



"Lion pride in print"

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2017

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 4

**Sports:**  
Lions sweep district to begin playoff run; Lady Lions' season comes to end.  
— See page 7



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

#### WINTER FORMAL

Seniors Hunter Owen and Sydney Key were crowned Mr. and Miss AHS at Winter Formal, which was held at the Whitney Theatre on Jan. 21. Other senior nominees included Ryan Phillips, Roman Fuentes, Alexis Munden, and Abbi Beard.

Each high school class also nominated three boys and three girls as nominees for class prince and princess.

Bryan Jones and Mady Connally were selected as the freshman prince and princess. Other nominees were Jose Camacho, Blaine Kayga, Carley Green, and Aubrey Moon.

Cutter Edgar and Madison Wilkins were selected as the sophomore prince and princess. Other nominees were Ryan Hill, Jillian Guinn, Haley Stewart, and Zak Shirley.

Adam Faith and Rylie Scott were selected as the junior prince and princess. Other nominees were Dax Neece, Sloan Graham, Madison Ratliff, and Krysten Morris.

The Winter Formal is a project of the Student Council.

#### UIL NEWS

On Saturday, January 21, nine students traveled to Haskell to compete in the first UIL meet of the year. Out of the nine, two placed in four events. Junior Genevieve Stunkard placed first in Ready Writing, second in News Writing and sixth in Feature Writing. Rylie Scott placed third in Spelling and Vocabulary. On Saturday, February 25, the UIL academics will travel to Stamford for another practice meet. The district meet will be held in Anson on Saturday, March 25.

#### BREAK SCHEDULE

Students will have Monday, Feb. 20 off for a teacher work day. Spring break release will begin Friday, March 10 with a 12:00 p.m. release at both campuses. Classes on Thursday, March 9 will be on a regular schedule with a 3:40 p.m. release. The annual break will continue through March 19, with classes resuming on Monday, March 20 at 8:00 a.m.

While students will not have classes during the week, there are still several athletic events set during the week that will involve students.

## Cast prepares Holocaust play

### One-Act strives to perfect production

BY JILLIAN GUINN  
Staff Writer

Students are preparing to go to Anson on March 8 for District One-Act Play competition with the production of *Remember My Name*.

New One-Act director Jenny Scott is very excited about the upcoming performance.

"I've seen this play advance to state in the past and place very well, so I'm excited to see what it can do for us," Scott said.

A total of 15 cast and crew members will be participating this year.

"Casting was very difficult as there is a lot of great talent," Scott said.

The cast is very busy preparing for competition, where only two teams will advance.

"In District 2-A, we will be competing against Anson, Hamlin, Haskell,

Hawley, Roscoe Collegiate, and Stamford," Scott said. "All the schools are pretty good. Anson went one place farther than Albany last year, but I think the competition will be pretty even."

Scott has high expectations for her students.

"I'd like to advance to state, but I know no matter how we place, I will be very proud of our cast and crew," she said.

Roles were set and posted after auditions on November 21, with sophomore Caroline Masters named as the lead.

"I would like to advance at least once or twice this year, but no matter what I will take pride in our play," Masters said. "I want to receive All-Star cast this year and I intend to put in the hours necessary to make that possible."

Masters is also very pleased with the play that was chosen.

"I think this play is very emotional, and when performed correctly, it could definitely advance," she said.

*Remember My Name* is set during the Holocaust and has really touched



Sophomore Caroline Masters and Junior Chloe Fields rehearse a scene from the One-Act Play. The district competition will take place in Anson on March 8. This year's play is *Remember my name* by Samuel French.

PHOTO BY  
JILLIAN GUINN

some of the students participating in the production.

"Doing these emotional plays really opens your eyes and shows the true horrors the Jewish people went through," Masters said. "It shows how all of humanity was turned upside down and how easy it is for people to devalue a life. It really is a learning point, and I feel like everyone could benefit by being educated on this subject."

Returning actor, junior

Natalie Hayner, is very pleased with the role she was assigned.

"I play Yvette Reynaud, an opportunistic woman who is trying to turn the protagonist in to the authorities," Hayner said.

Hayner was awarded with All-Star Cast at bi-zone and district last year.

"My expectations for this play are high," Hayner said. "I hope that simply because it's such a tough subject matter, and we have a great cast, we'll

be able to go farther than we've gone in a long time. I only hope I can play my part well enough to help make the play more believable and enjoyable."

Even though Scott had a difficult time casting the play, Hayner believes the roles were set appropriately.

"I think the play was cast perfectly," Hayner said. "After watching our rehearsal, I think it's

SEE "ONE ACT" Pg 8

## Students, animals shine at local show

### Preparations underway for major shows across state

BY CUTTER COWART  
Staff Writer

Stock show is much more than just showing an animal. It's dedicating precious hours of your life to deal with your animals.

Sophomore Cutter Edgar has participated in stock shows for eight years.

"Even though I've been doing it a while, I still enjoy participating in it, no matter how much of my free time it takes up," Edgar said.

Edgar's busy schedule doesn't allow the time most exhibitors have to work with his animals.

"During the football season I didn't have a lot of time to work with



Junior Madison Ratliff walks one of her pigs during the Shackelford County Stock Show. Ratliff left the show with a Grand Champion banner with her cross barrow. She has ten show animals this year and will be competing in 6 major shows during show season.

PHOTO BY  
CUTTER  
COWART

my pigs," Edgar said. "I dedicated most of my weekends and free time to my pigs."

Cutter is showing five pigs this year.

"Considering I've shown for so long, these past few years have just come naturally to me," Edgar said. "As the show season got closer I was washing and walking my pigs every other day. I lived at my pig barn."

Edgar is going to four major stock shows, in addition to showing at the county show.

"I have done quite well in the past at the majors," Edgar said. "My most memorable one was when I placed four of my five pigs including a first place."

Stock show can take a toll on student life

"Missing weeks at a time makes it hard to catch up in school," Edgar said.

SEE "STOCKSHOW" Pg 8

## UIL academic season underway

### Competitors, teachers prepare for future meets

BY KADE EVERITT  
Staff Writer

Athletics has always been what people talk most about at Albany High, but academics is becoming a hot topic among students who participate in UIL events.

"It's a sawful early, and we lost some strong personnel last year, but we will have to wait and see," UIL coordinator Rick Davis said.

"We have some people who can step up and fill the slots, but I'm not sure what to expect at the moment."

While numbers have decreased recently, students and their sponsors have still achieved success. The science and journalism teams in particular have done well in recent years.

"Science teachers like Mr. Norton and I not only push students academically, but we also do appropriate labs," Andre Raymond said. "We just hold them to a higher standard, and as a result students are getting more than students might get at another school."

The science department sent a team to state last

year with Levi Britting winning third individually, along with the team placing fourth.

Raymond said he is having to replace two of his high-scoring students who graduated last year.

"I haven't talked to him yet, but Hunter Owen is going to come back along with several new members," Raymond said. "Hunter is a senior and has had upper level classes, so we should actually have a really strong team competing again this year."

Raymond also feels that this year's team has a good chance of making another run to state due to students



Science teacher and UIL coach Andre Raymond looks over practice tests with junior John Munoz and sophomore Caroline Masters as they prepare for a meet. The science team has been successful in recent years, advancing to both regional and state meets. PHOTO BY KADE EVERITT

SEE "UIL" Pg 8

## EDITORIALS

## UIL involvement is important

The high school has routinely taken first place at the UIL district meet because of the great number of students participating, but this year the numbers are much smaller. Participating in academic events challenges students intellectually and strengthens them competitively, and more students should be involved.

Competing in UIL helps from an educational standpoint. For instance, spelling expands vocabulary, competing in science events strengthens knowledge of chemistry, biology, and physics, and competing in journalism events improves writing skills.

Being involved in extracurricular activities, such as UIL competitions, is also beneficial when it comes to applying for college. It takes more than just grades to get into college. Most universities seek out students who have been involved in academic, athletic, and volunteer activities, and while good grades and test scores are important, being involved in extracurricular events is becoming increasingly more important to college admission officials.

Students that have competed in events at the state level are eligible for academic scholarships, where students who don't compete don't have the opportunity.

It has been said that there is no real benefit from being involved in UIL events, but that is simply false. Students who compete academically are improving their chances to be accepted at the university of their choice and receive a scholarship as well.

