



THE LIONS ROAR

"Lion pride in print"

Monday, May 25, 2015

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 6



Brandon shares love for rodeo



Senior plans to attend Cisco Junior College as member of the rodeo team. — See page 6

Lifelong classmates reflect



Seniors share memories made with lifelong classmates over the years. — See page 8

Baseball team wins

Team plays series against Hawley in the regional quarterfinal round. — See page 7

— See page 7

Briefs

Final exam schedule set

The schedule for final exams for the spring semester has been set for later this week. Students are required to take a minimum of two exams in core classes, plus tests in classes in which the requirements are not met.

High school students exempt from testing are required to sign in the office by 9:30 a.m. each day. Junior high students will report as usual and go to the gym if not taking a test.

The final exam schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, May 27
8:00 a.m. – 1st period
10:00 a.m. – 2nd period
1:00 p.m. – 3rd period

Thursday, May 28
8:00 a.m. – 4th period
10:00 a.m. – 5th period
1:00 p.m. – 6th period

Friday, May 29
8:00 a.m. – 7th period
10:00 a.m. – 8th period

Graduation plans finalized

This year 23 students will graduate from Albany High School during ceremonies set for Friday, May 29 at 7 p.m. in the gym. Along with receiving diplomas and other academic scholarship awards for the seniors, the ceremony will include speeches, music, and a reception at the Whitney Theatre. Parents, friends, teachers, and other guests are welcome. Project Graduation will be held that night for graduates and students who served as ushers.

Two-a-days to begin in August

Two-a-day workouts for football, volleyball, and cross-country are scheduled to begin Monday, August 3 at 8:00 a.m. Athletes will receive a letter in the mail over the summer and should be in contact with the coaches to receive additional information. All students must have a physical completed prior to workouts.



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

Students attend ILPC convention



Lions Roar staff poses for a picture after accepting the Gold Star Award at the ILPC convention held April 18-19 in Austin. Albany was of just five papers in Classes 1A through 6A to receive a Gold Star Award. The staff also earned several individual awards, including senior Shelby Barton's Tops in Texas. PHOTO SUBMITTED

Newspaper receives Gold Star award

BY CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

On April 18-19, newspaper, yearbook, and journalism students attended the Interscholastic League Press Conference (ILPC) in Austin, Texas. Many students received awards including one Tops in Texas won by senior Shelby Barton.

"I was not expecting to win at all," Barton said, "mainly because of the tough competition from all of the bigger schools in the state."

Barton won the award for best photo story among 1A through 6A.

"My photo story was about the spirit Albany shows during football play-

off games," Barton said. "I think it truly demonstrated the excitement of the season."

On the last day of the convention, *The Lions Roar* received the highest overall award given to a newspaper – a Gold Star.

"I was really nervous during the awards ceremony," senior editor-in-chief Molly Lee said. "After they called the Bronze and Silver awards, it was an all-or-nothing situation waiting for the Gold Star Award."

Lee was excited about the win.

"The staff worked so hard all year to achieve the goal of getting a Gold Star," Lee said. "I felt ecstatic that all the hard work we did this year paid off and wasn't in vain."

Newspaper advisor Donnie Lucas was pleased with the results.

"We have some tradition
SEE "ILPC" Pg 8

Activities mark end of year

Seniors stay busy with variety of functions

BY LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor

As the school year comes to an end, most seniors have only one thing on their mind – graduation. There are several activities sponsored by the school and senior parents that all lead up to the final walk across the gym floor set for Friday, May 29.

The seniors have already participated in a Bible presentation, progressive dinner, Six Flags trip, and baccalaureate. The final senior tradition is Project Graduation on May 29 after the graduation ceremony.

"The progressive dinner was a lot of fun," senior Michala Huckabay said. "We played lots of games, swam, and ate good food."

For Project Graduation, the seniors will visit different locations around town like the graduating class did last year. Venues will include the football field, the city park, and end with breakfast at The Feed Store, with a variety of activities

planned at each site.

"I am really looking forward to project graduation because our whole class will get to be together," Huckabay said.

Seniors raised money for many of the activities by working in the bas-



Seniors Steve Phillips (left) and Marquis Thurman (right) go through the main course buffet line at the Fiesta themed progressive dinner held May 17. PHOTO BY LORI DAVIS

ketball concession stand their junior year, having a "split the pot" at home football games, selling baked goods at a basketball game, and having a Krispy Kreme fundraiser.

