



THE LIONS ROAR



Sports:
Lions get earlier start on 2016-17 basketball season. Girls start district.
— See page 7

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 3



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

FINAL SCHEDULE

The fall semester exam schedule is set for Monday through Wednesday, Dec. 19-21 and information has been released about when the holiday break will begin. The testing schedule is as follows:

MONDAY
1st period—8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
2nd period—10:05 to 12:05 p.m.
3rd period—12:50 to 2:45

TUESDAY
4th period-- 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
5th period-- 10:05 a.m. to 12:05 p.m.
6th period—12:45 to 2:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
7th period—8 to 9:45 a.m.
8th period—9:50 to 11:35 a.m.
Students taking courses with an EOC are required to take the fall finals.

The students are scheduled to be released at 12 o'clock on Wednesday when finals are concluded.

WINTER FORMAL

Winter Formal is set for Jan. 21 at the Whitney Theatre. The annual event is scheduled from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Tickets will be available after the Christmas break for \$15 from class presidents or \$20 at the door.

Angel Pacanins will serve as the disc jockey. The naming of Mr. and Miss AHS will be announced, along with class princes and princesses.

Breakfast food will be served at The Feed Store immediately following the winter dance and will be open to anyone who attends.

The dance is sponsored by the Student Council and is the main fundraising activity of the year.

STUCO CAROLING

The Student Council revived Caroling for Coins to benefit the Christmas Basket program sponsored by the Albany Ministerial Alliance on Wednesday. Members of the council dressed up in ugly Christmas sweaters and other Christmas apparel to fan out over the city to collect money for the seasonal effort to help families with need. The exact total of the amount collected was not available at press time, but Student Council president Hunter Owen said that he thought about \$500 was collected.

Bob Knowles, president of the alliance, said that the extra funds will go towards helping local families have a brighter Christmas, along with helping meet other needs that may come up later in the year.

NHS hosts charity lunch

Toys for Tots donations exceed expectations

BY BRIAN HAMILTON
Staff Writer

The annual Toys for Tots fundraiser luncheon exceeded expectations by raising more than it ever has since it began locally in 2012.

Over \$1,100 was raised, and counselor Dee Dee Waggoner feels students had a big part in the success of this year's fundraiser.

"NHS students did a great job of advertising the event," Waggoner said. "Timing was also good, and there were no conflicts, thankfully."

Waggoner commended senior Sydney Key for publicizing the luncheon.

"Sydney used social media to help advertise," Waggoner said. "She also made flyers and took them to several churches around town."

Money raised is used to buy toys for the less fortunate.

"Leigh Lowe, Resource Care employees, and myself help find children in Shackelford County who could benefit from Toys for Tots," Waggoner said.

If parents need help for Christmas, they can contact any of the sponsors.

"Parents need to fill out request forms at the Resource Center," Waggoner said. "School employees help to identify students



A community member (top) makes a donation at the Toys for Tots luncheon. Juniors Madison Russell (left to right), Madison Ratliff, Chloe Fields, and Felicity Coronado serve brisket and sausage to locals. Proceeds exceeded \$1,000 and will be used to purchase toys. PHOTOS BY BRIAN HAMILTON

who could benefit from this program."

Waggoner feels Toys for Tots allows kids to experience things they might not experience otherwise.

"It ensures that more children get to experience the spirit of Christmas," Waggoner said. "For NHS students, it makes them more aware of needs right here at home."

Toys for Tots boxes were located in the High School

hall, gym foyer, and at Dollar General.

"When fans come to a basketball game, they should bring a toy," Waggoner said.

Moran and Stephens County also benefit from Toys for Tots.

"Not all money raised stays in Albany," Waggoner said. "Staff Sgt. Beaty helps Moran and towns in Stephens County as well."

Staff Sgt. Doug Beaty is the Marine in charge of the Toys for Tots fundraisers.

"I started in 1986 and fell in love with it," Beaty said. "It's my fifth year doing it in Albany, and the fourth year doing the barbeque luncheon."

He believes this year was the most successful.

"I made three full briskets and 25 pounds of

SEE "Toys for Tots" Pg 8

Fiber optic line completed

Faster internet will now be provided

BY JILLIAN GUINN
Staff Writer

Region 14 Education Service Center is installing a fiber optic line planned to be finished by Dec. 1.

"By installing the line, our building will now be tied in with Region 14 through both our microwave antenna relay and a fiber optic line," superintendent Shane Fields said. "It will provide a faster and more dependable connectivity."

The service center provides internet service to most of the school districts in its service area via microwave antenna.

"No additional money is being spent to install the line," Fields said. "We are receiving extra benefit from the West Texas Telecommunication Consortium or WTTC to have it installed."

The fiber optic line provides a more reliable source of internet according to Fields.

"This new fiber connection will give us more redundancy so if the



High school technology coordinator Daniel Key (left) installs the new fiber optic line that will connect the school with Region 14. The line provides more bandwidth than traditional cables, allowing Wi-Fi and other internet access to respond much faster.

PHOTO BY JILLIAN GUINN

fiber fails we will still be able to connect through the wireless tower," Fields said. "I believe with the route the fiber line is taking, we will no longer be on the end of the network and will be less likely to be dropped if there is a connectivity issue."

The fiber optic line will provide faster internet service with unlimited band width according to technology

coordinator Daniel Key.

"Fiber optic lines use light instead of electronic voltage to send information between devices," Key said. "The line will give us larger band width and faster internet. The Wi-Fi now is 40 times faster."

Contractors had to think carefully about how to efficiently install the fiber optic line.

"The fiber optic line contractor bored under

the parking lot 4 feet deep so as not to disturb the asphalt," Fields said. "They trenched from behind the tennis courts to the back of the junior high and brought the connection into the building where the wireless tower is."

Fluctuating band width speeds have a huge effect on teachers and students. Lots

SEE "Fiber" Pg 8

Energy upgrades to be installed

BY RYLIE SCOTT
Assistant Editor

A \$1,019,884 energy upgrade program will be put into effect district-wide starting over the Christmas break that will allow the district to run more energy efficiently. New air conditioning/heating units, lighting, and water conservation measures will be installed by McKinstry Services as a result of a campus-wide energy audit.

"We had 38 air conditioning and heating units that are 15 years or older," Superintendent Shane Fields said. "There are a couple of models from 1983, and since new equipment has come such a long way as far as running with better efficiency, the district felt that it was time to change some of our facilities' technology."

Through a QZAB program, a Qualified Zone Academy Bond, the campus's monthly utility bills will virtually pay for themselves.

"On top of not having to spend money to make many repairs, the energy audit proved that with this new equipment, the money we will save from electricity and water costs and other repairs will be around \$38,000," Fields said. "By combining these two totals together, it's basically a wash because it makes the payment for you. It's also a win-win for the district and the community because they're not having to make the payment on this bond."

Only select A/C units will be replaced at both campuses. However, all the lighting will be new.

"The air-conditioning upgrades don't cover all the units, just the ones that are outdated," Fields said. "Lighting includes every closet, locker room, classroom, office space, and even the security lighting — it's every light bulb."

Like the lighting upgrades, water conservation measures will also be put into action the same way.

"Every sink, restroom, and sprinkler system will be affected by this," Fields said. "Everything that the district owns will feel the impact of electrical and water savings, including the football field and bus barn."

There is also a control upgrade component to this project, where every room's thermostat will be on a central control system.

"This allows us to see when rooms are occupied or when they're not," Fields said. "We can make sure that in the summers an A/C unit isn't running when it shouldn't be or

SEE "Energy" Pg 8

EDITORIALS

Community service

Some students do not enjoy participating in community service, probably thinking that their time would be better spent doing something else. However, community service is an excellent way to help others while planning for the future and obtaining personal benefits.