Again, participating in UIL is beneficial in multiple ways, and AHS has taken pride in its academic excellence for years. More people need to be involved.

## Cheating reaps no benefits

Cheating is an issue that has been around for forever. Many students feel that cheating is not wrong, but this view is misguided.

Cheating robs others of their hard work. When people cheat, they take the work of others and say it is their own. A student who has worked hard to complete an assignment can get the same grade as someone who did not try at all, if that student decides to cheat off of someone else's paper. This is not fair, and it's not right. Students must learn to do their own work.

Cheating does not help students learn the information they need to be successful in life. Using others' work can fetch a good grade, but it does not help in the long term. Having good grades but no knowledge is not a recipe for success. Students who cheat on classroom assignments will have trouble on major exams such as the SAT and ACT, where it is virtually impossible to cheat. Cheating students will be in for a rude awakening when they arrive at college and have no idea what their professors are talking about because they cheated their way through high school.

Students who cheat run a high risk of being caught by teachers. Getting caught for cheating can result in a bad reputation that is hard to reverse. Teachers will never trust students who have this reputation, and with good reason.

Some students say that there is nothing wrong with cheating, but they are simply wrong. Nothing about cheating is morally right. Cheating is just settling for short-term success, but setting yourself up for failure later in life.

Students who cheat don't understand how much they will regret not learning at school. It is a lesson that comes at a high price.



**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, CUTTER COWART  
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.



## Expressing feelings is not a bad thing

## Gardner Seeds



KYLEA GARDNER

something like that is very rare.

The older generations blame millennials for the inappropriate mannerisms conducted by the younger generations, and as annoying as it is to get blamed for basically every bad thing that happens in the world today, I can't say that I don't agree, at least a little bit. People my age and even younger have grown up in a time period where acting like you're cold-hearted or "unable to have feelings" is almost encouraged, and it's honestly depressing.

Call me a hopeless romantic, but I truly believe in "real" relationships. I believe in going on dates, investing time in another person, and working through hard times, but in this day and age, finding

Expressing my feelings has never come easy; it's actually a big struggle for me personally. I don't like the thought of getting rejected or being called crazy for expressing myself. Isn't it sad that we live in a world where caring for someone can be called crazy? But, with that being said, I still have enough respect for people to express my feelings even when it's not easy for me. There is nothing worse than pouring your heart out to someone who in return just stares in the opposite direction and lets every word you say go in one ear and out the other.

I have learned in the past months that being with someone who feels the same way about you that you feel about them is so much better than going on day by day wondering if my significant other and I will ever have a chance. Being able to go out of your way to take care of someone and be present in their everyday life is something that should never be taken for granted. The thought of love doesn't have to be a bad thing. It can actually be one of life's most beautiful feelings.

## Self worth should not come from material things

## Rachel's Revelations



RACHEL HILL

Ah, love is in the air... and it kind of reeks.

What is it about this time of the year that makes everyone go senseless? Girlfriends become clingy and obsessed with overly priced items. Boyfriends start stressing about whether or not their gift will be appreciated. A day that is supposed to be one of the happiest for couples sometimes ends up being a drama-fest. Okay, maybe I am being a little stereotypical here, but not much. When did we start defining relationships by the price of a gift or the number of roses so-and-so bought so-and-so? Where did the mindset of 'it's the thought that counts' go? Why do we have to designate a holiday to showing how much you care for someone? To me, Valentine's Day reminds me how important it is to show the ones I care for just how much I appreciate

and love them every day.

Now, don't get me wrong. I have to admit that I am one of those girls who scrolls through social media pages in order to see different 'couple goals' posts and all the different gifts significant others receive, but there is a point where I start to get annoyed. I think that it's a little overwhelming and quite over-publicized. I mean, I don't doubt that it's fun to come up with a unique gift or gesture for your significant other, but a relationship should not be defined by the extravagance of the gift. Personally, I enjoy the little things that have a special internal meaning more than the big things that mean little in a short time. Too often we let things give us meaning, when we should be focusing on the person and the feelings involved.

Society has taught us to look into material things in order to find our value, and the meaning behind Valentine's Day reiterates that even more. I guess I have gotten my strong opinion about Valentine's Day from my parents and grandparents. They have never been overly consumed with gifts or gestures, but they quietly and meaningfully show their love to each other and their family.

## NFL players suspended for illegal drug use

## Parker's Pinions



PARKER MOON

The use of drugs in today's society has escalated greatly within the past decade, especially in professional sports. Illegal substances such as performance enhancing drugs (PED's), marijuana, illicit drugs, and other pain medications are the most common among pro athletes. In January, Dallas Cowboys defensive end Randy Gregory was suspended for the third time this season. The first time was a four-game suspension, and then a ten-game suspension right after that. Gregory played in the final two games of the Cowboy's regular season until being suspended for another year. However, this is not Gregory's first encounter with drugs. In the 2015 draft, he was picked in the second round by the Cowboys despite testing positive for marijuana usage during the NFL combine. Even though he has been a problem for the Cowboys, owner Jerry Jones stated that the team will fully support him.

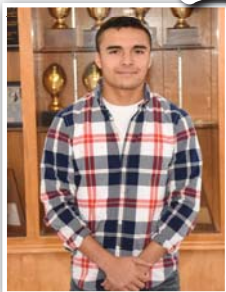
While Gregory is an example of a player battling drug use, probably the most well-known offender is Johnny Manziel. Manziel was known for his remarkable athletic abilities in college while playing for Texas A&M University. Most people expected him to do just as well in the NFL, but his secret use of drugs and partying in college took a toll on him later in life. It was not surprising to see Manziel being talked about on ESPN or Sportscenter due to new allegations against him. When Manziel entered the NFL as a first round pick for the Cleveland Browns, his abilities were the complete opposite as those shown in college. In the end, Manziel's partying lifestyle and use of drugs led to him being released by the Browns in March 2016.

Overall, the use of illegal substances by players in the NFL is selfish from a team standpoint. Players who put their needs before the team's is common in sports and always will be. It is especially selfish when your team had a good chance of going to the Super Bowl, such as the Cowboys.

In the end, there will always be a problem with people who put their needs before others. To cope with that, coaches will just have to find people who are more committed to the game and the team than to their own selfish shortcomings.

*Our 2¢ worth*

What is your most romantic Valentine's Day moment?



SENIOR ROMAN FUENTES

My girlfriend was out of town, so I went into her house while she was gone and had flowers and chocolate to surprise her when she got back.



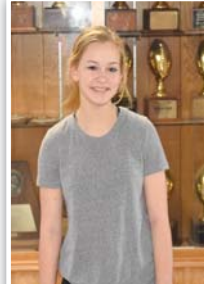
JUNIOR KELTON PARKER

When I was in fifth grade I put a love note with a piece of candy and gave it to my crush.



SOPHOMORE CAROLINE MASTERS

Once a guy took me out to the lake, and we watched the stars, and at midnight he leaned in and kissed me.



FRESHMAN CAITLYN HOLSON

In first grade I asked multiple boys to be my Valentine's date so I'd get multiple presents.

## ROARING REVIEWS

### PASSENGERS



December 21, 2016 PG-13 114 min  
Fantasy/Sci-Fi

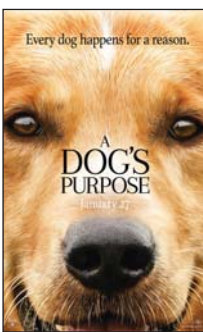
On a routine journey through space to a new home, two passengers, sleeping in suspended animation, are awakened 90 years too early when their ship malfunctions. As Jim and Aurora face living the rest of their lives on board, they begin to fall for each other, unable to deny their intense attraction... until they discover the ship is in grave danger. With the lives of 5000 sleeping passengers at stake, only Jim and Aurora can save them all.

Director: Morten Tyldum  
Writer: Jon Spaihts  
Stars: Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt

#### Staff Review:



### A DOG'S PURPOSE



January 27, 2017 PG-13 120 min  
Fantasy/Drama

A devoted dog (Josh Gad) discovers the meaning of its own existence through the lives of the humans it teaches to laugh and love. Reincarnated as multiple canines over the course of five decades, the lovable pooch develops an unbreakable bond with a kindred spirit named Ethan (Bryce Gheisar). As the boy grows older and comes to a crossroad, the dog once again comes back into his life to remind him of his true self.