Senior parents also sent out letters to people in the community seeking donations towards Project Graduation.

"We have a very generous community when it comes to helping our kids," superintendent and senior parent Shane Fields said. "Over 40 percent of the people responded with a donation."

Counselor Dee Dee Waggoner has also organized different sessions leading up to graduation for the seniors that help teach different life skills that will be beneficial in college.

"The purpose of these sessions is to provide and enhance real world skills before the seniors graduate," Waggoner said. "We focused on life skills that aren't necessarily part of the school curriculum."

Steve Waller from First Financial Bank and Debbie Hamilton taught students about budgeting, Tisha Wilkins showed students how to write proper thank you notes, and Matt Birkla from The Oil Exchange gave a lesson on car maintenance and repair. The sessions were held at the Feed Store, and the Feed Store staff provided a meal for seniors during the lessons.

"At the budgeting session, we learned how to spend less money and to save it instead," senior Kaylee Waters said.

Many of these activities were organized and conducted by senior parents.

"We have had several parent meetings to plan everything," Fields said. "There has been a lot of help, and it makes the work load a lot lighter."

Fields encourages all parents to be a part of their child's senior year.

"It is a special time in your kids' lives, and an opportunity that you can't get back," Fields said.

UIL members compete at state

Students to participate tomorrow

BY RACHEL HILL
Copy Editor

The academic side of AHS is shining through as several students prepare to compete in the UIL Academic State meet on May 26 in Austin.

"I have two going in journalism events," journalism and newspaper sponsor Donnie Lucas said. "Shelby Barton went last year, and she is going this year in feature and news writing, along with freshman Genevieve Stunkard who will be competing in feature writing as well."

The trip to state can

be a little overwhelming.

"It feels a little weird and doesn't seem real until you're really there and competing," senior Shelby Barton said.

Barton placed seventh in last year's feature writing contest at state.

"There is a little pressure just because I know what a lot of people expect of me, but I try not to think about it too much," Barton said.

As a freshman, Stunkard will be experiencing state level pressure for the first time.

"This trip makes me nervous because I already got super anxious at the smaller competitions, and state is a lot bigger," Genevieve Stunkard said.

Levi Britting is also competing in science in Austin after winning second at the regional meet in Odessa.

"Even though this is my first year, I don't feel nervous," Britting said. "I'm just happy to be able to go."

The students put a lot of time in the classroom preparing.

"All I do is go to class and listen," Britting said.

Others use their past experiences.

"Being in journalism has helped me a lot over the past years, but Mr. Lucas has us go over several UIL prompts to help us better prepare," Barton said.

Stunkard agrees.

"The prompts Mr. Lucas makes us work on seem to be harder than the actual competition," Stunkard said.

The pressure is higher as the competition gets steeper.

"I feel like because I'm a freshman and I've accomplished so much

already, people are going to be disappointed if I don't do well at state," Stunkard said.

Stunkard won first

place in feature writing at both the district and regional meet, and Barton also advanced to state in news writing this year.



UIL participants Genevieve Stunkard (left), Levi Britting (middle), and Shelby Barton (right) try on their medals from the regional meet. The three students will compete at the state contest this week. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE ALBANY NEWS

Editorials

Getting Ahead

For many students, the countdown to the beginning of summer began on August 25. Summer used to be a time of relaxation away from school, but with all the activities going on, it can be just as busy as the school year.

Instead of lounging by the pool with a cool glass of iced tea, students are taking college classes, working summer jobs, playing select sports, and going to morning workouts just to stay ahead of the game.

Many students will take college classes to get some extra hours under their belt for a cheaper price. Academics are becoming more competitive each year, and the number of college applicants continues to rise. Because of this, some students are searching for that extra advantage that will set them apart, and college hours can be just that.

With school from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or later, it can be difficult to have a job during the school year. There are only a few hours available to work after school, and the weekends are filled with countless other activities. The summer is the only time for many who need to work and save up some money.

Morning workouts and select sports teams are another way to try and rise above competitors. Athletes want to improve their skills during the off months so that they can earn a better spot on a team or become a better individual player. Putting work in now can offer an advantage when the school year begins.

Some say that the summer should be more laid back, but these three months are an excellent time for students to get a jump on things and become better prepared for the following school year. With the way things are nowadays, it just isn't possible to take three months off if you want to be successful.