Volunteering to help out those who cannot help themselves is a simple way to make a community a better place. All kinds of people need help to complete tasks that do not take very long for teenagers looking for community service hours. Giving time to others can have an impact on others, whether it be picking up trash, passing out brochures at a theatre production, or babysitting for a busy young mother. Every hour spent volunteering can be a big help.

While volunteering should be done because students simply want to help others, it also has many benefits in the near future and later in life. Time spent doing community service looks great on a college application and can be the difference between getting accepted and not making the cut. Serving others can also teach selflessness and respect toward people outside the usual comfort zone.

Volunteering makes students feel good about themselves. Helping others and volunteering time and effort can give students a good feeling about what they have done. After lending a hand and seeing how the volunteer work helps the community, most people will get a good feeling about themselves.

Many students say that giving time and help to others is not fun and is a waste of time. Most of these students have never volunteered any of their time to help their community. Offering services to those in need is not even close to being a waste of time. Serving others has many benefits that you cannot get elsewhere. Only volunteering lets students help people in need, feel good inside, and bolster a college application.

High school heroes

It seems like every year after graduation comes there are still a select few ex-students that can't seem to "escape" high school, whether it be hanging out with sophomores at the church parking lot, or still getting into football games for free by saying you're a student. These individuals are commonly referred to as "high school heroes." While high school can be fun, it's a place meant to be temporary, not a place to dwell in throughout your young adult life.

Ex-students being supportive of their school is perfectly fine, commendable in fact, but there is a difference between being a loyal fan and coming home every weekend to relive the "glory days."

There is a whole world out there beyond your hometown. Post high school education opens the door to well-paying jobs and unlimited opportunities for success, but you'll never be able to find it if you're still taking the drag wearing the football letter jacket you received five years earlier.

Some of these said people argue that college was not all that they expected it to be, and that they miss being home. There are many instances in which this statement is correct, but if the first person you see when you walk into the opening football game of the season is someone who was supposed to have moved into their dorm three weeks earlier, you have to question whether they gave college life a try at all.



THE

LIONS ROAR

ILPC 2016 Silver 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

2016-2017 STAFF

Editor-In-Chief.....	KYLEA GARDNER
Assistant Editor.....	RYLIE SCOTT
Photo/Layout Editor	RACHEL HILL
Features Editor.....	GENEVIEVE STUNKARD
News/Copy Editor.....	NOLAN DAVIS
Sports Editor.....	PARKER MOON
Entertainment Editor.....	HENRY KELLY
Cartoonist	GENEVIEVE STUNKARD
Staff Writers/Photographers.....	KADE EVERITT, JILLIAN GUINN, BRIAN HAMILTON, RYAN HILL, CAITLYN PATTERSON
Adviser.....	DONNIE A. LUCAS
Principal	KEVIN HILL

The Lions Roar is a student publication published periodically as a nonprofit education project by the Albany High School Journalism Department. Any errors will be corrected if brought to the attention of the Adviser in writing within 10 days of the publication date.

Albany Independent School District prohibits discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge pay, fringe benefits, and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicapping conditions or national origin.



There is a light at the end of the tunnel



Gardner Seeds

I've always been a fan of people who can openly talk about things that aren't so easy to talk about, but that has never been me. Putting my feelings down on paper is much easier for me than voicing them out loud.

When winter comes around, my mind wanders back to a different time in my life. A time when the idea of love, or hope for that matter, withered away until eventually it was completely gone. In those few months, I was in a place so dark that seeing the "light at the end of the tunnel" sounded impossible—like a dream so unrealistic that it shouldn't even be expressed in words.


The idea that people who go through depression and thought of suicide don't really have it "that hard" is a complete myth. You don't know pain until you hold the sweaty, shaking hands of the woman who gave birth to you in the elevator on the way to your therapy appointments. You don't know pain until you sit at the table with your father, who doesn't say anything because he has no words to describe how it

feels that he can't help his baby girl with this battle. There is no amount of pain that compares to the blank look on your best friend's face when you tell her that you don't know if you can make it to walk the stage at graduation with her, or when you hold your big sister in your arms in the front seat of her car with tears streaming down her face as she whispers, "Why didn't you tell me something was wrong?"

Every day felt like a lifetime back then, but the light that seemed so impossible to reach was much closer than I thought. I learned that the only way to heal was to speak out, and I was genuinely surprised by the positivity that finding someone to talk to brought to my life. I have no agenda in sharing this story other than to speak to those who feel, or have felt, the same way I did; to tell them that they are never alone, and there is always a way out. You just have to find something worth living for, and trust me, it's out there.

Colder weather is approaching, but I don't see things the same way that I once did. I used to look out the window and see nothing but death, withered leaves, bare trees, and the gloomy gray clouds that settle upon the December sky, but now my perspective has changed. I no longer see death, I see hope, because even in the harshest winter, there is still the promise of spring.

Finding community among peers is important



Rachel's Revelations

I recently heard an old song that I love called "Garbage In Garbage Out". The last time I heard it was probably five years ago, but when it came on I remembered every word.


My favorite line is "what goes in is found out", and I feel as if this is something everyone would benefit from if they kept it in the back of their minds. I have always thought that surrounding yourself with people who influence you in a positive way is one of the most constructive things you can do in your life. I think that the things you allow in your life can either help you or hurt you. Sometimes it is hard to determine between the two, which is where responsible friendships really come in to play.

I struggled with this early on in high school because I wanted to keep to myself. I hardly ever invested time in any of my friendships, and I began to feel lonely. I think humans have a natural desire for community

and interaction that can only be filled through meaningful devotion to friendships. The key is finding people that have common beliefs, making friends that enjoy the same things as you, and developing relationships that make you laugh. It is then that your life begins to fill with happiness, and the desire for human contact is satisfied.

When you have friends that hold you accountable, it is much easier to stay focused on your goals in life while also having fun at the same time. Some of my favorite memories are with the friends that influence me positively, and looking back, I realize that those memories would not have been as sweet if my friends weren't there. Even things as simple as screaming lyrics to ridiculous songs during dreadfully long car rides are much more enjoyable when you are with those who matter. When you are facing hardships that seem impossible to overcome, the strength you find in those who help build your life around positivity will pull you through. Friendship and influence, however, is a two-way street. You reap what you sow, and the same goes for the friends you make. Sometimes the most meaningful friendships are ones you never see coming, but yet you wouldn't trade them for anything.

Cowboys face quarterback controversy



Parker's 'Pinions

The Dallas Cowboys quarterback controversy is one of the most talked about situations in the NFL because a rookie is filling the role of a 10-year starter. Rookie Dak Prescott stepped up to fill the role of the veteran Tony Romo who suffered a back injury during a preseason game against the Seattle Seahawks.

Prescott was drafted to the Cowboys in the fourth round of the 2016 NFL Draft. For a first-year rookie, Prescott has done a phenomenal job as quarterback. Prescott passed Tom Brady's record and set the rookie record for the most pass attempts without an interception during the 30-16 win over the Green Bay Packers. Brady set the standard at 162 consecutive passes during his 2000-01 season, but Prescott beat that by 14 passes until being picked

off during the same game that he set the record.

He also broke a Dallas Cowboy rookie record held by Troy Aikman for the most touchdown passes thrown by a rookie. Aikman held the record at nine until Prescott beat it by two. Aikman set the record in 11 games, while Prescott beat it in eight games.

Devastated like most veteran quarterbacks would be, Romo announced in an interview on November 15 that, "Dak Prescott has earned the right to be starting quarterback." Prescott has a 67.9 completion percentage, 2,974 passing yards, 19 touchdowns, and 2 interceptions. Since Jerry Jones is the general manager and owner, he gets to call the shots. Hopefully he will make the right decision to keep Prescott because of how well he is leading the team. If he does put Romo back in at starter and they lose, it would signal that the 36-year-old might be over the hill. The Cowboys need a fresh quarterback that will stick with the team for a while and lead them to a Super Bowl. After how well Prescott is producing, maybe this is the year.

