and generally be a better person.

"I'm going to try to work harder next year to be a better person," Hunter Owen said.

When asked how successful he had been in the past and to predict how successful he thinks he will be in the coming year, Owen was skeptical.

"I think I have been working harder at school and sports, but it's hard to be a good person when people make you mad," sophomore Chelsi Freasier said.

Her resolutions to "have abs, work my hardest to be a better person, and to not drink sodas" ran into some of the same difficulties.

"I've been somewhat successful. I made it about a month. It was really hard because people either set you off or the temptation sets in," Freasier said.

Some find they are better at keeping their resolutions when they involve family or friends.

Eighth grader Jorge Jimenez's goal is being a better person, getting

better grades, and getting better at football.

"I am very successful with these because my friends help," Jorge proudly said. Jimenez's classmate, Emma Hart, added, "when my resolutions work it's because I've made sure my friends know my goals, and they have helped me by not letting me give up."

Fellow eighth grader Lety Cecilio has had mixed results in her quest to eat healthier, help others, and to do her best in sports and school.

"I have made resolutions the last four years, and some I have kept. But some resolutions of mine don't work," Cecilio said.

Although much larger studies of Americans have shown that close to 90 percent of resolutions fail, those who make them are much more likely to make improvements than those who don't even attempt to fulfill a resolution. Most experts say the key to a successful resolution is willpower and self-restraint.

"Resolutions are all about perseverance. You have to be really willing to commit, and some people dive right in and fail," junior Molly Lee said.

Though most resolutions may never completely succeed, the key is to never quit trying.



Sophomore Kelsey Tollett sits down to write out her resolutions for the new year. Tollett successfully completed her 2013 goal by cutting out sodas from her diet. PHOTO BY SHELBY BARTON

MEET THE BOARD

Pam Davis:
Secretary



Pam Davis, secretary of the Albany ISD School Board, is well-known

around Albany. Since being first elected to her seat in 1998, Davis has contributed to the community of Albany. Ms. Davis has served as president of the Albany Study Club, held a position in the PTO, and has been a director of the Chamber of Commerce.

Davis has also been an Albany ISD substitute teacher, a docent at the Old Jail Art Center, and an active member of AMP (Albany Mainstreet Players), most notably playing Louise in the popular *Patsy Cline*. Although Davis plays an

integral role in the activities of Albany, she hasn't resided in the county her whole life.

"The grace of God guided me to Albany," Davis said, "I came initially to marry my husband, Tom."

Davis has lived in Albany the past 23 years, and has no regrets on the decision. Her only child, Timothy Miler, went through Albany High School system and graduated in 2000. Miler now lives in the Metroplex.

After high school, Davis went on to receive a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Psychology.

Clint Bumgardner:
Board Member



Clint Bumgardner, board member of the Albany ISD school board,

has held his position on the board since 2006. Bumgardner has also served on the Shackelford County Central Appraisal Board, the Texas A&M Foundation Real Estate Board, and a deacon at the First Baptist Church of Albany. He has lived in the county for 12 years, after deciding that a smaller town was best for his family.

"We moved here in 2001 so our kids could experience a small school and so we could enjoy the community and friendship of a rural town," Bumgardner said.

Although he himself didn't graduate from Al-

bany, all three of his children did. Bumgardner's oldest, Ben, is enrolled at Parker Chiropractic in Dallas. His middle child, Grace, is a junior at Texas A&M University, while his youngest son, Jake, is a freshman at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Bumgardner graduated from Eldorado High School and received two degrees from Texas A&M University. The first was a Bachelor's degree in Ag Economics and the second a Master's in Land Economics and Real Estate. Bumgardner is currently a real estate appraiser for West Texas Appraisal.

BY: Chandler Fields

AHS True Life: I'm moving forward

Student opens up about an incident that changed everything

BY KATHRYN HAMILTON
Assistant Editor

Town after town, a tragic night, and a turn around. The summed up life of senior Melinda Phillips.