Students should take advantage of the summer because it is a great opportunity to become better academically, financially, and athletically.

Bring Back GIP

When GIP (or the Grounds Improvement Program) was part of the disciplinary system at the school, it kept people out of trouble. With the threat of having to clean the school looming as a possibility, young kids went into high school wanting to stay out of trouble. GIP should return to the school.

Between balancing sports, extracurricular activities and having a social life, students usually don't have time for anything extra to come into their schedule. That was a big factor that helped GIP thrive. Students do not want to come after school or have to be penalized for missing practice because they got in trouble and had to clean the school. It makes coaches frustrated when their players miss practice, and it makes them even more upset when it is because they were disrupting class and not representing Albany the way they should.

Another reason GIP was effective was the areas that required cleaning. Cleaning the bathrooms in the locker rooms and cleaning the window paint off of the gym foyer after homecoming were not easy tasks. As a young student watching people spending up to a week cleaning the gym windows, it was incentive not to get into trouble.

The disciplinary system has no fear factor and that is one reason why students aren't afraid to get into trouble. Sitting in a classroom for lunch detention or sitting alone all day in ISS isn't really a punishment to some. Some have said they actually enjoy sitting by themselves and spending the day away from everyone. Saturday school has a certain "fear" factor in that students do not want to have to come to school on the weekend, but Saturday school should not be the biggest punishment at the school besides being expelled or suspended. Making students work and clean teaches discipline and respect, and that will always be more effective than making students eat lunch in a classroom.



THE
LIONS ROAR
ILPC 2015 Gold Star Winner
ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

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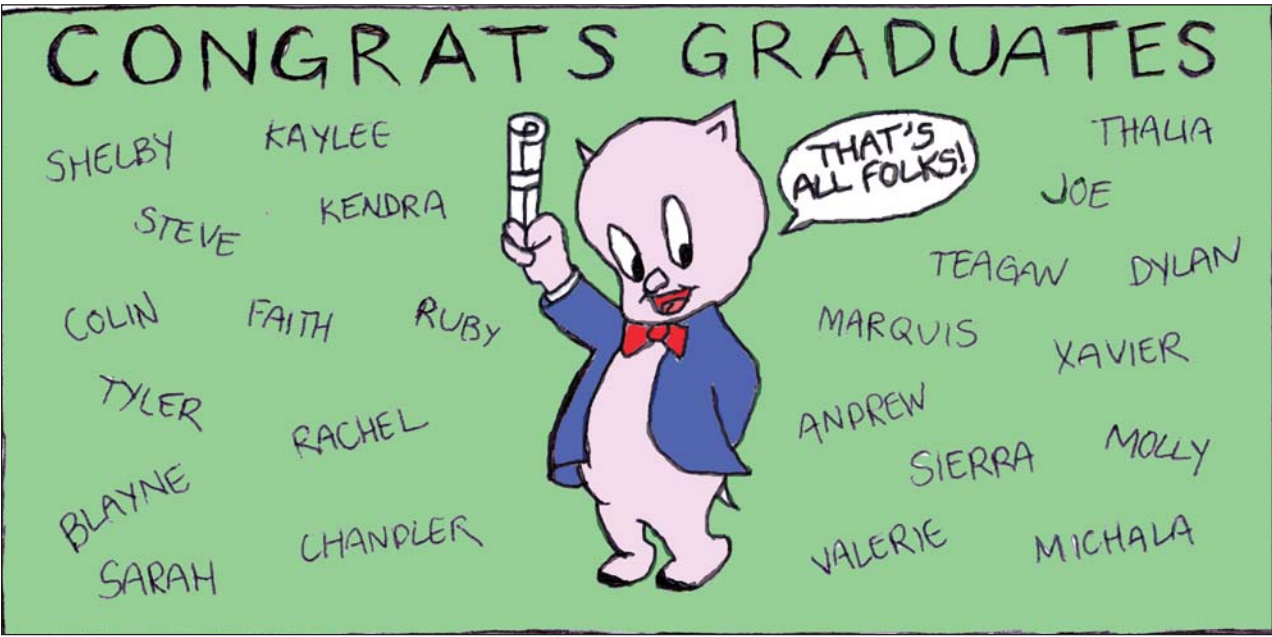
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COMMENTARY



Albany will always be home

Senior year is weird. You don't know if you're ready to leave or want to stay because you wake up every morning with a different feeling. If you asked anyone before this year where I was going to go to college, they would have all replied "NOT Texas Tech." I was so adamant about not following my two siblings (and practically the rest of Albany) to a school when hundreds of other schools are an option, right? WRONG.