Director: Lasse Hallström  
Writers: Bruce Cameron, Cathryn Michon  
Stars: Britt Robertson, Dennis Quaid

#### Staff Review:



### SPLIT



January 20, 2017 PG-13 117 min  
Thriller/Horror

Though Kevin (James McAvoy) has evidenced 23 personalities to his trusted psychiatrist, Dr. Fletcher (Betty Buckley), there remains one still submerged who is set to materialize and dominate all of the others. Compelled to abduct three teenage girls led by the willful, observant Casey, Kevin reaches a war for survival among all of those contained within him -- as well as everyone around him -- as the walls between his compartments shatter.

Director: M. Night Shyamalan  
Writer: M. Night Shyamalan  
Stars: James McAvoy, Anya Taylor-Joy

#### Staff Review:



# Opinions vary over best romance movie

## The Longest Ride voted most popular among students

BY HENRY KELLY  
Entertainment Editor

With Valentine's Day right around the corner, some students find themselves huddled around the television watching romance movies and discussing which one is the best and why. The results of a recent poll show that *The Longest Ride* is the most popular among the student body.

"*The Longest Ride* is so just so sweet and has a good story," senior Alycia Smith said. "It makes you want to go out and help others just like the characters do."

Unlike the majority, junior Jorge Jimenez's favorite is *The Notebook*.

"It's a classic," Jimenez said. "When it first came out, I was really young, and I watched it with my mom."

Jimenez says he doesn't get emotional during this type of movie.

"It is just a movie," Jimenez said. "It doesn't make me feel anything."

Romance movies have a different effect on junior Chloe Fields.

"I like a lot of Nicholas Sparks' movies, but my favorite is probably *The Best of Me*," Fields said. "The first time I saw it, I was snuggled up with blankets and chocolate on a snow day with some friends. We were all crying by the end."

Junior Genevieve Stunkard has a different opinion.

"I don't like Nicholas Sparks' movies because they are too quick and you don't get to know the characters' personalities," Stunkard said. "I feel like they don't have much personality so that people can put themselves in their place."

*Breakfast at Tiffany's* has been Stunkard's favorite since a young age.

"My mom really liked it, and she let us watch it," Stunkard said. "I have cried every time I have watched it since then."

She feels that there is more personality in the characters of this movie than others.

"Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) is a memorable character that everyone can relate to," Stunkard said. "She is able to be herself with a huge personality and still be loved. It gives me hope."

She has discovered that the movie can play with your emotions.

"It breaks my heart and then fixes it within 10 minutes," Stunkard said. "It is an emotional rollercoaster."

Stunkard believes love in reality should be more like love in the movie.



Junior Reyna Garcia (above right) and junior Chloe Fields (above left) sit back with a bowl of popcorn and a blanket to watch a romance movie. Both enjoy the genre and have seen most of the popular films. A lot of the movies that Fields, Garcia, and many other students watch are based off books written by Nicholas Sparks. Romance movies tend to be more popular around Valentine's Day.

PHOTOS BY HENRY KELLY

"Guys should more often accept and love girls for their personalities," Stunkard said. "That's why *Breakfast at Tiffany's* feels more mature."

Like Stunkard, substitute teacher Melissa Lee doesn't like some of the more modern romance films.

"Some of the movies nowadays seem fake, but *The Love Story* is realistic," Lee said. "It shows what true love is like."

The movie has been Lee's favorite since it came out.

"I first saw it with a bunch of friends," Lee said. "I cried; you'd be heartless not to cry in this one."

Junior Lindsey Lucas tends to enjoy the sad romance movies.

"I love movies that make me cry," Lucas said. "It makes me feel alive."

Lucas' favorite is *Endless Love*.

"The first time I saw it, I was third-wheeling with Kourtnee Waters and her boyfriend," Lucas

said. "It was amazing and every time I watch it, it gets better and better."

Like Lucas, junior Reyna Garcia prefers sad movies.

"The movies that make you cry are the best ones," Garcia said. "That's why I cry a lot in movies."

Garcia favors *A Walk to Remember* over all the others.

"She's the nerd and he's the rebel, and at first they hate each other, but then they get to know each other," Garcia said. "It's a great movie, and I recommend it to everyone."

It wasn't 'love at first sight' for Garcia.

"I watched it first when I was little with my brother's girlfriend, and I didn't really know what was going on," Garcia said. "Then I re-watched it and understood what was happening."

Garcia finds romance movies like *A Walk to Remember* and *The Longest Ride* to revolve around a

few simple details.

"It's about finding the perfect match," Garcia said. "Then it's sad because it feels like they are supposed to be together, especially if someone is sick and dying."

Garcia feels stories like these are realistic but hard to come by.

"I think there are guys out there like those guys in the movies," Garcia said. "But they are just hard to find."

Junior Mason Denton believes romance movies are far from realistic.

"My favorite is *The Longest Ride*," Denton said. "But movies like it will probably never happen because they're super extraordinary circumstances."

Lucas hopes for the romance in the movies to come true in her life.

"I feel like somewhere out there, that is really happening," Lucas said. "Someday, maybe it will happen to me."

# THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

BY HENRY KELLY

## La La Land

After watching *La La Land* in the theater, I couldn't help but feel like I was watching a play on stage. The way lighting, singing, and dancing played into the movie made me feel like I was at a live performance. This was a very interesting style for a movie, making it very unique and fun, while also conveying a strong and passionate story.

Like most movies, it is easy to get caught up in the storyline, but what made this different is that sometimes you would just snap out of it and remember that you were watching a movie. At times, actors would suddenly begin singing and dancing, then the story would snap back into place as if nothing happened. While some movies are like this, *La La Land* made me feel as if I was watching a dream.

I can't imagine how much fun that must have been for the cast. They are getting to explore new aspects of theatre and truly challenge themselves in their abilities. Thanks to a lot of practice and help, the musical side of the movie was

phenomenal. *La La Land* was a well-rounded movie, not overshadowing the acting and story with too much singing, and vice versa.

After starring in several movies together, Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling have proved to work together very well and complement each other in their films. After seeing *La La Land*, I am now sure that the two have a certain chemistry when working together that not many other actors have.

It was among the top movies at the holiday box office and was also wildly popular at the Golden Globes. The film went into the awards ceremony nominated for seven Golden Globes and finished the night winning all seven.

If you enjoy musicals, *La La Land* is one you must see. The impressive singing and dancing are enhanced by a great story and remarkable actors. It also has been nominated for a record 14 Academy Awards, which speaks for itself.



IGN's 2016 Game of the Year and is the most fun I've had with a video game in a long time.

The video game revolves around different objective-based games, including capturing certain locations while the other team tries to defend. The game also includes one team escorting a vehicle while the other team tries to stop them from getting to the checkpoint. Each team has six players with 23 characters with unique abilities to choose from. There are currently 21 maps in the game, while some are only playable during certain times of the year and new ones are continually being created by Blizzard's (the company) staff, which allows for fresh and fun gameplay.

The staff at Blizzard are very responsive to the *Overwatch* fans, continually tweaking and adjusting the game to create a more enjoyable experience and allowing it to fulfill its potential.

With all the unique characters in the game, each player is able to find one that they are specifically good with, or players can mix it up and use any character. The characters are put into four different

categories, and each player contributes to the team. Teamwork is the key to success, and if one player is slacking, the whole team is affected.

It is always fun hopping on the game with a friend and working together to win. The game is meant for using strategy and tactics to help your team, and if you work together well, you get to feel the sweet taste of virtual victory. If you'd rather play alone, *Overwatch* is still just as entertaining.

While each character has unique abilities, they also all have unique backgrounds and stories you can learn about. While there is no "story mode" in the game, players learn more about

the characters in the game by watching different short films on the game's YouTube channel "PlayOverwatch," as well as updates on new characters, events, and maps.

After creating such a big name for itself, I questioned whether it would live up to the hype. I was happy to find that I felt it did. *Overwatch* is a blast to play, and it continues to entertain me as I play more and more. I recommend it to anyone looking for a fun and fresh game that continues to entertain.