Sunshine and roses do not describe Phillip's life. As a young child to a young woman, she has dealt with times and situations that many people will never experience.

"I grew up in The Colony, near Frisco. When I was in the second grade, my parents divorced," Phillips said. "My dad couldn't afford to live there by himself, so we moved to a place called Aubrey."

Eight-year-old, Phillips was now part of a broken family, and the time spent with her mother was slim.

"The court decided on shared custody; however, we stayed with my dad because my mom was not in a good place," Phillips said. "She was into a lot of drugs at the time. Anytime we would stay with her, she would put me and my brothers and sisters in a separate room, then go off and get into things with her friends."

The move to Aubrey would be the first of many.

"We were in Aubrey for less than a year, then moved to Comanche and were there for about a year," Phillips said. "Next was Bangs, and we were there for a couple of years, then we were back to Comanche for a while. Now, here we are in Albany."

Phillips landed in Albany the spring of her sophomore year and thinks her family is good here.

"I don't know why we moved around so much. I guess it was because my dad kept finding different jobs. Now he works for APL," Phillips said. "We also have family members here, so that has made a difference."

After her sophomore year, Phillips received a new family member.

"My dad married again when I was in the fourth grade. As we moved around he dated a lot, and my first summer here, my dad married his third wife," Phillips explained.

Her relationship with her dad's new wife has not been the easiest.

"It's been really hard. We don't talk at all anymore. I even tried to move out after a fight we had," Phillips said. "I'm 18 now, and I don't feel like I need someone taking care of me and telling me what to do."

When an adult tells a teenager what to do, teenagers do what teenagers know how to do: rebel.

"When my dad got married, I started rebelling and looking for attention. As a result, I let myself get in a bad place," Phillips said.

That "bad place" was truly a bad place.

"I'm not going to go into depth about it, but something happened that changed everything."

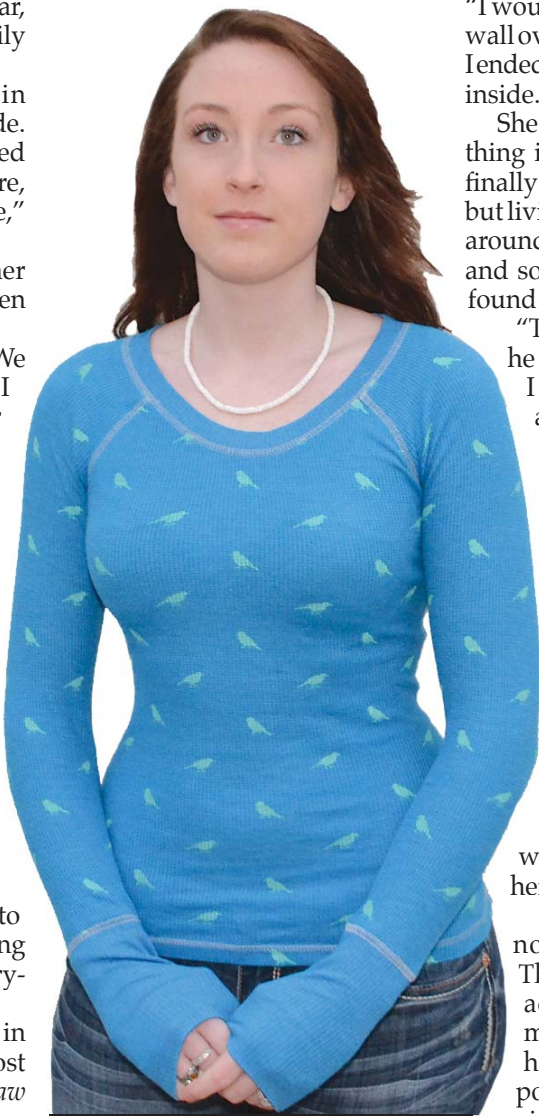
The bad place she was in was the type of incident most people only hear about on *Law and Order SVU*.