The minute I stepped on to Texas Tech's campus, I knew that's where I was supposed to be. I had been to the campus dozens of times, but it wasn't until I moved my sister in last year that I realized that's where I wanted to be. And then the tears came.

I'd like to think I cried because I would miss my sister, or because Lubbock is basically the Miley Cyrus of Texas. (It used to be cool when we were little until we grew up and realized how awful, crazy, and unappealing it really is.) But in reality, I was crying because that was the first time I fully realized I would have to leave my parents, leave my friends still in high school, and that I would be leaving Albany.

No matter how much you might want to get out, Albany is home. Albany is familiar and what we know.



#blessed
by MOLLY LEE

When you start realizing that you won't be able to know every face that you see at school or know all of the players on the football team, it starts to become a reality of what Albany has given us growing up.

I know I didn't move here until I was in the sixth grade, but Albany welcomed me with open arms. The people I have met here are some of the greatest people in the world. Albany is one-of-a-kind, and no matter how much you are ready to get out, you will soon be aching to come home. So, thank you, Albany.

Thanks for all of the opportunities I was able to experience that I didn't get at Wylie. Thanks for teaching me about neighborly love and what it means to support one another as a community. Thanks for allowing my family to re-grow roots and sow into a place that my siblings and I will always consider home. But most importantly, I am thankful that I truly learned who God was after moving to Albany. You don't know how special it is to go to a school and live in a community that loves and serves Jesus until you have been to a place where it is frowned upon. I will always be aching to come home, and I hope that feeling never goes away. God bless and WRECK 'EM!

Work with what you got

After the last basketball game of this year, my next sport was softball. I was so excited to get back in the outfield again. With the smell of fresh cut grass, wind blowing in my hair, and making the play when it mattered most, I was ecstatic to get started. I knew I needed to step up my game considering most of the team graduated last year.

In our first tournament, I played center field and loved it. I couldn't imagine playing anything else, considering I never thought about any other position. After the first game, the coach moved a few people around because nothing was clicking. He always threatened that he would move me to hell. I never thought that he would ACTUALLY do it though. Outfield was MY spot. Then my perfect world came crashing down in flames.

Catcher. Why catcher? It's hot under all the heavy gear, and it makes your hair all messy. Plus you have to crouch down the ENTIRE game! I just remember thinking, "Okay coach, why in the world are you putting me at catcher. I haven't played there in ages. Why? Just...why?" I played catcher freshman year, but I wasn't good. At all.

Our catcher last year was amazing; nothing got past her!



REDHEADED RANTS
by CURRY WILSON

She was a brick wall that never crumbled, and now I have to fill the shoes fit for a giant. A softball giant to be exact! Are you serious?

The first time I strapped on my gear I felt like I was carrying a huge bag of cinder blocks. Balls drove past me like bullets. Runners ran around the bases and scored on my account. I felt responsible for almost every run that was on the board.

A few games passed and I gradually got better. I held on to the hope that maybe, just maybe, coach would come to his senses and put me back into my natural habitat. That never happened.

Once I faced reality, I said to myself, "Alright, Curry, this is your spot now. You need to get your stuff together because the team needs you. So suck it up and do your best and have fun." And that's what I did.

Today, I strap on my catcher's gear in the beating sun and try to do my job. I've sort of come to like playing that position. I learned that not everything will always go your way, so you need to work with what's given to you and make the best out of every situation. I never thought in a million years that I would be catching, but I wouldn't change a thing if I were given the option.

Sports contribute to life

Sports are not just sports. Anyone who has played at a high level knows that. Football, baseball, basketball, softball, etc. are all games and games are supposed to be fun, but what is really going on when you play has a much deeper meaning than you might realize.

If you have never played a sport at a high level and sacrificed your time and energy to it you should probably stop reading this column.

Playing sports develops work ethic, integrity, determination, and respect for the person across from you. In sports you build relationships with your teammates because you sacrifice a part of yourself for them day in and day out. You don't get to just call yourself an athlete; you have to earn that honor. If you are one, you will be able to tell who else is by the way they carry themselves.