Our 2¢ worth



What is the true meaning of Christmas?



SENIOR **ABBI BEARD**

Celebrating the birth of Jesus and spending time with your family.



JUNIOR **JUSTIN NASH**

Shooting deer and celebrating the birth of Jesus is the true meaning of Christmas.



SOPHOMORE **SERENA MORENO**

The true meaning of Christmas is spending time with family and getting presents.



FRESHMAN **COBY KNIGHT**

Christmas is about spending time with your friends and family.

ROARING



ARRIVAL



November 11, 2016 PG-13 96 min
Mystery/Crime

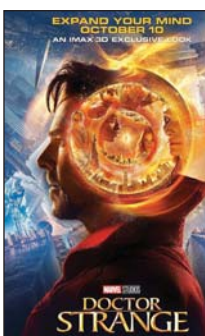
Linguistics professor Louise Banks (Amy Adams) leads an elite team of investigators when gigantic spaceships touch down in 12 locations around the world. As nations teeter on the verge of global war, Banks and her crew must race against time to find a way to communicate with the extraterrestrial visitors. Hoping to unravel the mystery, she takes a chance that could threaten her life and quite possibly all of mankind.

Director: Denis Villeneuve
Writer: Eric Heisserer
Stars: Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner

Staff Review:



DOCTOR STRANGE



November 4, 2016 PG-13 115 min
Fantasy/Crime

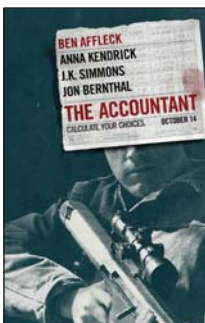
Dr. Stephen Strange's (Benedict Cumberbatch) life changes after a car accident robs him of the use of his hands. When traditional medicine fails him, he looks for healing, and hope, in a mysterious enclave. He quickly learns that the enclave is at the front line of a battle against unseen dark forces bent on destroying reality. Strange is forced to choose between his life of fortune or leaving it all behind to defend the world as the most powerful sorcerer in existence.

Director: Scott Derrickson
Writer: John Spaights
Stars: Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor

Staff Review:



THE ACCOUNTANT



October 14, 2016 R 128 min
Crime/Drama

Christian Wolff (Ben Affleck) is a mathematics savant with more affinity for numbers than most people. Using a small-town CPA office as a cover, he makes his living as a freelance accountant for dangerous criminal organizations. With a Treasury agent (J.K. Simmons) hot on his heels, Christian takes on a state-of-the-art robotics company as a legitimate client. As Wolff gets closer to the truth about a discrepancy that involves millions of dollars, the body count starts to rise.

Director: David Lowery
Writer: Toby Halbrooks
Stars: Bryce Dallas Howard, Oakes Fegley

Staff Review:



Theater arts returns to schedule

Class travels to Bass Hall in Ft. Worth for field trip to see *MacBeth*

BY HENRY KELLY
Entertainment Editor

Improvisation, miming, script-writing, puppetry, prop-making, and a trip to Bass Hall in Fort Worth- these are just some of the things Jenny Scott has brought to the stage in her first year as the local theater arts teacher.

Like many others, junior Reyna Garcia needed a fine arts credit and chose theater arts.

"At first I took theater because I didn't want to take band," Garcia said. "But I've found that it's something new and fun, and I've learned how to get out of my comfort zone."

Like Garcia, junior Lindsey Lucas had not ever been involved in theater before this class.

"It has definitely helped me be more out there," Lucas said. "I've been able to get more comfortable talking in front of people."

Lucas finds theater arts to be more hands-on than other classes.

"We don't just do papers; we actually get to be involved in theater activities," Lucas said. "We get to act and help make props for the junior high One-Act Play."

Lucas believes the new class will be a big help to the high school's One-Act Play.

"The theater arts class will get more people on-deck to help," Lucas said. "I have never been involved, but I think I'm going to try to help out with the One-Act Play this year."

Junior Shelby Snead agrees. "The class allows Mrs. Scott to get an idea of who is better for different parts," Snead said. "She can find out more rather than relying just on the auditions."

Sophomore Braden Davis also believes the class will improve the One Act Play.

"It allows us to have more practice time during school in addition to after school," Davis said. "That way we are even more prepared when it comes time to compete."

Davis likes the addition of theater arts.

"It is a good class for this school because it gives students another way to get their fine arts credit," Davis said. "Theatre is the most interesting and most fun class to me."

Teacher Jenny Scott would like to create a strong theater program like she has seen in other schools.

"I want to model after Lockhart, where students can write their own plays," Scott said. "The students would put on their plays during the lunch hour and at the community theater."

She has found that the class has helped students grow in their acting abilities.



Junior Kelton Parker (top, left) pretends to propose to junior Rylie Scott (top, right) under the supervision of theater arts teacher Jenny Scott (top, middle) in order to prepare for their District UIL One-Act Play Competition. Theater students (left) prepare to watch *Macbeth* at Bass Hall in Fort Worth.

PHOTOS BY
HENRY KELLY

"It has been neat to see some of the nervous freshmen progress over time," Scott said. "Now I see them more comfortable acting on stage alongside some of the older kids, and it's great to see that happening."

She also believes that the class is a great experience for students.

"The students get to express their creativity, and theater arts gives them the avenue to create thought," Scott said. "With this class, the students' confidence and theatrical ability will grow over time."

Scott recently took the class on a trip to Bass Hall in Fort Worth to see the play *Macbeth*.

"I thought it went very well because it exposed the students to another level of theater," Scott said. "Even though we have the Aztec Theatre, it is interesting to see plays on a large scale."

Davis agrees.

"The play we went to see was very interesting," Davis said. "The trip was fun, and it's always neat getting to go on a theater-related field trip."

Davis finds the class to be helpful to his acting abilities.

"We play a lot of theater games that improve your acting," Davis said. "They are fun to play and help me to work better with actors on stage."

Lucas has enjoyed getting to go up on stage as well.

"I always enjoy when we get to go to the auditorium and actually act on stage," Lucas said. "I like trying all the new exercises."

Snead said being onstage is the most enjoyable.

"I really like the activities we do to help us act," Snead said. "My favorite is when we act out a party where we all improvise

our lines and act like a certain character, and the hostess has to guess who we are supposed to be."

Snead has also learned some of the history of theater in the class.

"We learned about Medieval plays and how they worked," Snead said. "We also learned about older plays, including those by Shakespeare."

Davis learned the same.

"We've read and learned about the history of theater," Davis said. "It's pretty neat to find out how it has changed."

Scott claims this is only the beginning.

"We are kind of rebuilding the theatre program here," Scott said. "Hopefully, in the future we will have advanced theater classes for those who want to do more technical work or play-writing."

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

BY HENRY KELLY

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

and possessions, as well as the city of New York.

The interesting part of this movie was the way it brought back the same feelings from the popular Harry Potter series, and since the film was made by most of the same people, it was very similar, which was what most people were hoping for. For one, I noticed the music was just like the Harry Potter movies, which, although it can go unnoticed, is very important. Another similarity were the special effects. It actually felt like it was in the same world as the Harry Potter movies.

The movie was based on a book written by J.K. Rowling, but it did not truly tie into the story of Harry Potter. Some Harry Potter fans might not have read *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, but it will be like an old familiar friend when they see it. The great thing about this is that the new movie revealed many new aspects of the wizarding world which allowed the story to feel new and refreshing for those craving more from the Harry Potter movies.

The movie evokes the same sentiments concerning the world of Harry Potter just as many had hoped. I encourage anyone, whether they have seen a Harry Potter movie or not, to see *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

Allied

Many movies in the past have combined war and romance, but *Allied* puts a touch of mystery on it like no other movie before.

There is a great combination of both a love story and action that should keep all viewers watching. *Allied* doesn't overdo the romance, producing a thrilling war movie, without resorting to endless battle scenes. It's based on an interesting and affectionate love story between World War II operatives Max Vatan (Brad Pitt) and Marianne Beauséjour (Marion Cotillard).