However, this was no television episode. It was real life.

"I was working, and after I got off, I went to a party where

my friends were. Or at least they acted like my friends," Phillips said. "When I woke up at the party, I realized what had happened to me. I was so hurt. I didn't say anything, but I just remember thinking to myself, 'Wow, I actually trusted these people.'"

Those "friends" revealed their true selves to her that night.



"I thought they liked me and were my friends, but after that night, I realized none of them

cared about me at all," Phillips said. "I felt really alone at that point. I tried so hard to fit in, and it ended up turning on me."

Phillips was caught in a sea of emotions.

"There were times when I would break down and cry, and other times where I would feel overwhelmed by it all and get angry," Phillips explained. "I would just want to punch a wall over what happened, but I ended up keeping everything inside."

She could only keep everything inside for so long. She finally confided in her cousin, but living in Albany, word got around about what happened and soon enough, her father found out.

"The day he found out, he called me and told me I needed to come home, and I knew he knew. I had wanted to tell him, but I didn't want him knowing I had gone to a party and lied about it," Phillips said. "After I told him, I felt so relieved. Holding everything in had been getting to me. He was so angry and upset. Not with me, but with what had happened."

To make matters worse, people blamed her.

"I felt betrayed because no one had my back. They were so good at acting like they were my friends. After it happened, fingers were pointed at me," Phillips said. "Most of the people blaming me weren't even at the party."

During the ordeal she hid herself emotionally.

"It's hard for me to get close to anyone. The way I talk about giraffes and other goofy things is how I distance myself from people," Phillips said. "I use that so people will see that and not anything else."

But like anything broken, the pieces must be picked up.

"I started talking to my family and have even been working on getting closer to my stepmom. I started finding what made me happy rather than looking for it in other people," Phillips said. "I began to focus more on school and work, and I even decided to join the National Guard. I have to move forward with my life. There will be times when I'll be driving and I'll start tearing up, but then I say to myself, 'I'm good. I'm going to be in a better place than them because I'm going somewhere.'"

And that somewhere is South Carolina.

"The recruiter came out to talk with me and my family, and we went through the process of signing up," Phillips explained. "I signed up for MEPS on Nov. 6, and that's when I swore in and took the oath. On July 14, I'm leaving for South Carolina for basic training."

Phillips will be gone for 18 weeks.

"I'm excited even though I'm going to be gone for a long time. It's serious, but if it's something hard, it's usually a good thing if it pushes you to work harder," she said.

Phillips isn't sticking around in Albany living in a sadness of what happened.

"What happened to me was bad, but in a way it motivated me. Since the incident, rather than ponder over it, I decided to do something good for myself. I'm moving past this, and I've realized I need to live in a way that's best for me."

Students reminisce about joys of holiday

Season filled with memories of Santa gifts, time with family

BY MOLLY LEE
Feature Editor

The holiday season is filled with food, family, fun, and laughter. During this time traditionally spent with the loved ones, special traditions and memories can emerge.

Christmas is also a time of giving, and the best giver and deliverer of gifts has to be Santa Claus.

"Every year on Christmas Eve, we open pajamas given to us by my grandma," senior Conor Wilson said. "This year, since my cousin had a baby, the tradition will be passed down so pajamas will be given to the great-grandchildren now."

Eighth grader Genevieve Stunkard's family has a tradition of having Christmas somewhere else besides home.

"My family and I go to Disneyland for Christmas every other year," Stunkard said. "I have lots of family in California, so we go during the holidays to visit them."

Stunkard does have a preference, though, of her favorite location for Christmas.

"I like Christmas at home more because it's a different feeling waking up around the tree and opening presents rather than in a hotel room."

Coach Jimmy Fuentes has a tradition of his own at his house.

"To make sure that my kids won't guess their gifts, I number all of their presents instead of writing their names on them," Fuentes said. "They won't know until Christmas morning who has which number."

Senior Lexie Lee shared some traditions that she has in her own household to help accommodate Santa's reindeer while he delivers presents.