People might argue that high-level sports are not for everyone, and they may be right. High-level sports are for the strong-hearted and determined, not for the weak and uncommitted. My respect is definitely hard-earned, but knowing someone is an athlete will twist my mind. This means in a situation where I need someone, I can rely on



SPORTS WITH STEVE
by STEVE PHILLIPS

a fellow athlete to help me. If I am working on something, you aren't going to sit back and watch me do all of the work. That is what the weak do.

Football is a completely different story. I might slightly respect someone if he sacrifices his time and energy to play, but unless I see the work put in, my full respect is not earned. Football is not a sport for the cowardly. No one should waste their time if he can't handle the three-hour practice, round-the-clock dedication, and no real football player is going to even want to be in the presence of someone not willing to sacrifice time and energy to get something done. Football has been more than just a game to me. I have had fun with my brothers in the jungle, but that's not what it was about. Football has taught me to be a man. It has shown me what determination really is. It has taught me to have integrity. It made me feel what hard work really was, and in all of that, it taught me to be humble. These are all things that can't be learned nor understood without having played for the Albany Lion Football team. I would like to thank my coaches and teammates who have been with me and sacrificed for me the past few years. This is Steve, signing off.



2¢ worth

What are you looking forward to about senior year?

"I'm excited to have the responsibility of the whole high school looking up to me as a role model."

Cason Asher
Junior



"It will be the home stretch of high school, so I'm excited about that, but I am ready to start a new chapter in my life."

Tobi Nall
Junior



"I'm looking forward to more freedom, and being the 'big dog' on campus will be fun, but at the same time being a leader is something I am really looking forward to."

Tyler Miller
Junior



"I have taken so many classes the last two years that my senior year is mostly going to be getting ready for college, so I don't have to worry about high school work anymore."

Sarah Rogers
Junior



College Essentials Checklist

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SHOWER ESSENTIALS



Having a shower caddy and shower shoes are a necessity for anyone who has to use community bathrooms. These items can be found at Walmart, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and Target.

LIFE PLANNER

Life Planners help you easily organize your calendar, class schedule, appointments, and daily activities. Planners can be found at various places like Office Max and Target.



ALARM CLOCK



Alarm clocks are needed by every student entering into college. They vary in price and style and can be found at PB-teen, Walmart, and Target.

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BEDDING



Bedding ranges in price, design, and style to fit your personal preference. Bedding for guys and girls can be found at PB-teen, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and Target.

MICROWAVE

Microwaves are needed in every college dormroom. Coordinate with your roommate on who will bring needed appliances like this. They can be found at Walmart and Sears.



DESK LAMP



Desk lamps are a thing that are needed in every dorm room but often forgotten about. Desk lamps can be found at Target, Walmart, and Office Depot.

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MINI FRIDGE



Mini fridges are another essential appliance to use in your dorm room. Coordinate with your roommate to see who is going to bring essential appliances like this one. They can be found at Walmart and Target.

LAPTOP COMPUTER

Laptops are a pricey investment needed by every college student. Laptops can be found at Best Buy or any Apple store.



KEURIG COFFEE MAKER



Any student who is a regular coffee drinker should invest in buying a Keurig Coffee Maker. If you drink coffee often, this appliance will pay for itself. You can find these at Walmart, Target, and Kohls.



Avengers: Age of Ultron
May 1, 2015 PG-13 141 min
Action | Adventure

Tony Stark and Bruce Banner try to jump-start a dormant peacekeeping program called Ultron, but things go horribly wrong and it's up to Earth's Heroes to stop Ultron from enacting his plans.

Director: Joss Whedon
Writers: Joss Whedon, Stan Lee
Stars: Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Robert Downy Jr.

Staff Review:

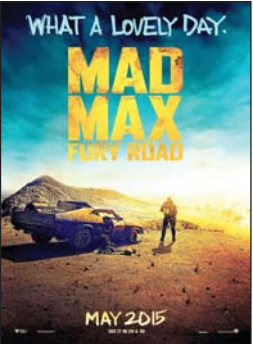


Mad Max: Fury Road
May 15, 2015 R 120 min
Sci-Fi | Action

In a desert landscape where humanity is broken, two rebels might be able to restore order: Max, a man of action and few words, and Furiose, a woman who is looking to make it back to her homeland.