The movie follows the two as they fall in love and get married after being on a mission together. Max soon finds out that his wife might be a German spy and is ordered to truly find out whether he can trust

the mother of his daughter or not.

One thing that sticks out about this movie is the way different languages were used. Sometimes when watching a movie with subtitles, the characters can feel far away, and it can be hard to understand and interpret the emotion in their voice.

In this movie, this was not a problem because the timing was just right. By that I mean there were never too many subtitles to make it drag on, but instead it included just the right amount to make the movie feel authentic and still be entertaining.

This movie brings suspense to a love story in a way that I've never seen. The way details unfold as the movie progresses leaves viewers itching for more. The story is a perfect combination of different genres creating a thrilling, yet romantic, war film that is a one of a kind.

This movie is rated R, so it may not be for everyone, but I recommend it. It is a mixture of love and conflict that results in a compelling WWII based movie.



Student works to get back on track

Motivation
in classes
decreased as
years progressed

BY CAITLYN PATTERSON
Staff Writer

Lack of interest in school can lead to failing classes and academic ineligibility for activities like athletics, band, and stock show. For someone who isn't involved in any type of extra-curricular activities, the motivation to do well can be totally absent, and with no type of consequences, they may feel like grades are unimportant.

Freshman Alexus Vickers knows the struggle of not being motivated. Failing all of her freshman classes, she is retaking those courses as well as finishing sophomore classes, with the plan to rejoin her class for her junior year.

"Last year, I didn't really care much about school," she said. "I missed so many days that most of summer school was spent making up days I had missed."

Vickers didn't have much figured out for her future either.

"I couldn't really see myself going to college or even finishing high school," she said. "I planned on staying here and getting a job."

She had no motivation to focus in any of her classes, and her grades suffered because of it.

"My grades were never passing," Vickers said. "On my report cards I made 50s, 30s, and even managed to make a 2."

However, her grades weren't suffering because she was incapable of doing the work. She simply didn't want to do it.

"Most of the time instead of paying attention I was drawing, sleeping, or I just didn't show up," she said. "I know I could have done the work, but I just didn't want to."

She said teachers responded

differently.

"Some teachers didn't try to do anything about it," Vickers said. "But there were a few that would always try to help me catch up no matter how much school I missed."

It wasn't until she looked at her schedule and saw that she would be a freshman again that she decided to get serious about her work.

"For some reason I still thought I would move on and be a sophomore," she said. "When I saw my schedule, it really got to me, and I realized I would have to start working harder."

Other students started to notice that she wasn't in any classes with them anymore.

"Last year some people thought that I was cool or funny because of how much school I missed and the grades I was making," Vickers said. "But now when they see my name on the freshman list, they make fun of me. They make me feel stupid, and it upsets me."

She decided to take charge and change her outlook about school.

"I realized that high school was going to be different," she said. "I wasn't going to be able to do what I did in middle school and just get by with it. I was going to have to try a lot harder."

Vickers knew it was going to be rough. There were never any concerns at home when she didn't pass, so she had to find ways to encourage herself.

"Getting in a relationship and having friends that support me has made everything so much easier," she said. "They motivate and urge me to do my best. My boyfriend helps to make sure I don't fall behind, and he explains things when I don't understand them."

After thinking about her future, she realized she didn't want to be left behind in high school when her friends graduated.

"I wasn't going to get anywhere with my life, and I knew I needed to get serious because I didn't want to see myself being a dropout anymore," Vickers said. "I didn't want



Alexus Vickers, a freshman, receives help with her school work from science teacher Andre Raymond. Though she used to make failing grades because she says she didn't care, Vickers has been working harder in school in order to prepare a better future for herself. PHOTO BY CAITLYN PATTERSON

to end up like my mother, who had me in high school and never pursued a career."

Her mom stayed in town and worked different jobs to help them survive, which caused struggles at times.

"I realized that I could be someone and that I don't have to end up like my parents," she said. "I have found careers that interest me, like cosmetology, but I have to get a basic education first to be able to pursue that."

She worries she won't be able to get a decent job or go to college because of the grades she made last year.

"I've retaken and passed my classes using the Plato program, but I'm having to take English and Algebra in class because of the EOC tests," Vickers said. "By the end of this school year I'll finish world history and biology, so I should be able to take junior classes next

year, but I'll have to double up on English classes. I know I'm going to have to work hard to finish all of my classes, but it's worth it."

Vickers came to the realization that her performance in school will greatly impact her future.

"If I wanted to pursue a career like being a doctor or a lawyer, then the grades I make would have more of an impact on my career decision," she said. "I don't think there will be much of a problem since I want to be in cosmetology, but I can only do so much, and I'm trying to do everything I can to get back on track."

Vickers thinks people's behavior towards school usually has a lot to do with their home life.

"Some students may not pay attention because they plan on going to work for their family, or their family doesn't have enough money to support them, or they just haven't found a serious reason to

make them care," she said. "Once I finally got a reason to care, I started doing a lot better in my classes. I think students just need motivation to push them along."

She strives to make all A's and B's now.

"Now that I do my work and pay attention in class, it's not such a challenge to make good grades," she said.

Vickers just needed to take a step back and see the bigger picture.

"I knew that I wasn't going to get anywhere with the grades I was making and I wasn't happy, so I changed," she said. "Things don't just fix themselves; you've got to change them yourself."

Vickers hopes that more students don't end up like she used to be.

"School may not be the most fun place, and a lot of it can seem pointless, but it's important to get an education," Vickers said.

Zeller leaving Feed Store to take area post

Founding director
looks to expand
Young Life program

BY KADE EVERITT
Staff Writer

After five years of working with students at The Feed Store, a local mission and hangout aimed at helping teens and young adults, founding director Grant Zeller is heeding the call to become the area director for Young Life and Capernaum programs in Abilene.

"For me, living a life of faith means doing things that are uncomfortable," Zeller said. "And knowing when it's time to go and time to say 'God I trust you if you're leading me in this'."

Although Zeller is leaving Albany, he is not going to stop working with teens and young adults.

"I will still be doing Young Life," he said. "But my focus will shift to Young Life around the loop of Abilene. Hopefully, we will be able to grow into Clyde, Baird, Merkel, and Anson and other high schools around Abilene."

While working with schools in the Big Country, Zeller will also work with the Capernaum program.

"I will be supervising the Capernaum ministry, which is our special needs ministry, along with the schools around Abilene," Zeller said.

With Zeller taking his work to Abilene, many students may miss the feeling of always having someone there to meet their needs.

"Grant was always there for me," senior Steven Ford said. "Anytime I needed somebody to talk to, I could go to Grant, and I still can today. Grant is for sure one of the better role models in my life, and I will always look up to him."

"Grant was able to bring me out of my anti-social shell and show me what it was truly like to love everybody like we are called to do as followers. He was able to



Feed Store director Grant Zeller (left) cleans out his office as he prepares to take a Young-Life position in Abilene. Zeller and Senior Caleb Britting (bottom) host the annual Mr. Christmas Tree pageant in festive sweaters and wigs at The Feed Store. Zeller will be making his official move to Abilene on Jan. 1.

PHOTOS BY
RACHEL HILL AND
KADE EVERITT



make ordinary high school kids into powerful leaders of the community," senior Grant Head said.

Senior Kylea Gardner explained the admiration she has towards Zeller.

"Over the last couple of years being on the Feed Store board, Grant has been there and has set an example of leadership for

others," Gardner said. "He carries himself in a way that is respectful to everyone, whether it was toward a high school kid or a pastor at a church. Grant always handled everything with grace."

Zeller knows that by leaving, many hearts will be broken.