"Every year my family and I

make reindeer food and sprinkle it in our yard," Lee said. "The food has oatmeal, sugar, and glitter in it so that the reindeer can see it."

Junior Austin

me that Santa was actually on a diet, so instead of cookies, we had to leave out a banana and milk," Freasier said.

Santa might not always agree, though, that all of the cookies made for him

are tasty.

"Santa left me and my siblings a note once that told us our cookies were a little burnt and we needed to work on them for next year," Lee said.

A good thing about Santa is that he's always reminding people to be good.

"One time my brother Andrew and I were being terrible in the car, so my dad got on the phone with Santa Claus and told him not to bring us any presents," senior Kathryn Hamilton said. "Once we got home after throwing a screaming fit in the car, we wrote a note to Santa and put it on our door step telling him how sorry we were and asking him to please bring us presents."

Some kids are intrigued by the idea and concept of catching Santa Claus in the act.

"One Christmas I was trying to be sneaky and wait up for Santa," eighth grader Tracilla Carter said. "I ended up falling asleep, so when I woke up, I tried to sneak back into my room, but I tripped over the tree and unplugged all of the lights."

Senior Madison Jones was curious about catching Santa as well.

"Every time I told my parents that I thought Santa wasn't real, they would tell me that if you don't believe, you won't receive," Jones said.

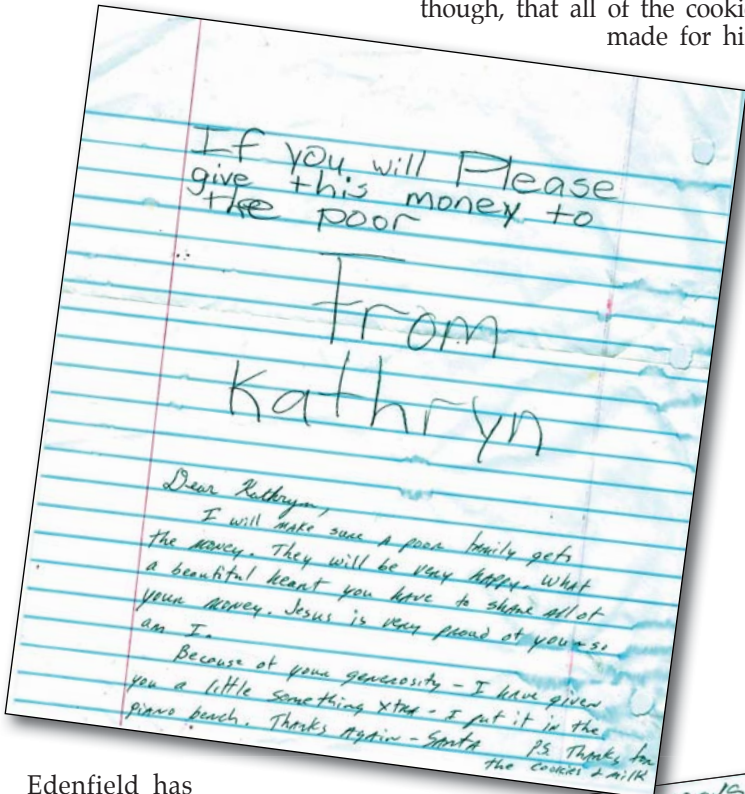
Jones decided to stay up and find out herself.

"So one year I was determined to find out, so I stayed up all night long while holding my little flip phone to

record the Christmas tree until Santa came," Jones said. "During the night I fell asleep and when I woke up, presents were under the tree! The time lapse felt like only two minutes and my phone had died. So obviously, Santa is real."

Santa is known for leaving some pretty generous gifts, too.

"When I was little, I wanted a basketball goal so badly for Christmas," senior Abbey Head said. "I wrote a note to Santa asking him for one, and when I woke up the next morning, I had a basketball goal sitting in my driveway. Santa himself wrote me a note telling me I was going to be a basketball star."