# Students describe date night disasters

Dream dates can turn into unexpected nightmares

BY KADE EVERITT  
Staff Writer

Valentine's Day is a day for roses and chocolate candy, along with the perfect date. But in reality, that image many people have may be far from it. Sometimes Valentine dates can be more disastrous than dreamy.

Senior Kylea Gardner is one of many girls who realized that just because the guy looks nice, it is not always the case.

"I was at the Fair and a guy came up and introduced himself to me and asked me to hang out," Gardner said. "As the night went on, he tried holding my hand and putting his arm around me. I went to the restroom and texted my mom asking her to call me and give me an excuse to leave."

In cases like this, the girl leaves the guy and never sees him again, but things did not work out that way for Gardner.

"After my mom called, I started walking to my car when a girl came up yelling at me saying 'his tongue was down my throat yesterday but he didn't want to talk to me today because he was with you' and then she proceeded to punch me in the face."

Gardner said the encounter went downhill from there.

"She then jumped on his (the guy's) back and began punching him in the face. I ran



As they enter the dating world, many teens are shocked to realize that searching for "the one" can be more awkward than many romance movies make it out to be. From angry encounters with exes to having what was thought to have been a potential partner arrested by the end of the night, sometimes romance can be anything but fun.

PHOTO BY  
RACHEL HILL

away but glanced back to see a security guard tackling them both," Gardner said.

Gardner also met a guy with an unusual quirk.

"We had been talking for eight months but never hung out outside of sporting events, so the first time I actually went to his house, he asked if I wanted to see his baby," Gardner said. "I was really confused, but I agreed."

Gardner had no idea what

was going to happen, but she was intrigued.

"We went to his room, and he picked up his mattress with a stack of \$100 bills under there," Gardner said. "He asked if I wanted to see his second baby, so I followed him to his backyard."

Gardner was scared to see what was in the shed.

"He opened a shed, and when I looked inside, there was weed growing," Gardner

said. "I immediately told him I had to go home, and that was one of the last times I talked to him."

Sophomore Haley Stewart had an interesting date.

"I went on a date once with a guy to Taco Bueno in his mom's car," Stewart said. "After I got home, I got a text saying that he might be going to jail for a little bit. It turns out he accidentally trespassed on someone's land and got

caught. I have never heard from him since."

Senior Emmy Shirley had a bad experience with a rude guy.

"This guy asked me out on a date," Shirley said. "I paid for my own meal, and he only talked about himself. Then he wanted to go hang out with his friends, and so I drove him to his friend's house, and I left him there before I went home."

Senior Rachel Hill learned that close friends are not the best people to go on a date with.

"I went on a date with one of my good friends," Hill said. "We went to Chilis, and three of his friends met us there. They all sat across from me and talked about their terrible football season."

Hill will not be going on another date with that guy.

"I sat awkwardly eating my salmon," Hill said. "We are still good friends, but that won't happen again."

Junior Elise Brown went on a date once with a guy who invited a friend to come along. She is dating his friend now.

"We all go to church together, so it is definitely awkward when I see him," Brown said. "A couple of weeks ago, my boyfriend walked up and sat right beside me. I felt very uncomfortable sitting there knowing he could see us together."

Most times the intentions are to have and plan the best date, but sometimes the guys' actions come across differently to the girl. No matter how much teens prepare for their perfect date, sometimes they are either left with the friend or with no man at all.

# Working students have difficulty striking balance

Seniors struggle with time management for work, class

BY CAITLYN PATTERSON  
Staff Writer

For some students balancing work, school, cheer, band, and UIL can seem difficult, but senior Sydney Key manages to fit it all into her busy schedule.

Key works for Betsy Parsons at the Albany Dance Theater for two to five hours per day Monday through Thursday every week.

"I help pick up kids from school, get their dance costumes on, and correct their dancing," Key said. "It's really fun. I like getting to see how the kids improve from the beginning of the year to the end of the year."

When Key has a school-related event, she is usually allowed time off.

"Betsy is really lenient and supportive," Key said. "I think that's because she's on the school board and understands how important our school-related activities are."

Key aspires to pursue a career in law. She feels that her background in dance will eventually help her to perform better as a lawyer.

"When you're in dance, you have to be outgoing and hold yourself up," Key said. "I think that has helped me to become more confident in myself."

Senior Ryan Philips has been working since he was 15. He started as a bus boy at the Beehive and now works at Brookshire's as a grocery stocker.

"I have to make sure the store is stocked by the end of the night, and I have to keep it looking fresh for the next morning," Phillips said. "I stock the shelves, sweep and mop the floors, clean the bathrooms, whatever needs to be done. Sometimes I help carry people's groceries out."

Phillips uses his time off between school and work to get his homework done.

"When I was 15, I would end up doing my homework in the morning or whenever I had time during

classes," Phillips said. "Now that I'm a senior, I have time to do it after school and during my off period, but sometimes I still miss a paper or two."

Phillips says when people call in sick for work it puts a lot of stress on the other workers, especially when they are short-handed.

"I try to request time off when I know I have something like UIL coming up," Phillips said. "When we miss time, they normally give us a few extra hours each day so we can make up for it. They're normally okay with us taking time off as long as we don't try to call in sick every day."

Phillips has an interest in becoming a music teacher. He plans to start his music education next year and get a degree in music business.

Like Phillips, senior Efen Camacho also works at Brookshire's.

"I'm a grocery manager," Camacho said. "I have to count money from the office and all the registers and make sure everything is balanced out and stocked properly."

Camacho tries to find time to do his homework when he's not at work.

"I normally have a few hours off before I have to work, so I try to get as much homework done as I can," Camacho said. "When I don't finish, I usually stay up late or work on it the next day."

Whenever it's convenient, Camacho spends his time with friends.

"It's hard to balance work and seeing my friends," Camacho said. "Sometimes I have a day off during the week and have to work on the weekends, but if I get a day off I usually like to spend it with my friends."

Camacho wants to attend UTI in Waco to become a diesel mechanic, but says he will use Brookshire's as a rebound if that doesn't work out.

"Hopefully, if I stay at Brookshire's I can eventually work my way up to being a store director," he said.

Madison Brown, a senior, works as a cashier at her grandmother's boutique, Bunkhouse Divas, and as a waitress at the



Senior Sydney Key (above) teaches young girls ballet at the Albany Dance Theatre. Key works two to five hours per day on Monday through Thursday. Senior Efen Camacho (left) stocks and fronts shelves at Brookshire's, the local grocery store. Camacho sometimes struggles to finish his homework because of his job.

PHOTOS  
BY CAITLYN  
PATTERSON

Beehive Restaurant.

Brown says balancing homework and work usually results in staying up late to get homework done. "I've learned time manage-

ment from being in high school and having two jobs," Brown said. "If I need to call in to the Beehive so I can study, they're usually pretty cool about it. I just

have to call in the morning to let them know."

Brown hopes she can become a veterinarian someday, and work experience will be helpful.

# Student aide shares serendipitous love story

Fate steps in to help couple find happiness, blended family life

BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD  
Features Editor

It was August of 1992 when Tina Hailey, who was babysitting local teachers' kids at the time, and rocking a baby to sleep, heard a timid knock at the front door – so gentle and tinged with remorse, it was as if the knocker, whoever it was, was already apologizing for the news he would soon deliver and the horrible despair it would bring.

Before she even opened the door, she felt a pang in her heart that told her that her life would never be the same. When she was greeted by a gathering of paramedics, her preacher, and her husband Bryan's coworkers, her suspicions were confirmed.

"All I could tell them was, 'No, don't say it. Do not say it.' I already knew, but I didn't want it to feel any more real than it already did," she said.

Disregarding her pleas, the group informed Tina that her husband, an airplane pilot, had been killed in a crash. Her two boys, ages six and eight at the time of their father's death, lost their childhood to grief and the belief that they had to take care of their mother in his absence, going so far as to try to sell all of their toys and bicycles from their front yard. Tina was rendered emotionally unstable. She felt vulnerable and scared in the world without her partner, who had been her sweetheart since high school, by her side to protect her.

Then, a year later came another knock on her door – and this time, her life would be changed forever for the better.

It was Robert Dacus, a tall man in a suit with a gentle voice, whom she had met alongside Bryan in the parking lot of their church a year before, there to tell Tina that he had been praying for her after Bryan's death and to ask her if she would be willing to go to Sonic to get a Coke with him sometime in order to get to know her better.