"I know, with me leaving, many people will be upset and

maybe even disappointed," Zeller said. "But I trust that I am leaving the high school and junior high programs in better hands. The beautiful thing about relationships is they never end." Zeller knows that God is leading him to new experiences.

"I feel like the Lord is leading me, and that it is time for my own

soul to grow so I can continue to love others to the fullest," Zeller said.

Although Zeller is not going to be working specifically with Albany, he will be a part of camps and other gatherings.

"I will still be doing stuff when we go to camp and through Big Country Young Life," Zeller said. "I will still be involved with Albany; you just won't see me at every club meeting. I will still be sending volunteers and setting up the best people I can for this place."

Zeller will depart from Albany beginning the first of the year.

"The official move will be January 1, but in my new role, I will still be serving Albany, the Feed Store board and Young Life here," Zeller said. "I will still be around and trying to find out what that feels like in a healthy way."

Zeller is uncertain who his replacement will be but has an idea of what he wants.

"I will be helping find my replacement, and it will be a person eager to be involved in the community," Zeller said. "I don't know right now who will be taking my place. We know between Faith, Tisha, and the Feed Store board that we have a good team in place."

Zeller has not only impacted teens and young adults but the community as a whole.

Gardner has always thought of Zeller as a role model to the community.

"Grant has a certain way about him that appealed to every student in some way or another," Gardner said. "He would draw kids from every walk of life to come together and interact with one another through Young Life, the Feed Store, and even things as simple as riding with him to football games. There is no doubt that his being here has affected all of Albany in a positive way, but the youth has especially benefited from him in the last five years."

"What Grant was able to bring to the community is something you can't find very often, and he impacted many people's lives in a positive way, including mine," senior Roman Fuentes said.

Jailed parents cause hardships for students

Children of addicts cope with harmful effects of lifestyle

BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD
Features Editor

When Valerie*— not her real name — closes her eyes, she can see with perfect clarity the one Christmas of her life that she was able to spend with her mother in person.

The memory takes on an ethereal, dreamlike vibe in her mind as she recalls the scent of spruce, the gentle glow of dainty fairy lights, and the expression on her mother's face, her deep brown eyes warm with love and a vibrant smile stretching from ear-to-ear, as she watched her children open their gifts.

"That was one of the best days of my life, because everyone was finally together for the holidays," Valerie said. "But by the next Christmas, she had gotten into trouble again. My family celebrated as normal, but I think we all felt a little dead inside, like something had been drained from our hearts knowing she was spending Christmas in prison."

For as long as Valerie can remember, her mother has been in and out of prison and jail due to struggles with drug addiction. This year, the local student will celebrate Christmas as she has almost every year before: first, cozily yet bittersweet at home, and then a week later under the stark lights of the prison in which her mother is currently incarcerated, where Valerie, her siblings, and her father will show her mother photos of what she missed.

According to Valerie, her mother has battled with substance abuse since she was a teenager.

"She just got into the wrong crowd early on," Valerie said. "She started with marijuana, and that eventually led to use of cocaine and other hard drugs. She went through a lot of problems with her family, and then after her mom passed away, the drug use increased significantly. I guess you could say she doesn't really know how else to cope when life hits her hard."

Valerie remembers the first time she ever visited her mother in jail.

"Everything was grey and bleak, and it smelled like dust; in essence, I guess you could say it smelled like death, if dead skin cells count," she said. "The people who worked there called us in saying our visitation was ready. I was really little, so I didn't really understand what was going on."

Through the clear barrier between them and the direct connect phone, Valerie's mother assured her and her siblings that everything would be okay and that she'd be out soon.

"I was so confused and ended up crying because she was right there in front of me, but I couldn't hug her or feel her touch at all," Valerie said. "The second time I went to visit her, I remember sitting in the waiting room next to my grandpa with tears in my eyes, and when he asked me what was wrong, I said I had thought that I would never have to go there again."

With time, though, Valerie got used to the visitation routine and grew to be able to visit her mother without crying.

"Now, I try to keep my mind away from the fact of where she is and try to focus on her and talk to her about my life as if there isn't a sheet of glass between us," Valerie said. "When she talks about her life in prison, she says it's hard to be away from us and lonely, and that she tends to just read and sit in her bunk all the time. She says that prisons are kind of nasty because there are a lot of bugs everywhere and fungus in the showers, and that other women are usually trying to pick fights with each other, being loud and always arguing."

Despite her independent behavior, Valerie says her mother is not at all shy.

"She's actually really bubbly and sociable, and her natural cheerfulness just lights up every room she walks into," she said. "Every time she's ever met my friends, she's been nothing but accepting and gives them big hugs and asks them about their lives and families. She treats everyone equally, and she's just really caring and super funny."

Just before her mother's most recent sentencing, Valerie spent a weekend in Dallas with her mother and her mother's boyfriend.

"We went ice-skating and had so much fun," she said. "My mom and I just have such good chemistry and get along so well. It's like we're each other's other halves, because we're so similar and silly. I didn't want that weekend to end."

Just a few months later, Valerie and her siblings were in court testifying in



The illustrations above depict what the holidays are like for Valerie and Christian. They spoke of the sadness they experienced knowing their mothers were in prison without their families at Christmas. ILLUSTRATIONS BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD

defense of their mother for the crime of breaking and entering while on drugs.

"She supposedly broke into a family friend's house with her ex-boyfriend and trashed the place," she said. "I don't know why. Her ex-boyfriend tried to pin it all on her. He was a pretty bad guy, and he made her cry a lot and hit her when they were together."

At the end of the trial, both Valerie's mother and her ex-boyfriend were sentenced to eight years in prison.

"When she was sentenced, me and my siblings and all my other family members at the trial just broke down and cried," Valerie said. "When I got home and told my dad about it, he broke down and cried, too. He still gets really emotional when it comes to her and her situation, because even though they're not technically together and were never married, I think he still considers her to be his wife because they had four kids together. I definitely know that he still considers her to be his best friend, and whenever they're on the phone, I hear him tell her that he'll always be there for her."

Three weeks after the trial, Valerie spent her seventeenth birthday crying alone in her bedroom in disappointment.

"I thought I was going to be able to spend my birthday with her because her lawyer had convinced me that she had a really good chance of just getting parole," she said. "I took it too seriously and so I was let down, but things perked up when I got a call from her and we talked for a long time about good memories. She also sent me

a birthday card that was practically a novel. I felt a little better being able to hear her voice on my birthday, but it still wasn't the same."

Valerie says that she used to feel angry towards her mother because of her drug problem.

"I'd get mad when she'd tell me 'this is the last time' and then it wasn't," she said. "I felt like I was powerless when it came to helping her for a long time. But I'm not angry anymore, and I understand that it's probably as hard for her as it is for me. I want to try to help her in any way I can."

She remains optimistic that this will be the last time her mother will be incarcerated.

"I love her so deeply," Valerie said. "My mom is just kind of troubled and needs a lot of support. I've always felt guilty for her mistakes; like, if I had supported her enough before she made them and had shown her enough love, they could have been prevented. In a way, I guess I kind of feel like the roles are reversed: like I'm the concerned parent and she's my rebellious child whom I'm always trying to keep out of trouble."

After seeing her mother's struggles with her addiction, Valerie feels strongly about how those who battle with it should be treated.

"Drug addiction is a sickness, and maybe she'd be able to get better if it was treated that way rather than like a crime," she said. "People usually get involved with drugs because they're hurting, and going to prison and being

separated from their families just makes things worse. I think addiction should be treated with rehab, love, and support, and I'm willing to give my mother anything I can to help her."

Similar to Valerie's situation, Christian's* mother, though no longer incarcerated, struggled for years with drug addiction.

"I live with my aunt and uncle because my mom's drug addiction eventually made her incapable of taking care of me and my siblings, and she was arrested," he said. "My mom and my siblings and I were all living in a one-bedroom house, where my mom used the bedroom and my siblings and I slept on chairs and couches in the living room. My parents were never married, and my dad wasn't around."