Director: George Miller
Writers: George Miller
Stars: Tom Hardy, Charlize Thorman

Staff Review:



Poltergeist
May 22, 2015 PG-13 93 min
Horror | Thriller

A family whose suburban home is haunted by evil forces must come together to rescue their youngest daughter after the apparitions take her captive.

Writers: David-Lindsay-Abaire
Stars: Sam Rockwell, Rosemarie DeWitt

Staff Review:



Pitch Perfect 2
May 15, 2015 PG-13 115 min
Comedy | Drama

After a humiliating performance at Lincoln Center, the Barden Bellas enter an international competition that no American group has ever won in order to regain their status.

Director: Elizabeth Banks
Writers: Kay Cannon, Mickey Rapkin
Stars: Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson

Staff Review:

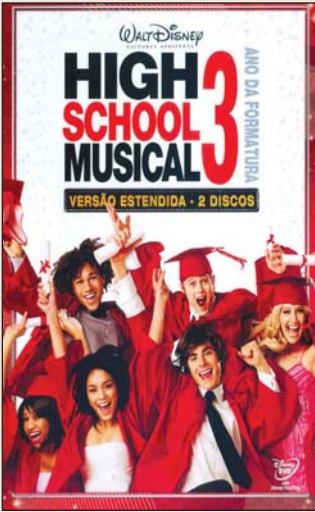


THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
BY RACHEL HILL

With graduation right around the corner, classic high school movies seemed to be an appropriate genre to take a look at as the school year winds down.

High school Musical 3: Senior Year

With preparations for the final basketball season, senior prom, and graduation, the beloved couple of Troy Bolton and Gabriella Montez try their hardest to savor every moment and make it the best. College plans threaten the sweetheart's relationship, but one last musical puts everyone at ease with their hopes and fears for the future. Like all of the *High School Musical* movies, it's sure to cause a few songs to stick in your head for a while.



Breakfast Club

When five students, each representing a different high school stereotype, spend a day together in detention, unexpected friendships



bloom. They realize they have more in common than anticipated, including contempt for adults, as they rally against the much hated faculty brings them closer together. This movie has adult humor, profanity, and substance abuse themes, and is more suitable for teens and adults than for children.

Friday Night Lights

The new football coach at Dillon High School has his hands full. Eric Taylor must build the football program basically from

scratch. For some, playing football is the high point of their senior year while for others the dream continues past high school. The jocks, dropouts, losers, and big dreamers that make up the DHS football team worship faith, firearms, and football. This movie hits all aspects of the American dream; race, class, God, and faith in humanity.

17 Again

Basketball star Mike O'Donnell has it all. That is, until he throws everything away to marry his girlfriend and raise their child. Fast forward 20 years later and you wouldn't recognize Mike. The "perfect high school marriage" is going down the drain, his kids think he's totally a loser, and his job is going the same direction as his marriage. One day, he gets a once-in-a-lifetime chance to go back to high school to rewrite his life, although he may be threatening his present and future.



Graduates to spread wings across

Seniors prepare for new journey

BY STEVE PHILLIPS
News Editor

The end is near and this means that graduation time is upon us.

Some seniors will be transitioning into a place where they feel comfortable, while others are venturing into the unknown.

"I'm excited to live in the same town as my siblings again," Molly Lee said.

Other seniors are ready to venture out of the Albany bubble.

"I'm looking forward to making lots of new friends and being on my own," Michala Huckaby said. "I'll be able to have freedom to do things without my mother telling me to come home."

Shelby Barton concurs with Michala.

"I look forward to making new friends because I've been friends with everyone in our class for so long," Shelby said. "A new group would be fun and exciting."

Chandler Fields is looking forward to new and different things outside of Albany.

"I look forward to living in a new city the most," Chandler said. "Everything will be different, but change is a good thing."

With new experiences at hand, there will also be some nervousness.

"I've been attending Beltway Park Baptist Church since I was in sixth grade," Molly said. "I am nervous about starting over and getting plugged into a new church."

Shelby has fearful things on her mind upon entering college.

"I'm most nervous about living in the dorms and sharing a bathroom with people I don't know," Shelby said. "Thankfully, Molly and I are sharing a room, so she may help me not go insane, or she will, I don't know."

Some are still skeptical of how college will treat them.

"I am most nervous about the classes and what level of difficulty they will be," Sarah Taplin said.