She adamantly slammed the door in his face, not knowing, at the time, that he was to be her future husband, that she would begin working as an aide for special needs students as Mrs. Tina Dacus, and that, on February 22, 2017, they would joyfully celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

"It was kind of a God thing," Tina said. "In that moment, I never would have known that my life would become as good as it is now, and I'm so grateful that God gave me the ability to see that all I needed to do for things to get better is trust in the plan that He has for me."

Bryan, Tina, and their two boys, Shawn and Shane, moved from Oklahoma to Breckenridge, Texas, in March of 1992 after Bryan had been offered a job as a pilot for a company.

"At the time, we had both been self-employed – he did aerial photography and I was operating a daycare center," Tina said. "We packed up everything and sold our plane, and on the first night we came into town, we had a hard time entertaining the kids in our small hotel room, so we all decided to go for a drive. It was dark and raining, and while we were cruising around looking for houses for sale, I saw a modern brick house with a pale yellow trim, pointed to it, and half-jokingly said 'There's a house we can live in!' to which my boys replied, 'Don't be ridiculous, that house isn't for sale.'"

Little did they know, the house they were talking about belonged to Robert Dacus, his wife, and their three daughters, Katie, Kara, and Kayce, whom they would meet the next morning at Bethany Baptist Church in the parking lot before the service.

"When Robert first came over to greet us, I immediately picked up that he was very genuine," Tina said. "He and Bryan instantly bonded, and discovered they had both gone to the same college and that Robert used to live near us back in Oklahoma. It was the strangest thing, because it was as if after everything one of them would say, the other said 'Me, too!' Afterwards, Bryan told me on the way home, 'That Robert guy was nice. He was real. A lot of people only pretend to be nice, but he really, really is.'"

According to Robert, he had never believed in love at first sight until he saw Tina in the parking lot that morning.

"She was wearing a yellow dress with puffy sleeves, and the first time I saw her, I thought, *that's someone I can marry*," he said. "*God forgive me*, I thought, because I was still married even though it was falling apart, and I knew something awful would have to happen to her husband in order for me to be with her. I still regret having that thought."

The end of Robert's marriage came soon thereafter, as well as Bryan's tragic death.

"I tried to make sure that I gave Tina and her boys enough time to grieve before I approached her again," Robert said. "I know it was really hard for her to overcome, but I think his death gave her a lot of strength, in the end."

After he felt he had waited an appropriate amount of time, Robert spontaneously decided to approach Tina one day when he saw her pull up to the grocery store on his way home for lunch.

"I thought, *here's my chance*," he said. "So I went into the grocery store behind her and pretended to shop."

Tina was alarmed when she realized she was being followed.

"If I went down an aisle, he'd turn down the same one, and it happened over and over," she



Student aide Tina Dacus and her husband of 20 years, Robert, are photographed outside of their home (above). To the left, the couple is seen during the early stage of their relationship with their five children.

TOP PHOTO BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD.  
LEFT PHOTO PROVIDED



Above is a photograph of the Dacus on their wedding day in 1997. To the right, the pair is photographed with their grown children, their adopted teenaged son Cameron, and their six grandchildren.

PHOTOS PROVIDED



said. "I ran away from him in a way, because I was scared to death."

Finally, she ran out of places to run.

"On the cereal aisle at the end of the store, I finally got the chance to shake his hand and reintroduce myself," Robert said. "She was very nervous. It was a week later when I went up to her door and asked her out, and she slammed it in my face. I always joke with her that she broke my nose when she did that."

Soon after, Tina and her boys moved to Ranger for a short time, Robert said.

"During that time, I dated a little bit, but I still thought of her and prayed for her constantly even though I assumed she was completely out of my life," he said. "I made a list of all of the attributes I wanted in a woman; number one was that I wanted someone who loved God more than me, and then I wanted someone who would love me more than anyone else, and then there was the normal stuff, like 'kind' and 'funny.'"

Similarly, though Tina and her boys moved by several others, she found she was still anxious that getting back into the dating world would be like replacing Bryan – something she never wanted to do. So, like Robert, she made a special list.

"I wrote a letter to God asking if getting back out there was in the direction he wanted me to go," she said. "I wrote a list of the things a perfect husband would be: a Godly man, someone with no desire to drink, someone who wouldn't be jealous of Bryan, someone who would love my boys, someone who would be willing to be a daddy to them, someone that I could be honest with, and, finally, not necessarily someone who

had lost their spouse to death, but someone who could understand the pain of having someone leave them unexpectedly. I kept it in the bottom of my pajama drawer."

Then, one day after work, Robert pulled into his driveway with his daughters in the car when he saw Tina's boys riding their bikes in the neighborhood.

"I was really surprised and said hi, and my girls really hit it off with them playing basketball and stuff after I had gone inside," Robert said. "They started attending the same church as us, and our families just grew closer and closer."

Eventually, Robert invited Tina and her boys to play tennis with him and his daughters, figuring she'd feel better spending time with him with their kids around.

"Because I had slammed the door in his face the first time he asked me out, I felt bad, so I agreed," Tina said. "Probably 95 percent of our dates included the kids. We went to the park, we had lake outings, we flew kites, we went roller skating, and we went on lots of walks and bike rides."

After six months, however, Tina was getting cold feet.

"I was so nervous, and it was like, 'Oh my goodness, I think I'm falling in love with him and I'm not sure I want to,'" she said. "Because I had put that I wanted an honest man on my list, I figured I'd be a hypocrite if I wasn't honest with him."

One day, she took Robert aside and gave him her confession.

"I told him, 'Listen, I think I'm falling in

love with you, and it's scaring me," Tina said. "I told him I didn't want him to even think of holding my hand for the first six months because I didn't want to let my emotions overwhelm me. I wanted to be sure I wasn't just being stupid in love. He looked at me kind of funny, but said that if it was something I needed, he would honor that."

So Tina and Robert stuck to getting to know each other accompanied by the kids, eventually becoming best friends.

"Very rarely were we together without all five kids there," Robert said. "It was awkward being romantically attracted to her when she just wanted to be my friend, but the whole time, it's like I just knew she was the one God had chosen for me. The checkmarks down the list were just...they were all there."

One day, Tina shared with Robert her struggles with dating and the talk with God she had had and the letter she had written.

"He immediately replied, 'Will you come to my house with me? I have something I want to share with you,'" she said. "He went into his room and in one of his drawers was a piece of paper. He handed it to me."

It was the letter Robert had previously written to God about the qualities he needed in a wife.

"It was at that moment that we both realized that God had molded us in a way that meant we were for each other," Tina said.

Soon after that, one Sunday morning, Robert confronted his pastor about something he would like to do after the service. He happily agreed to go along with it.

"At the conclusion of the service, the pastor asked Robert to come forward for an announcement," Tina said. "Robert thanked the church for their prayers for him and his girls as a single father, and for all the support they had given us in the progression of our relationship, and then he asked me to join him. He said to the church, 'God answered your prayers by leading me to an amazing woman and her two boys,' and then he got down on one knee and proposed, and after what felt like an eternity for him, I said yes! Then, the church applauded wholeheartedly, and our kids joined us up at the pulpit."

Though the newly-engaged couple had planned to have a small, simple wedding, the ladies of the church, in all of their excitement, took over the planning in order to give Tina and Robert a wedding that they felt fit their story, which they described as "a fairytale."

"They decorated the pews with ivory bows and put tons of ivory flowers at the front," Tina said. "It was so sweet of them."

Though she described the wedding as light-hearted and fun, it was still a very emotional experience for Tina.

"I cried walking down the aisle, knowing it was all God's will," Tina said. "I was just so grateful and humbled that He led me to Robert, because he's such a good man. I just knew in my heart that it was right. Before we exchanged rings, Robert and I gave all of the kids necklaces with three circles. One circle represented my family, one represented Robert's family, and the center circle represented God, who had united us. And, as we were exiting the church, the music people decided it would be really funny to play and sing the theme from *The Brady Bunch*, which didn't make sense based on the number of kids we had at the time. But in 2001, we were blessed with our adopted son, Cameron, and we really did become *The Brady Bunch*!"