Edenfield has a tradition of leaving food out for the reindeer as well.

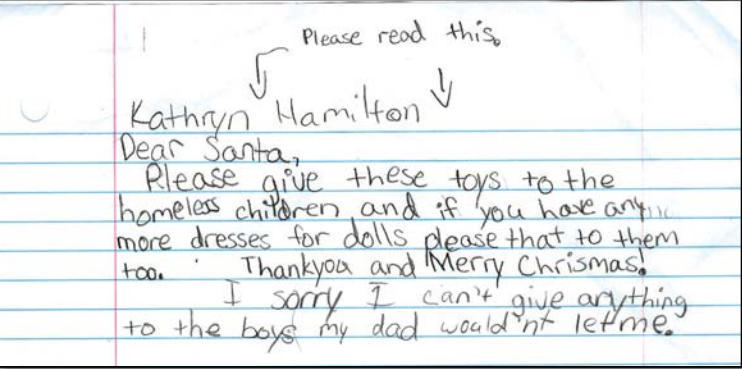
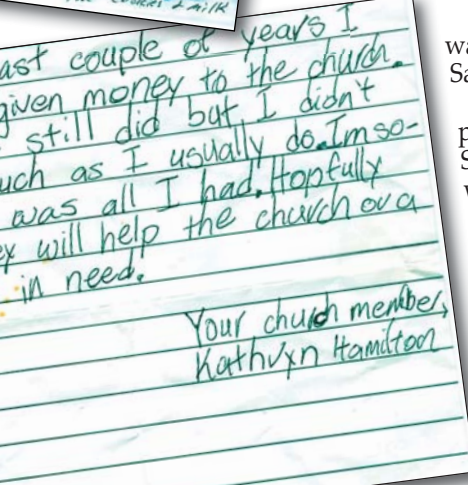
"My family and I always leave out carrots by Santa's milk and cookies so that the reindeer will have a snack, too."

Sophomore Shelby Alexander has a tradition of leaving an alternative to milk and cookies for Santa.

"My family leaves out chips and salsa for Santa," Alexander said. "We have always done this because our Christmas dinner is white enchiladas."

Dillon Freasier reminisced about a time where he, too, left a nontraditional treat for Santa.

"One year, my mom informed



WHAT'S HAPPENING!
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

18-20- Semester Finals
20- JV/ Varsity Boys and Girls Basketball vs. ACHS @ 3:00- There
30- Varsity Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Sonora @ 3:00- San Angelo Central

January

3-JV/V Girls Basketball vs. Anson @ 5:00- Here
3- Varsity Boys Basketball vs. Gorman @ 7:30-Here
3- JV Boys Basketball vs. Knox City @ 3:30- Here
7- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Hamlin @ 4:00-Here
8- College Day- wear your favorite College shirt
10- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Munday @ 4:00- There
11- Winter Formal @ Whitney Theatre
14- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Stamford @ 4:00-Here
17- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Haskell @ 4:00-There
21- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Anson @ 4:00- There
23-3- Christmas Break
24- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Hamlin @ 4:00- There
28- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Munday @ 4:00-Here
29- AS/VAB-Juniors
31- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Stamford @ 4:00-There

February

4- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Haskell @ 4:00-Here
7- JV/V Boys and Girls Basketball vs. Anson @ 4:00-Here

Wellington stops Lions at semifinals



Junior Steve Phillips drives the ball against the Muenster Hornets to gain a critical first down for the Lions. Albany went on to win the game to advance to the semifinal round of the playoffs, which hasn't happened since 2009. PHOTO BY MADISON JONES

Team ends season with hard fought battle

BY CONOR WILSON
Assistant Editor

The football season ended one step away from the state championship game with Wellington beating Albany, 46-20, Saturday in Lubbock for the semifinal title.

"Our guys are driven to carry on a tradition that has been established here long before they got in the program," Coach Jimmy Fuentes said. "They know what is expected of them and know they don't play for just any program."