At the time, Christian's mother was cleaning houses for work.

"She was gone all day and pretty much all night either working or hanging out with her friends, who also did a lot of drugs," he said. "Because no one was really around to enforce anything, my siblings and I didn't really go to school, even though we were enrolled. I took care of my siblings all day, because they were younger than me."

For Christian, taking care of his siblings meant playing with them, making sure they were fed, and trying to prevent them from seeing his mother's drug paraphernalia around the house.

"She used around the house all the time: heroin, marijuana, and Xanax, for the most part," he said. "I smelled marijuana in her room all the time, and she didn't even seem to try to hide the syringes. It never surprised me, because she'd pretty much used for as long as I can remember, but what she was doing still upset me a lot."

Despite Christian having begged his mother many times to stop using, her addiction overpowered her.

"I hated that she was choosing to numb herself and leave us all to deal with the life she was making for us, but I knew it was hard for her to just walk away from the drugs," he said. "I just didn't know how to help her. I was incredibly frustrated, and we'd argue a lot, and she'd claim she didn't have a drug problem."

His mother was arrested numerous times for drug possession.

"Whenever she was in jail or prison, my siblings and I would stay with our grandmother or our aunt and uncle," he said. "Even though it upset me whenever she was arrested because I wouldn't be able to see her, I was happy at the thought that maybe being punished would break her addiction and she'd never do drugs again when she got out. She almost always was pulled back into them by her friends as soon as she got out, though."

When Christian's mother was in prison, he and his family tried to visit her once a month.

"The prison was intimidating because it was so large and high-security," he said. "We had to take our shoes off and be searched before we could see her. Visitation took place at long tables in the prison gym, and the conversation was kept simple and light so that my mom could just worry about herself and getting better. She always cried when we had to leave."

Though Christian's mother was only incarcerated for one Christmas of his life, he said the experience was horrible and he never wants to go through it again.

"We had always had really happy Christmases," he said. "I don't know how she did it, but my mom always found the money to get me and my siblings nice gifts. During the Christmas she was in prison, I missed her so much. I cried, because she's my mom."

Despite the quarrels they had, Christian says he loves his mother immensely and always will.

"She's outgoing and extroverted and lively," Christian said. "But even being such a sociable person, whenever someone tried to bring up her problems, she'd close herself off from the world and try to get away from it, denying that she had a problem at all. She got started with drugs because she grew up in a bad place and never knew anything else. I know she also struggled with depression."

Since his mother has been clean, Christian has visited her every couple of weeks.

"I want to be able to live with her again and have things be better," he said. "I want her to stay clean forever because drugs are what tore our family apart. When I have a family of my own, I just want everything to be normal and for her to be a happy grandmother, and for us to all celebrate Christmas together, never having to be separated again."

*Name has been changed in order to protect student privacy.

Students relate passion for hunting

Lifetime hunters share experiences

BY CUTTER COWART
Staff Writer

Hunting to some students is more than a recreational activity; it's a passion that they have come to know and love.

Chase Hill, a junior, is an avid hunter and has been all his life.

"I go hunting at least four times a week during hunting season," Hill said. "I go when I can get off of work, and there is always enough time to do homework in the stand."

Hill has been hunting for as long as he can remember.

"I shot my first deer when I was four. Before that I always had a BB gun in my hands," Hill said. "I would shoot squirrels, birds, and such whenever I had time."

Like most students that hunt, Hill spends a lot of time with his father during the season.

"My dad taught me to be a lot more respectful to animals," Hill said. "It's a serious thing. If you're willing to kill an animal, you need to make a quick, clean shot so that it doesn't suffer."

Respect toward the animal is expressed widely by almost every hunter.

"There is a respect for the animal when you find it after tracking it for a long period of time," Hill said. "It's not all about jumping

around and celebrating like some people do. You treat the animal with as much respect as you can because it's a living, breathing thing that God made."

Hill enjoys hunting white tail deer the most.

"It's one of the most majestic-looking animals you will ever see in your life because they're so quiet," Hill said. "They're probably one of the smartest animals in the world that you can hunt because of how aware they are, so you have to be careful with the moves you make."

If he could go on any hunt in the world, Hill says he would like to go to New Mexico and shoot an elk with a bow.

"Shooting an elk with a bow would be a physical and mental challenge," Hill said. "It's a lot harder to get close with a bow, and it's not like a rifle you can shoot from 300 yards without having to get in the animal's personal space. During the rut when they are looking for females, they bugle, and ever since I was a little kid, it has sent chills down my spine, and I've always wanted to hear one up close."

Hill hunts both for trophies and to put meat on the table.

"Knowing where your food comes from is a privilege," he said. "Most people will never see the process of killing an animal, processing it, and then eating it. I also enjoy hunting because you're usually with friends and family, and there is never a dull moment dur-

ing those times."

Hunting is also a passion for junior Parker Moon.

"There are a lot of things I like about hunting: waking up early in the morning, freezing my butt off, setting up decoys, walking to the blind, and such," Moon said. "Hunting is something that brings me peace. It allows me to get away from the outside world and just relax and have a good time with friends and family."

Over the course of his hunting career, Moon has grown closer with his father.

"I started hunting when I was very young," Moon said. "I didn't start shooting anything until I was eight or so when I got my first rifle. When I was five I would go with my dad on goose hunts and antelope hunts. I don't really remember it that well, but he does, and if he can remember it, then it's worth it."

Moon hunts for the sport of hunting, but donates the meat to local residents.

"Hunting is more of a passion," Moon said. "It's that drive to get out in the mornings and go explore and find something most people will never see. Hunting takes you into the world of nature, and it's an adventure every time."

Moon has been on several out-of-state hunting trips.

"One of my favorite hunting experiences was my mule deer hunt in New Mexico," Moon said. "The area was all sand dunes, and it took a lot of time

glassing over the dunes trying to find a deer to shoot. On the other side of the dunes were our friends, and they called us to come over there and kill a deer."

Moon believes that hunting brings out a side of you that doesn't normally show.

"My dad took a big flank around the deer so hopefully he could smell his scent and walk towards us," Moon said. "When he came by us, I had the opportunity to take a shot. The first shot hit him in his back, and the second I put right in front of his stomach. We went to go find him, and as we were admiring this deer, my friend's grandpa broke down in tears because of how happy he was for me."

Moon also believes hunting has several perks, like allowing you to travel around the world.

"Hunting takes you to parts of the world that are truly amazing," Moon said. "It takes you to beautiful scenery and places that no man will ever go or see from a picture on the internet."



Parker Moon (top) admires a duck he harvested during a morning duck hunt with friends and family. Chase Hill (bottom) poses for a picture with a buck he killed last year.

PHOTO BY
MICHAEL MAHONEY
AND CHASE HILL



Lions Roar Christmas Gift Guide

Local Shopping

Online Shopping



GIRLS

Bedside Smartphone Vase

\$32.00

Part smartphone dock, part vase, this bloom box functions as a convenient phone dock as it brightens up your bedside.
www.uncommongoods.com



BOYS

Columbia® RFID Trifold Wallet

\$12.00

This stylish leather trifold wallet features an understated logo imprint and rugged durability.
www.jcpenny.com



MOM

Monogrammed Robe

\$39.99

These comfortable robes tie in the front and are sold as a one-size-fits-most style. They are the perfect length to provide coverage without getting in the way when you are getting ready.
www.marleylilly.com



DAD

Yeti Rambler

\$39.99

This stainless steel, sweatproof ramblr helps keep canned or bottled drinks cold and refreshing. They are great on-the-go gifts for dads!
www.yeti.com



GIRLS

Mara Earring Set

\$58.00

With shades ranging from pale to deep and matte to sparkly, you can't go wrong with this eye shadow palette for girls.
www.anthropologie.com



BOYS

Men's Cotton Quilt Snap-T® Pullover

\$149.00

This warm, diamond-quilted pullover has a 4-snap nylon pocket and a stand-up collar. Also water-repellant, this Patagonia jacket is the ideal gift for guys.
www.patagonia.com



MOM

Gucci Perfume

\$104.00

This elegant fragrance is made up of white musk, vanilla and blonde woods topped with jasmine, hints of green, and powdery florals.
www.gucci.com



DAD

Stainless Steel Propane Grill

\$299.00

For a gas grill that matches your backyard style, this Weber Genesis S-330 is the perfect choice. With 637 square inches of cooking space, you can easily grill for a crowd. Whether that's a tasty meal of pork chops, chicken, or steak is up to you.
www.lowes.com

Girls tip off district competition

Team starts 2016-17 season under new coach

BY RYAN HILL
Staff Writer

Heading into the new season, the girls' basketball team is taking the floor under new coach Tate Thompson, who has high hopes to lead the girls to a better season.