Robert was sure from the beginning that choosing to marry Tina was the right decision.

"I know it sounds cliché, but I was initially drawn to her love of God and her love for her children and family," he said. "She was beautiful inside and out. And, after we married, our families merged together into my house, which happened to be the same house with the yellow trim that Tina had pointed out to Bryan and her sons driving in the rain years before."

Tina said Bryan would be very happy with her marriage to Robert.

"I never felt like I was betraying Bryan, because I knew Bryan liked Robert and Robert was never jealous," she said. "Robert had come home with flowers before and told me, 'I know today is the anniversary of Bryan's death. You can take these flowers or you can take them to the graveyard.'"

Robert agreed that it would always be important that he remain respectful towards Tina's first husband.

"On the anniversary of his death one year, I told her, 'This is your boy's day – I'm not even going to call you,'" he said. "We go to his grave every once in a while to change the flowers and clean it up together. Her relation with Bryan helped her to develop into the person she is, and that's the person I love."

Robert said he couldn't be happier than he is now.

"Tina completes me – I'm going to die in her arms," he said. "My advice for those who are just starting to get into relationships is not to date anyone you can't see yourself getting married to. Make a list of everything you feel you need in a partner, and if someone doesn't fit it, God will show you. Most of all, trust your heart, and trust God. God is good."

One of the couple's strongest bonding points is their love of God and their belief that He brought them together.

"It just goes to show you that God is good all the time," Tina said. "Sometimes, in life, things happen that we don't understand, but I truly believe that if we allow God to make our choices, the best things happen. The first time I saw Robert at the door, I slammed it in his face, and I think we do that too much in life: slam the door on the opportunities God wants us to have. You've got to give him control and have faith that what he wants is best."

# Lady Lions struggle in district play

Team faces tough losses throughout season

BY CUTTER COWART  
Staff Writer

The Lady Lions have gone through a tough district season but are looking ahead to next year with the lessons they have learned. Head coach Tate Thompson is completing his initial season as the girls' basketball coach.

"As far as our overall record, this was not how we wanted it to go," Thompson said. "I did see a big improvement in the way the girls played and tried to buy into my new system. It's hard on their end for a new coach to come in with new expectations and defenses."

The Lady Lions faced tough District 8-2A competition this year.

"It's hard to measure success just on their record," Thompson said. "Especially in the younger ones who bought into my ideas. I wish I had more time with the seniors, but they did a great job given their situation."

Thompson and his team were struck with illnesses and injuries towards the end of the year.

"We had a few injuries and illnesses late in the season," Thompson said. "Bailey Reddin tore her ACL, and the last couple of weeks we battled against the flu and pneumonia. We didn't really have any significant injuries besides Reddin's."

Thompson thinks the biggest struggle the girls faced was adjusting to him as their new head coach.

"The biggest challenge the team faced was getting the girls to deal with my changes," Thompson said. "Eventually, it's going to

work out where girls from seventh grade all the way up to seniors know what to expect from me."

Thompson didn't set a goal for this season, coming in with an open mind.

"Truly, I didn't set many goals just for the fact that the system was new, and I was also trying to learn about the girls' basketball program and girls' basketball in general," Thompson, who previously had only coached boys, said. "I just tried to soak up as much as I could this year."

Senior Alexis Munden also struggled with some of the changes.

"This season brought challenges that took some patience," Munden said. "I had to adjust to having a new team and learning the new plays that Coach Thompson planned for us."

Munden played her final season along with two other seniors.

"My favorite part about our season is that I am getting to play my last year with Abbi Beard and Kaleigh Clevenger by my side."

Munden worked hard to improve during the season.

"My main goal was to improve and play every game with everything I had," she said. "I also wanted to make it a memorable season that I could always look back on."

Munden says there are things she will miss.

"I'm going to miss the adrenaline rush I get before stepping out on to the court before every game," Munden said. "But I am not going to miss going to practice every day."

Sophomore Jillian Guinn also struggled with the new coaching system.

"At the beginning of the season, Coach Thompson introduced his new system and I was trying to remember so much that I didn't play like I did in the past," Guinn said. "Over time I adjusted to it, and now I'm getting closer to becoming

the player that I want to be."

Although the Lady Lions' district record of 1-11 wasn't how they wanted it to turn out, Guinn has an open mind about it.

"I have learned that winning is not always everything," Guinn said. "Eventually, all the hard work that I put in will pay off later."

Guinn's liked working with the younger teammates.

"My favorite part of the season was working with some of the younger girls," Guinn said. "They will eventually be a part of my team, and I want us to be the best we can be."

Guinn has high hopes for better seasons ahead.

"I struggled with the new ideas Coach Thompson introduced," Guinn said. "But it's going to help the basketball program improve overall."

Junior Chloe Fields played an entirely new position this year.

"My goals for this season were to get better playing at the post," Fields said. "It's my first year to ever play there, and it's much harder adjusting from being a three-point shooter to taking bank shots in the paint."

Fields said that she had to make adjustments to Thompson's coaching style.

"Having a new coach for the first year was definitely challenging," Fields said. "I think we adjusted well to his system and what he expected from us."

Fields is taking what she learned this year so she can apply it to next season.

"I learned to have confidence in my shots," Fields said. "This will allow me to score more points next year."

Fields also created memories with the seniors.

"My favorite part about this season was growing closer to the seniors," Fields said. "They've made a huge impact on my life."



Junior Madison Russell (left) takes a shot during a district game against Hawley. New girls' coach Tate Thompson has been working this season to improve the team's skills. Senior Abbi Beard (below) works defensively to stop former Albany student Taylor Manske during a Lady Lions' district game against the Haskell Maidens. The girls fell short in district play, but hope to return stronger next year.

PHOTOS BY  
KADE EVERITT



# Lions looking to sweep through district

Senior Hunter Owen goes up for a layup in the Lions' win against Hamlin on Jan. 13. The Lions are currently sitting in first place in the district and can afford to lose a game without moving down in the rankings. Albany will finish the season up on Tuesday against the Hawley Bearcats and jump into playoffs within the next week. They hope to duplicate their playoff run from last year to the regional tournament and possibly make their first state appearance.

PHOTO BY  
RACHEL HILL



Team hoping for another playoff run to tourney

BY PARKER MOON  
Sports Editor

After coming back from Christmas break, the Lions hit the court hard for district play. The team faced a couple of 3A and 4A schools in tournaments over the break to help prepare them for district and to hopefully get back to the regional tournament.

"The season has been pretty good so far," head coach Ryder Peacock said. "We were a bit slow at the start, but we started to find our rhythm later on in the season. When we played our first game against Stamford we started playing in our old style of play."

Sophomore Ryan Hill agreed that the season has been going well.

"We've proved a lot of people wrong and will continue to as the year goes on," Hill said. "I knew we would have a strong team, but we are a lot better than we thought."

The Lions came out on top of the Jan. 17 Stamford game by a score of 67-54. The Bulldogs are in second place behind the Lions.

"Stamford is playing

really well and had a really good winning streak until they played us," Peacock said. "Stamford and Hawley are the best teams we've faced this year in terms of district, but we also played Dublin over Christmas break who was really good."

As the district progressed, the Lions improved in areas that are important.

## FOR THE RECORD:

LION BASKETBALL 9-0	
Anson .....	W 70-39
Roscoe .....	W 45-22
Hamlin .....	W 71-38
Haskell .....	W 33-23
Stamford .....	W 68-54
Hawley .....	W 51-30
Anson .....	W 60-28
Roscoe .....	W 77-35
Hamlin .....	W 58-26

"We need to focus on team chemistry more than anything, as well as getting guys to move the ball, pass, and getting people to score more," Peacock said. "Defensively, we are getting better, but we do need to work on our rebounding. Our areas of improvement are what you would normally see at this point of the season."

With District 8-2A about to wrap up, playoffs are right around the corner.

"We are already preparing for playoffs," Peacock

said. "Competing every night and fixing the little mistakes as we go will help us. Everything we do in a game is going to prepare us for playoffs."

However, senior Hunter Owen picked up on some weaknesses.

"We still need to work on some fundamentals and stuff before the playoffs come around if we want it to be a success," Owen said.

"The regular season has been a success so far, but we are still not satisfied with our level of play."

This year's team has six returners from last year.