Early expectations were not as promising this year considering the teams' small number and size.

"People in our community saw how young we were going to be and maybe thought that this would be a rebuilding year for us," Fuentes said. "But we as coaches knew what it would take to get these younger players to perform at the level that we needed them to. We focused on getting what we expected out of them, and they responded very well."

Fuentes is not the only one who

has seen success with this team. Head coach Denny Faith has seen fulfillment in this year's team.

"Anytime we can go undefeated and make it this far into the playoffs is always a great success for us," Faith said. "It is so great to watch our kids perform to the best of their abilities and become so successful."

With only eight seniors on the team, Faith believes that they have been a key factor of this team's success.

"Leadership had really helped bring us this far," Faith said. "This team has good chemistry together. We spend four to five hours together each day and have been since August, which has created a togetherness for us."

For some seniors, football has not only been a part of their life, but a way of life.

Senior Javier Rocha places more meaning on football than just a game itself.

"Football is a sport where I can unleash what I have in me," Rocha said. "Just playing the game is fun, but when it has more meaning to it, it makes that fun game into a game filled with more emotion and tension."

Ever since the beginning of the season, Rocha has seen many improvements in the team.

"Coming closer as a team every

FOR THE RECORD:

ALBANY LION FOOTBALL 13-1

Hawley.....	W 21-0
Jim Ned.....	W 43-26
Munday.....	W 48-8
Ranger.....	W 51-0
Gorman.....	W 74-0
Roscoe.....	W 44-0
Roby.....	W 63-12
Baird.....	W 35-0
Cross Plains.....	W 55-12
Hamlin.....	W 17-14
McCamey.....	W 32-0
Iraan.....	W 24-21
Muenster.....	W 20-13
Wellington.....	L 46-20

game has been the biggest improvement I've seen," Rocha said.

Senior Justin Jones has been motivated this year to stay focused on the goal of having a successful year.

"It's my last year being able to bond with the other seniors and underclassmen," Jones said. "It has created a brotherhood that I will never forget."

The last time the Albany Lions advanced to the State Semi Finals was in 2009. By returning this year, the Lions ended the year with a 13-1 record.

Lady Lions shoot for strong season

Girls basketball begin season with high hopes

BY MICHAEL COTTER
Staff Writer

The Albany Lady Lions have started the basketball season strong, only losing one senior from last year, and a majority of returning players with at least one year of experience.

"One of our biggest strengths this year is experience," senior Kami Norton said. "Everyone on our team this year is a returning varsity player. In the past we have always been a young team, but this year we have six returning seniors each with at least two years of varsity experience."

Since all of the girls are returning varsity players, they are very excited and ready to play their last season.

"The girls this year are more determined and more focused than any team I have ever had. They play with a ton of heart and want," head coach Paul Johnston said.

All six returning seniors are

equally determined.

"When you become a senior, it starts to sink in that you only have one more chance to go far in the playoffs," Norton said. "For me I feel like I have gained motivation that only seniors can understand."

The girls know that there are teams out there who are good, and who also want to win. They also know that in order to be a great team they must outwork their opponents.

"My goal this year is to work harder than any other team every day," Johnston said. "We have a great opportunity to do whatever we have to do. All we need to do now is set our minds to it and go get it."

This year, the Lady Lions' district is the same as last year with Haskell picked to win the championship. However, Coach Johnston and the Lady Lions know that hard work and defense beats talent. "If we play hard and focused every game, we will be the feared team of the district. We are going to fight our hardest to win the district championship," Norton said.

"We are going to have to be in great shape this year," Johnston said. "In order to win we



Senior Heidi Horneck drives forward to the basket for a lay-up against the Archer City Lady Cats at the local tournament. The event was canceled after the first day due to icy weather. PHOTO BY JARED HUSMANN

are going to have to play great, not good, great defense, hustle, and push the ball."

Another good thing about this year's team is chemistry. The six returning seniors have been playing together since seventh grade. They are excited to play together this season.