"From the start of the season, we have gotten so much better," Thompson said. "Starting practices with little fundamentals will help us in the long run."

The coach is putting in a new system from what the team ran in the previous years.

"Bringing in the offense, it is more complex, yet has been easy for the girls to learn," Thompson said.

The new offense is based on a certain pattern.

"We are running a flex offense, an older style of play, that is based on a pattern that will make the offense flow a lot easier," said Thompson. "The girls are willing to learn which makes coaching it a whole lot easier."

The girls have bought into

what the coach is teaching this year.

"The offense that we are learning is different than last year, which is kind of hard, but the way he teaches it makes it easier to learn," senior Abbi Beard said.

The new coach makes coaching opportunities more learnable.

"Since he is younger, he teaches us from a different point of view, a more effective way," Beard said. "When he coaches, he shows us how to do things, and that is easier to learn."

The team was used to a more relaxed, slower style of play.

"This year's offense is also different because it is a lot more screening and cutting," Beard said.

"Last year we just ran plays that were based on one person scoring, but this year our offense is really efficient."

Not only is the coach changing the offense, but the defense as well.

"Instead of the traditional zone the girls have run, I am switching to a man-to-man defense," Thompson said.

Previously the girls have run a zone, where the girls are only responsible for a certain area of the court.

"Not having used man defense makes it a little more difficult to teach," Thompson

said. "I am having to teach the fundamentals of a man defense from scratch, so they know how to play it effectively."

Conditioning in practice was one of the top priorities during the preseason.

"In order for the girls to play a great man defense, they will have to be in great shape," Thompson said. "If they are in good shape, they can finish the game without being overly tired."

Beard agrees that conditioning will be a more important aspect of practice.

"Practices are so much different compared to last year, a lot more conditioning because the change of our defensive game plan," Beard said.

The team only has eight players on varsity, which means limited substitutes.

"Having a small team can be a good thing and a bad thing at the same time," Thompson said.

"With only having three on the bench, if we get into foul trouble it is hard to keep the count low."

The coach thinks that having a smaller team has benefits.

"Having fewer numbers will help in the practices with one-on-one to help the girls get better," Thompson said.

As well as benefits, there are downfalls to smaller teams.



Senior Alexis Munden goes up for a jump shot during the girls Albany Tournament. The Lady Lions will have a game against Hawley there tonight following the JV girls game.

PHOTO BY
RACHEL HILL

"Since we do play man defense, it is crucial to have fresh players on the court to keep the pressure on the opponents' offense," Thompson said. "Only having three subs, it is hard

to keep everyone fresh on the court."

The girls opened up district play on Tuesday against Stamford, but results weren't available at press time.

Lions jump off regular season

Boys team seeks to clinch second straight district title

BY PARKER MOON
Sports Editor

With football wrapping up a little sooner than planned, the Lions started basketball earlier than planned as well.

The Lions had their first regular season game on Nov. 2 against Olney. The boys lost to Olney 40-36.

"I think the game went as expected in terms of our first game," head basketball coach Ryder Peacock said. "We didn't shoot the ball very well and we made a lot of little mistakes and errors. Honestly it looked like a football team playing a basketball team, but that is what you would expect after playing football for so long."

The team's goal for this season is the same as last year.

"Our goal is to first win district," Peacock said. "After that,

it's to win the regional tournament and then go to the state tournament."

The Lions ended the season last year with a record of 17-4.

"Last year we made it to the regional tournament," Peacock said. "We lost in the first round of the regional tournament to Canadian."

Before starting their first practice of the season, the team met to set goals.

"We talked about building off of what we did the previous year," Peacock said. "We would like to do the same thing as last year but make it further, such as going to the state tournament."

The coach also believes the Lions have the necessary skills. "The potential is definitely there," Peacock said. "We have a very good team, and since I think the potential is there, then I think we can do as good as last year or even better, like going to the state tournament."

The Lions will face a tough schedule during the regular season to prepare them for post-district games.

"We've got a few games that I know will be tough," Peacock said. "There are a couple 3A



Head Coach Ryder Peacock teaches Seniors Steven Ford (right) and Roman Fuentes (left) some new plays to run for this year's season. The Lions will have a game on Dec. 20 in Albany against the Anson Tigers. PHOTO BY RACHEL HILL

teams that are good and some 1A teams that are ranked in the top ten in the state."

It has been several years since the boys' basketball program has started practicing this early due to the consistent success of the football team.

"The last time we started practicing this early was the first year I started coaching here in 2011," Peacock said.

This year the program has nine varsity players, six of which are returning from last year, and 20 junior varsity players.

"Right now we are running two teams," Peacock said. "We have them split up so we can keep as many on the floor as possible."

With three members graduating, younger players are stepping up.

"There is a lot of pressure trying to fill the senior's roles," junior Dax Neece said. "They were such good athletes that their roles were pretty big on the team. I also have pressure trying to be as good as my brother, who was on varsity starting his freshman year."

Along with new roles, new players had to be moved up to complete the roster.

"It's weird trying to make the transition," sophomore Ryan Hill said. "On JV we played at a lot slower pace, while varsity play is a lot faster."

Neece believes that this season will be good for the Lions.

"I am looking forward to playing with somewhat of a new team," Neece said. "I am expecting us to be just as good or better than last year. I hope we will make a deep playoff run like we did last year and even further."

Lions face tough loss in playoffs

Football team falls short to Iraan Braves

BY CUTTER COWART
Staff Writer

The Lions fell short to Iraan during the regional quarterfinal playoff game.

Most players on the team wanted to have a third straight shot at the state championship.

"I had hoped to put a ring on my finger," sophomore Cutter Edgar said. "I tried to do so by giving it all that I had every single play of the game for my teammates."

Iraan's offense was one of the toughest struggles that the Lions faced all season.

"The biggest challenge that I think the team faced was tackling the fullback," Edgar said.

Edgar also played on varsity during the playoffs last year as a freshman.

"My favorite part about the season was getting to know my teammates a lot better," Edgar said.

For some players, it was their last year for the Friday night lights.

"As a senior this year, I felt that I needed to be more of a leader than ever before," senior Jordan Pleasant said. "I think by doing so it affected how I played."

Pleasant has been on varsity for two years.

"I feel my varsity career was great," Pleasant said. "Winning as many games as we did was a huge accomplishment and I was proud to be a part of it."

Pleasant's biggest struggle was trying to get the momentum against Iraan to swing in the Lions' favor.

"Every time we would do something good, they would come right back with a very physical response," Pleasant said.

Playing for the Lions for four seasons, Pleasant says it will be hard to stop.

"I'm going to miss suiting up every Friday night in front of the town," Pleasant said. "Playing for one of the best football teams in the state of Texas was an honor and a privilege."

It was very disappointing losing so early in the playoffs, according to Pleasant.

"We had a goal to make it all the way, and we came up short," Pleasant said. "I would have loved to suit up one more time in a championship game."

Head Coach Denny Faith was extremely proud of his players this season.