"I think everybody is taking on extra roles, and we've all gotten better," Peacock said. "It's not something that is determined score-wise, nobody is going to say you're replacing him and what not, it's a collective effort."

Each team is a little different from the last.

"I feel as if this year's team has a lot closer bond than any previous team I have played with," Owen said. "We all love to share the ball and are unselfish players that work well together as a team. No matter who we put on the court, I feel as if the level of play never drops off from the starters to the backups."

The Lions play at home tonight against Stamford with an 8:00 pm tipoff. They will finish up district next Tuesday in Hawley.

# Golf, tennis prepare for season

## Golf greets new coach; tennis looking strong

**BY BRIAN HAMILTON**  
Staff Writer

Spring tennis and golf are getting back into the swing of things, and both look forward to have promising seasons. The golf team acquired a new coach, Tate Thompson, who previously coached at Haskell for five years. He coached the Indians to back-to-back state tournament appearances the past two years. "It's all new to me here," Thompson said. "I'm hoping to get some kids on the team that I hear can help us a little bit." Thompson knows it will be difficult for kids this spring semester. "Spring is always really busy," Thompson said. "It will be a challenge to get kids to be able to put good work in with their busy schedules." Nobody from last year's golf squads advanced past district last year. However, junior Weston Vickers was the closest, placing among the top ten boys at the district tournament. "I'm excited about golf sea-

son because the golf course is like my home," Vickers said. "I love to compete and I can learn stuff on a golf course that I can't anywhere else." Vickers feels he didn't perform as well as he could have last year. "It wasn't the best I could do," Vickers said. "There were several shots I should've made that would have allowed me to do a whole lot better." He hopes to change that this year. "I really want to perform well at district and make it to regionals," Vickers said. "I'll need to improve my short game and shoot better than I did last year at district." With a new coach comes a new system. "It'll be different having Coach Thompson as our coach," Vickers said. "Since he came from a school that's gone to state, it should be exciting." Another sport starting recently was tennis, which is hoping to improve on last year's district runner-up title behind Stamford. Tennis coach Sara Wilson believes there is a good shot that athletes will find themselves at the regional tournament again this season. "We have a good chance to get a few doubles teams back

to regionals," Wilson said. "Possibly we will add boy's singles too." Wilson believes that experience will help her players get back to regionals. "I have five seniors that have played all four years of high school," Wilson said. "Their experience should help them this season." Senior Aaron Schwark, who transferred to Albany from Indiana for his senior year, looks to have good potential, according to Wilson. "Aaron could help us a great deal," Wilson said. "He is a strong singles player." Schwark has experience playing at a much larger school. "I came from a school that had over 2,000 students," Schwark said. "The tennis there was really competitive, and our school was in one of the toughest districts in Indiana." The state tournament is all that is on his mind. "The goal is to win state," Schwark said. "I'm going to practice and play hard." With this being his senior year, he wants to go out with a bang. "There's a lot of pressure, this being my last year," Schwark said. "I definitely want to go as far and as hard as I can." Senior Kylea Gardner also

wants to end her high school tennis career on a good note. "I really hope my overall performance is better than last year," Gardner said. "I'd like to take first at district and get past the first round of regionals, but

I know the competition will be tougher." Regional qualifiers from last year were Steven Ford and Abbi Beard in mixed doubles, and Kylea Gardner and Michaela Reames in girls' doubles.



Senior Aaron Schwark began practicing for the regular season in January. Schwark competed in one of the toughest 6A districts in Indiana last year, transferring to Albany at the end of his junior year. He joins last year's regional qualifiers and seniors Kylea Gardner, Michaela Reames, Steven Ford and Abbi Beard on varsity. PHOTO BY BRIAN HAMILTON

# Softball girls face tough district race

## Team rebuilds after loss of key veteran players

**BY RYAN HILL**  
Staff Writer

The softball girls started practice a couple of weeks ago with a young team. Graduating four starters, there is a lot to replace. The girls' season ended earlier than expected in the bi-district round against Windthorst last year. They are working to get back to the playoffs this year. "Losing four of our starters will be hard to replace," head coach Jimmy Fuentes said. "Especially because their positions were so vital to having a good defense." Fuentes named off the returning starters: Kaleigh Clevenger, Alexis Munden, Krysten Morris, Reyna Garcia and Lindsey Lucas.



Freshman Caitlyn Holson goes for a grounder during the girls' first practice. The team is trying to find players to fill the roles of those who graduated last year. PHOTO BY PARKER MOON

The girls took the field for their first workout on January 20th. "I won't know for sure who will play where until we get out more and are able to do some good practicing," Fuentes said. "I have an idea, but I don't know for sure."

Garcia, the former first baseman, is one of the returning five and will play a big role this year. "I have mixed emotions about possibly being pitcher," Garcia said. "I don't like to pitch that much, but I know I have to step up and do it so we can be successful this year."

There will be younger players that will have to step up into big roles. "There is a good group of freshmen coming up," Fuentes said. "Have no choice playing some in important roles that graduated last year." There are going to be many tough challenges to overcome this season. "I am going to have to replace short stop, catcher, pitcher and the center fielder which will be one of the biggest challenges this year," Fuentes said. "We will also be tight on numbers and will be a very young team, which can be tough." Fuentes stated that the young players are really going to have to step up to help. "A big challenge will be playing a lot of underclassmen," Lucas said. "The freshmen are going to get to step up and play and help us win some games." The returning starters are looking forward to the new

season. "Since softball is the only sport I play, I have been ready for this season all year," Garcia said. Lucas, the second baseman is ready for the season, too. "I've been looking forward to this year," Lucas said. "I have really missed playing with the girls, and I can't wait to get games going." The team is in the same District 7-2a placement they were in last year. "Another tough challenge will be district play," Fuentes said. "Our district has some tough opponents that will give us some challenge when we play them." Fuentes said that all in all, the biggest challenge this year will be overcoming small setbacks that could prevent them from having the season they want to accomplish. The main thing that will be vital is the girls stepping up into major defensive roles in order to be successful this year.

# Track teams sprint into spring season

## Athletes prepare for chance to return to state

**BY RYLIE SCOTT**  
Staff Writer

With spring track quickly approaching, athletes and coaches are busy preparing for another successful season, including several state competitors returning to varsity this year. Girls' head track coach Ginger Norton is determined to win out this season. "My goal is to win the district, area, and regional titles, and then get back to state with the mile relay as well as individual events," Norton said. "You never know what can happen during track season, but if we can keep everyone healthy and injury-free, we should also be pretty solid across the board with our sprint relays." New to the Albany track program, former assistant softball coach Lauren Peacock is very excited to help out with individual jumping events: long, triple, and high jump, as well as junior high track. "I've previously coached both junior high and high school track

at Woodson," Peacock said. "I think the girls have a lot of potential as far as their season goes and expectations from previous years. It all depends on what they're wanting to work for this year." Senior hurdler Rachel Hill is determined to return to the state track meet after recently recovering from an ACL tear. "My goal is to get stronger first and then develop my speed and flexibility back," Hill said. "At the first track meet I just want to complete the race and not worry so much about the time." As soon as her knee gets close to 100 percent, dropping her times will then be a priority, according to Hill. "Right now, I'm running a lot of distance to try and get back in shape," Hill said. "I'm also doing a lot of weightlifting and hurdle drills to regain my flexibility because my right quad is still pretty weak." Hill will be competing in the 100 meter hurdles, 300 meter hurdles, and the mile relay. "For the past two years, we've gone to state with the mile relay, and each year we place a little higher," Rachel Hill said. "This is going to be the year that we're going to be able to get on the medal stand." Boys' head track coach Rod

Britting is also hopeful to get a few more kids back to Austin. "Last year, we had a pretty good season overall," Britting said. "We had great relays and individual events, so our main goal is to measure up to our potential." The boys' state returners include Roman Fuentes, Jordan Pleasant, Hunter Owen, and Ethen Bernstein. "There's about 8 to 10 varsity returners - it's a pretty good group," Britting said. "There will be a couple of guys that were on JV last year that will be able to help us on the varsity." Due to the prolonged basketball season, the official start date for track practice will continue to be subject to the playoff run. "I will be getting kids information, like have a workout posted that they can do on their own, or meet with the kids after basketball practice," Britting said. "Once the basketball season ends, I'll be able to practice with them during the athletic period."