"Ever since we were younger, we have had high expectations for our team," Norton said. "I love playing with them because we know how to read each other. When you've played with someone for over five years, you form a bond that is special and rare."

The girls also have an advantage on offense because of the flexibility of the positions they play.

"This year we have five or six different girls who can bring the ball up, five or six girls that are hitting really well from the outside, and four or five girls who can play post. The best part is that they are all very seasoned and cool under pressure," Johnston said.

The Lady Lions have started out preseason play with a record of 6-2, and will start their district season January 3rd against the Anson Lady Tigers at home.

Lions tip off basketball season

Coaches, players excited about road to district

BY LEWIS KELLY
Sports Editor

The Lion basketball team has began their season with a limited number of players, but that hasn't hindered the number of expectations and goals the team has set for the year.

"We're just trying to get everything ready for the season. In terms of a physical standpoint, we are looking at running a different offense and defense," boys head coach Ryder Peacock said. "I've been watching film and doing a lot of research to figure out which guy fits where on the court, because we are going to be very young and a totally new team."

The Lions graduated several seniors last year, leaving players thinking about their prospects for this year.

"We will only have two returning players from last year's team, which will make us a young and inexperienced team," junior Dylan Petree said.

"We are also changing things up this year by running a whole new offense."

Even with only a couple of returning varsity players, the players are not concerned with how the team stacks up.

"Having such a young team will not really be a challenge, because we've been playing with each other for a long time," junior Tyler Morgan said. "We know how each other plays and moves on the court."

Peacock plans to prepare his team for the schedule ahead of them.

"The thing I'm looking forward to the most is getting these guys ready for the season, especially considering the changes being made," he said. "It's the same type that my team ran when I was in high school. I've waited two years to run this because I think these guys fit the scheme better."

Morgan also has things that he is eager to face in the season.

"I'm looking forward to the challenging teams we will be facing this year," Morgan said. "Playing them will give us a chance to prove our ability."

Since underclassmen make up the whole roster for the Lions, juniors will have to step up a

year early to be the leaders of the team.

"I want to finish the season with a winning record and make first team all-district," Petree said. "Being one of the oldest players on the team, I know I'm going to have to step up more this year and be a leader by doing my part."

Both coaches and players have set goals for the season.

"As a team, we want to get back to the playoffs again," Peacock said. "Fundamentally, we want to get better every week."

Making the best of the abilities of the team, Peacock plans on capitalizing on agility and ball handling skills.

"Speed and quickness are big strengths for our team this year," he said. "I think we will be a good shooting team. We have some players that are good outside shooters."

Coaches and players have already recognized their weaknesses and plan on making adjustments to compensate.

"We have a short team, so rebounding will be one of the biggest weaknesses for our team," Morgan said. "We will need to learn how to block out well to get to the ball and beat the taller players on the other teams."



Junior Tyler Morgan shoots a jump shot over a couple of DeLeon Bearcat defenders. The Lions won the game 45-43. PHOTO BY JARED HUSMANN

Observation

Continued from | PG 1

"I could see more benefits if each individual subject area traveled the area to try and improve teaching within our field by examining how other teachers are engaging with students," Davis said. "There might be other ways that we could spend our time to get better results."

However, some teachers feel that the program is beneficial as it is.

"Observers are only able to spend twenty minutes in each room, which isn't quite long enough to evaluate the interaction between students," junior high theatre teacher Jennifer Everitt said.

Everitt believes it's a good way for teachers to observe and improve teaching strategies in the classroom.

Unlike Everitt, junior high science teacher Andre Raymond is against rounds because of his loss of class

time with his students.

"I think the rounds disrupt my teaching; it's not the fact of people coming in and out, but the afternoon students aren't able to be taught because of the teachers' meeting," Raymond said.

Raymond along with most other teachers, attend educational workshops outside of teaching hours to improve as educators. Therefore, he sees the rounds as unnecessary.