"I thought they performed excellently throughout the season," Faith said. "I was really proud of what we were able to accomplish, even though we would have liked to have gone further in the playoffs."

The Lions had some younger players starting this year.

"They just had a lack of experience," Faith said. "They all played hard and that's all I could ever ask for."

Faith hopes for an exceptional off-season.

"I think that they'll be motivated because of how early we went out in the playoffs, which will create a good offseason," Faith said. "I hope our kids want to get stronger and bigger because we can go further than what we did this year."



Senior Jordan Pleasant charges for the first down during the Lions final game of the season against the Iraan Braves. The Braves ended the Lions' chance for their third straight run to state.

PHOTO BY
RACHEL HILL

The biggest challenge that Faith thought they faced in the Iraan game was their offense.

"The things that they did offensively against us was definitely a challenge," Faith said. "Not to mention, the lack of size on our part."

Faith and the Lions had

prepared for this game weeks in advance.

"I think that we were well prepared, but we didn't get any turnovers and breaks that you need in football games," Faith said. "Our team played very hard and gave everything they had."

"Toys for Tots"

Continued from | PG 1

chicken, and we still ran out," Beaty said. "We always almost sell out, and we did this year, too." Beaty has nothing but praise for Toys for Tots.

"It's a community helping a community program," Beaty said. "People coming and donating and buying food are helping the less fortunate."

The money raised helps tremendously, he thinks.

"We normally make close to \$1,000," Beaty said. "Money donations go a long way, as well as the donation of toys."

Beaty is fortunate enough to get toys for lower prices.

"I get my toys from vendors at a cheaper price," Beaty said, "just barely above their actual cost."

Albany residents agree that the program is great for the community.

"I think it's important because all the money and toys that are donated stay here in Shackelford County for local kids," Jody Patterson said, "whereas with a lot of other organizations, it goes to other communities."

The sentiment is shared by others.

"I like Toys for Tots

because there are a lot of kids that probably don't have the experiences most children do," Randy Hudson. "A lot of kids have too much, but everybody needs some."

Hudson says what he knows about the program, it's very beneficial.

"The community needs help for some children," Hudson said.

"Fiber"

Continued from | PG 1

of band width is used with instructional videos. The fiber optic line will provide more band width than the towers, according to Fields.

"When my students ask me questions, I usually pull up visual aids off the web to help them understand," Andre Raymond said. "I waste a lot of class time trying to get pictures to load."

Even though the Wi-Fi is supposed to be faster with the fiber optic line, Raymond is still skeptical about the promised speed.

"I'm going to wait and see what happens," Raymond said. "If our equipment can't handle the speed, it will only affect us as much as our equipment allows."

While some may still have doubts, Key is confident that the line will

have a positive effect on teachers and students.

"There are no downsides of the line as far as the service goes," Key said. "If the tower antennas are damaged or temporarily stop working, we will still have the fiber optic as a backup."

"Energy"

Continued from | PG 1

if it's kicking on for whatever reason. We're hoping that the newer equipment that isn't being replaced will have less wear and tear because of this new program."

The district has up to three years to spend the bond money.

"What we have laid out right now is that we hope to start installation in December and be finished by the end of March," Fields said.

McKinstry Services, the company in charge of managing the construction project, will put different parts of the job up for bid.

"There will be different companies supplying the lighting and air-conditioning and heating units," Fields said. "McKinstry will put out the different jobs for bid to get the

best pricing for us."

McKinstry and Albany ISD have an agreement that the program will pay for itself.

"If it doesn't turn out as planned, they are responsible for some of the cost by paying us back the money that we didn't save," Fields said.

There is another component to this program, and that's education, according to Fields.

"We want to educate the kids, teachers, staff, coaches, and everybody involved to turn off their lights and shut the doors," he said. "We can't air-condition the whole world."

Fields hopes it will be a lesson students can transfer over to their homes.

"When they go home and leave their bedroom, they'll hopefully remember to turn off their lights because it saves money for mom and dad," Fields said.

This program is designed to educate others and the community.

"We will develop a website that is going to have conservation tips along with other educational components like free services for tutoring or online certifications by partnering with the Resource Center here in town," Fields said.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

16 HS BSK - Hico Tourny - VB 4:00pm
16 HS BSK - @ Hawley* girls only
17 HS BSK - Hico Tourny - VB
19 8:00am Finals Day 1 5:00pm
20 8:00am Finals Day 2 4:00pm
20 HS BSK - H vs. Anson*
21 8:00am Finals Day 3 12:00pm END 3rd 6Wks 12:00pm
Early Release

Dec 21-Jan 5

HS BB - Varsity Boys @ Breck Tourny 9:00am
28 HS - BB - Varsity Girls @ Eula Tourny 9:00am
28 HS - BB - Varsity Boys @ Breck Tourny 9:00am
29 HS - BB - Varsity Girls @ Eula Tourny 9:00am
29 HS BB - Varsity Boys @ Breck Tourny 9:00am
30 HS - BB - Varsity Girls @ Eula Tourny 9:00am

JANUARY

3 HS BSK - @ Roscoe* 4:00pm
4 Student Holiday / Staff Workday
5 HS BSK - Knox City JV Tourny 8:00am
5 BEGIN 4th 6Wks
6 HS BSK - @ Mason - JVB, VB 4:00pm
6 HS BSK - Bye
10 HS BSK - H vs. Hamlin* 4:00pm
12 End Grace Wk Regain/Lose 3:00pm
13 HS BSK - @ Haskell* 4:00pm
17 End Grace Wk Regain/Lose 3:00pm
17 HS BSK - @ Stamford* 4:00pm
20 3wk Grade Chk 3:00pm
20 HS BSK - H vs. Hawley* 4:00pm
21 Winter Formal 8:00pm
21 Haskell UIL
24 HS BSK - @ Anson* 4:00pm
24 HS BSK - @ Anson* 4:00pm
26 Shackelford Co. Stock Show
26 End Grace Wk Regain 3:00pm
27 Shackelford Co. Stock Show
27 School Holiday
27 HS BSK - H vs. Roscoe* 4:00pm
28 Shackelford Co. Stock Show
30 JHB - BB @ Hawley 5:00pm

Mr. Christmas Tree

America's Next Top Model has nothing on Mr. Christmas Tree contestants. Hours of hard work and preparation were put into the creation of this pageant.

Held at the Feed Store, Mr. Christmas Tree is a male pageant put on by members of YoungLife. Each class elects a male in their grade to compete for the most coveted title in the Big Country. The nominees base their entries around a theme, ranging from hotdogs to moto-Cross.

Four components make up the pageant: a talent, a modest swimsuit modeling, a questionnaire and a parade of trees. During the Parade of Trees, each contestant decorates a tree according to their theme, which is then lit up and displayed for the crowd to see.

In order to win this crown, the nominees must invite adults to vote. This year, senior Roman Fuentes was crowned Mr. Christmas Tree of 2016.

PHOTOS AND STORY BY RACHEL HILL



Senior Caleb Britting (left), playing the part of Jim Blitzen, helps host Mr. Christmas Tree male pageant. Britting was the freshman nominee three years ago and enjoyed the event so much he decided to help host this year's big event. This is the fifth year of the pageant and attendance has grown each year. Junior Harvey Hinkle (below) rappels down the balcony as he makes his entrance as 'The Amazing Spider Man.'



Sophomore Cutter Cowart (left) shows his dismay after his name was not called as the winner of the pageant. Senior representative Roman Fuentes (far left) poses for the camera in his 'Thrift Shop' get-up.



Freshman nominee Jeb Becker (above, left), dances a 'beach ball ballet' with BJ Morris (above, right) as the two balance on hover boards. Reigning Mr. Christmas Tree Grant Head (immediate right) watches as fellow senior classmate Roman Fuentes kisses the trophy after being crowned as the new Mr. Christmas Tree. The final ballot was a close one, but the seniors came away with the win.