Senior Rachel Hill starts preparing for track by doing hurdle drills. Hill suffered a torn ACL during the summer but still plans to run this year. Last year she went to state in the 100 meter hurdles, 300 meter hurdles, and the mile relay. PHOTO BY RYLIE SCOTT



## "One Act"

Continued from | PG 1

going to come together nicely and everyone will become their characters."

New to the stage this year, sophomore Cameron Dacus is performing well, according to the director.

"I am excited about being part of the play this year," Dacus said. "Learning my lines has not been a big problem, but I think the biggest problem I have is procrastination."

Scott is being assisted this year by former director Chanel Hayner and Jonathan Scott.

## "Stock show"

Continued from | PG 1

"Studying for tests you barely understand is challenging."

Edgar says that he has acquired many new friends over his stock show career.

"My favorite part about majors is meeting people that you can connect with almost instantly," Edgar said. "Getting out of school is also a plus sometimes."

But showing has its ups and downs, according to Edgar.

"The absolute worst

part about stock show is smelling like pig poop everywhere you go," Edgar said. "It seems like you can't get it off no matter how hard you try."

Junior Madison Ratliff, has been participating in stock show for nine years now.

"This stock show season has gone pretty smoothly for me," Ratliff said. "I haven't really faced any problems among my 10 pigs."

Ratliff is participating in six major shows this year.

"It's exciting and really rewarding when you do well," Ratliff said. "It's worth all of the hard work leading up to the major shows."

Most of the time the money earned does not even out.

"Because of all the money we spend on pigs, feed, hotels, meals, and such, it's hard to break even," Ratliff said. "But it provides scholarships, and overall it's worth the cost."

What Ratliff dislikes about stock show is washing and walking her pigs.

"I usually go up to our pig barn at least three or four times a week," Ratliff said. "I clean pens as well as walk and wash my pigs."

When majors come along, she spends most

of her time with her animals.

"When major shows start to get closer, I start going every day for at least an hour," Ratliff said.

Showing multiple animals is challenging for her.

"Showing several animals can be extremely difficult," Ratliff said. "I showed heifers two years ago, and it was way too much for me."

## "UIL"

Continued from | PG 1

who are very strong academically.

"What reminds me of the other teams that have gone to state is that they are very diverse," Raymond said. "One thing that has hurt us in the past is there was a gap in grade levels, which should not be an issue this year."

Senior Hunter Owen, who was on last year's state team, enjoys studying for UIL science.

"Science interests me a lot, and because of that, it allows me to learn new things," Owen said.

Senior Sydney Key also likes preparing for her prose event.

"I practiced all the time whether at home or with Mrs. Everitt," Key said. "I like getting to tell a story through poetry. Plus, math makes my brain hurt, so Prose sounded better than the calculator team."

In the past, Albany has gone to the Wylie Invitational meet, but this year due to Wylie opening up to bigger schools, the decision was made to compete at a practice meet in Stamford on February 25.

"We have gone to Wylie every year that I've been here, and it's a great meet," Davis said.

"But one of the concerns with teachers is that Wylie is becoming a big meet. They are allowing big schools to compete."

Donnie Lucas, sponsor of all four journalism writing events, had trouble finding participants for the Haskell meet last month.

"Evidently, there is a decrease in students' interest in doing UIL, so there is a lot of competition among teachers getting students to join their events," Lucas said. "I think the Haskell meet was small because of Winter Formal, so we are thinking our numbers will be up for Stamford and the district meet in March."

## WHAT'S HAPPENING!

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### FEBRUARY

10 4th Six Weeks Ends  
10 JV & Varsity Boys Bball vs. Stamford @ Home, 4:00pm  
11 Albany JH Boys Basketball District Tournament, 9:00am  
13 5th Six Weeks Begins  
14 JV & Varsity Boys Bball vs. Hawley @ Hawley, 4:00pm  
16-18 Eastland Softball Tournament  
20 School Holiday - Presidents' Day  
23 JV & Varsity Hawley Tennis Tournament in Abilene, 8:30am  
23-25 Stephenville Softball Tournament  
25 Stamford UIL Meet, 9:00am  
28 Varsity Softball vs. Rotan @ Home, 5:00pm

#### MARCH

1 JV & Varsity Tennis vs. Hawley @ Home, 2:00pm  
2 HS Track Meet @ Clyde, 3:30pm  
2-4 Eula Softball Tournament  
7 JV & Varsity Girls Tennis Tournament @ Breckenridge, 8am  
7 Varsity Girls Softball vs. Dublin @ Home, 5:00pm  
8 JV & Varsity Boys Tennis Tournament @ Breckenridge, 8am  
8 District One Act Play Contest @ Anson, 8:00am  
9 HS Track Meet @ Breckenridge, 3:00pm  
13 Varsity Softball vs. Winters @ Winters, 1:00pm  
13-17 Spring Break  
18 HS Track Meet @ Hamlin, 9:00am  
21 Varsity Softball vs. Haskell @ Haskell, 5:00pm  
22 JV & Varsity Jim Ned Tennis Invitational @ Abilene, 8:00am  
23 HS Track Meet @ Eastland, 4:00pm  
24 Varsity Baseball/Softball vs. Stamford @ Stamford, 5:00pm  
25 UIL District Meet @ Anson, 8:00am  
28 JV & Varsity Baseball/Softball vs. Hawley @ Home, 5:00pm  
29 JV & Varsity Tennis @ Seymour, 9:00am  
30 English II EOC  
30 HS Track Meet @ Home, 3:00pm  
31 JV & Varsity Baseball/Softball vs. Hamlin @ Hamlin, 5:00pm

#### APRIL

1 Prom, 8:00pm  
3-4 District Tennis Meet @ Abilene Rose Park, 8:00am  
4 JV & Varsity Baseball/Softball vs. Anson @ Home, 5:00pm  
6 HS District Track Meet @ Home, 8:00am  
7 JV & Varsity Baseball/Softball vs. Haskell @ Home, 5:00pm

# County Stock Show

Lambs and pigs and rabbits, oh my!

All sorts of animals were on display the weekend of January 27-29 during the Shakelford County Youth and Livestock Show. Starting Thursday night with rabbits and chickens, the show continued through Saturday afternoon, concluding with the exhibit sale. Exhibitors were busy all day Friday with pigs, lambs and goats.

Grand and Reserve Champion were awarded for each class and breed of animal, along with individual place awards

in each class. Exhibitors also competed in junior and senior divisions for showmanship buckles, awarded by the judges after each show based on the skill and maturity shown by the student exhibitors.

Over 185 students from both Moran and Albany school districts entered projects in the annual show, representing close to 320 animals. Students were also rewarded for their hard work during the annual premium sale Saturday afternoon.

PHOTOS AND STORY BY RACHEL HILL

Kade Everitt (right) enjoys the county-famous Curly Fries drenched in ketchup, as he watches the exhibitors in the arena. The concession stand during the county show features a variety of homemade sweets, along with burritos, burgers, and different drinks. Senior swine exhibitor Ethen Bernstein (below) sprays his Yorkshire down in the wash pens. Bernstein has been showing pigs since his freshman year. Exhibitors spend a lot of additional time after school and on weekends working with their animals throughout the year in order to impress the judge in the show ring. Well-behaved animals attract the judge's eyes. More serious exhibitors choose to continue their stock show season by participating in some of the major shows, such as Fort Worth, Houston, Austin and San Angelo, which are held throughout the spring across the state.



Senior Steven Ford (left) lifts his rabbit from a cage before he shows during the junior buck division Thursday night. This was Ford's first year to show a project. Sophomore Madison Wilkins (below) crouches down low while she drives her pig towards the judge's eye. Wilkins went on to win the senior showmanship buckle.



Juniors Kourtnee Waters (far left) and Felicity Coronado (left) handle their rabbits prior to the show, making sure their coats are smooth. Rabbits were shown Thursday night, with over 80 exhibits entered in the show. Eighth grade exhibitor Hannah Trail (below) adjusts the head gear that holds her market goat in place for a washing. The goat show took place Friday, Jan. 27 after the pig show concluded. Exhibitors from third grade or 8 years old through twelfth grade are allowed to enter the annual stock show.