"Rounds could be improved if similar teachers were grouped together to observe each other," Raymond said. "Teachers with similar expectations or goals need to be put together in order to improve the process"

Although each teacher may have a different opinion about the evaluations, the hope of improving student learning is a continuous goal for all.

"Rounds is a process that the campus committee looks at to see if improvement can

be made within the classes and our school," Hill said.

Holidays

Continued from | PG 1

that month.

"We like to show cultural recognition," Schrader said. "We have an event once a month to inform people on the cultural history in that month."

Students believe celebrating various cultural events could be beneficial to the community.

"I think these events do benefit our community," senior Mati Rupp said. "It gets people more involved in art."

Another way the community is benefitting is through the education these events offer.

"I think these events benefit our community by sharing the history behind each holiday," junior high student Chloe Fields said.

"It also helps by providing the arts and crafts projects."

Giving the community the opportunity to realize the traditions celebrated by other cultures is the key goal.

"These events help to show the different cultures around the world," junior high student Henry Kelly said. "It also helps to show the different ways that people celebrate holidays."

As a student docent at the art center, Rupp explains that they plan on involving more of the Hispanic community next year during Dia De Los Muertos.

"We plan on doing a community ofrenda next year to have the Hispanic community more involved," Rupp said.

Ofrendas are altars set up to remember and honor the memory of an ancestor and are an essential part of the Day of the Dead celebration.

In a small town where there's never too much going on, it's always good

to find an opportunity to embrace the many cultures and the traditions that tie community together.

Agriculture

Continued from | PG 1

the group asking for assistance, then we will get to work on that project," Beard said.

Beard believes that volunteering teaches students valuable lessons.

"It gives the students ownership in the projects, ideas, teamwork skills, and goals. It also shows the community that we have great kids who are willing to serve and give back," Beard said.

He also thinks that the students like helping out.

"Sometimes they may not want to at first, but they like the teamwork and togetherness that these tasks provide," Beard said.

Students get the opportunity to do something for

someone else when working around town or at the Ag farm.

"It is really nice to get to do something for someone else," senior Abbey Head said.

Beard really enjoys helping out.

"I think it forms a tight bond between the school and the community," Beard said.

Beard's very first project was fixing up the Ag farm.

"When I first started working in Albany, the Ag farm only had six animal pens and a run down Ag barn. With help from all of the classes, we constructed 51 pig pens, fixed sheep and goat pens, and cleaned out the pasture and made a field," Beard said.

Head believes that Ag is very helpful to the community.

"It helps take care of some of the jobs that other people might not have time to do," Head said.

FANATIC FOOTBALL FANS

Football in December will be remembered



Football is the heart and soul of Albany, Texas. This year the Lions have gone where no team has gone since 2009... the semifinals. Wind or rain, heat or snow, the fans come out to support their Lions every Friday night. From the crazy Scream Team to the game officials who share the same passion for football as the fans, Texas is filled with Friday night football addicts. It takes more than just the football players to create this classic Friday night football atmosphere. Cheerleaders chant to fire up the crowd. Bands play their fight songs as loud as they can. Flag crews sprint across the field after every score as the train horn blares throughout the stadium. No matter what part they play, it takes a whole town to craft a successful team.

PHOTOS AND STORY BY
JARED HUSMANN & MADISON JONES



The Scream Team, dressed as elderly women, cheer from the end zone as the football team scores a touchdown. (top left) These "senior citizens" are keeping the tradition of Scream Team alive by dressing up for every game with a different theme. The flag crew (top right) are also creating excitement in the end zone. They anxiously await the offense to score so they can sprint across the field. The fans (left) bundle up to brave the bitter cold as they support their Lions at the quarterfinal round of playoffs in Mineral Wells. A game official (above) jokingly poses for the camera during a time-out. A few Cubs (bottom left) root for the Lions and cheerleaders that they one day hope to become. Cheerleaders (bottom right) lead the fans with "get up on their feet" to cheer on the Ragin' Red Band during their halftime show.