Most seniors will be leaving behind their families, but it will be hitting some harder than others.

"I'm nervous about leaving my family," Sierra Price said. "I am really close with my family, so it will be a big adjustment."

Some seniors are already planning on being involved on campus.

"I'm planning on rushing and being involved in Greek life," Molly said. "I hope my college experience is filled with memories of friends and hopefully lots of sisterhood events."

Most seniors have preconceived notions about college.

"I imagine my college experience to be filled with fun football games, and late night studying," Shelby said. "I also hope to attend fun sorority events with new friends that I will never forget."

One student sees only positives to her college experience.

"I'm going to make many memories with new friends and hopefully be involved in many activities on campus," Michala said.

Another student knows that there will be stressful times along with the good.

"I imagine my college experience as something I will never forget," Chandler said.

Classes will be one of the hardest obstacles to overcome within the college experience.

"I imagine I will have lots of fun," Thalia Dudley said. "It will be hard taking classes because I will be a double major, so it will be difficult balancing social and school life."



Texas Tech LUBBOCK, TEXAS

Classmates Molly Lee, Steve Phillips, and Shelby Barton will attend Texas Tech University in the Fall. The trio looks forward to spending the next four years together.



UTPB ODESSA, TEXAS

Sarah Taplin plans to study Kinesiology at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin.



Angelo State SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Sierra Price, Andrew Brown, and Valerie Gandara have chosen to attend college at Angelo State University.

MARINES

Marquis Thurman will go to boot camp in hopes to become a United States Marine Infantryman.



WORKFORCE

Blayne Cauble is planning on entering into the workforce next year.

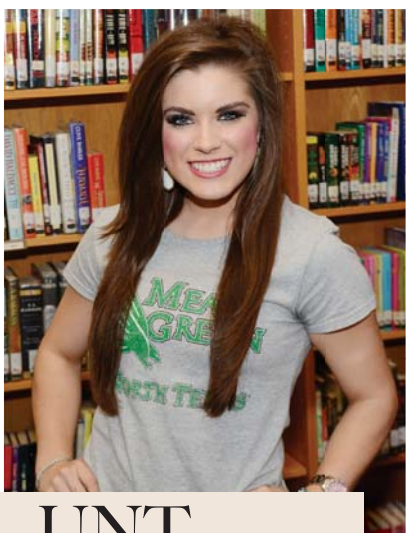


SENIORS @!20

state, beyond to further education



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UNT
DENTON, TEXAS
Rachel Kitchens will be heading to Denton to attend the University of North Texas and plans to study business.



TCU
FORT WORTH, TEXAS
Chandler Fields will attend Texas Christian University in the fall and major in pre-Medical studies.



Tarleton State
STEPHENVILLE, TEXAS
Faith Brooks in extending her education to Stephenville to attend Tarleton State University in the fall.



Weatherford College
WEATHERFORD, TEXAS
ylee Waters will be attending Weatherford College to major in Criminal Justice in the fall.

Cisco College
ABILENE/CISCO, TEXAS
Kendra Dockins, Joe Strickland, Teagan Brandon, Colin Read, Thalia Dudley, and (not pictured) Ruby Sanchez are all attending Cisco College in the fall.

HSU
ABILENE, TEXAS
Classmates Dylan Petree, Michala Huckabay, and Tyler Morgan will attend Hardin-Simmons University in the Fall. The group looks forward to experiencing college life together.



Brandon takes rodeo skills to Cisco

Senior earns spot on revitalized college team

BY STEVE PHILLIPS
News Editor

High school sports are coming to an end for everyone as the end of the school year nears. Some will never put on a jersey, helmet, or cleats ever again, but Teagan Brandon is putting on his boots for another go round.

"I grew up in the rodeo atmosphere," Brandon said. "I just want to continue my dreams of rodeoing at the next level."

The hardest thing for a student athlete is balancing schoolwork and everything involving their sport.

"First, I'm going to get a pretty little tutor that likes to eat steak," Brandon said. "Maybe I can sweet talk her into helping me in my classes."

Brandon is attending Cisco Junior College in the fall to participate on the college's newly revived rodeo team. The school will give him time to make up all of the work he misses for competition.

"I will only have classes a couple days a week so that will help me a little bit," Brandon said.

He will live on the Cisco College campus in Cisco with his home just 45 minutes away.

"Living in Cisco will be beneficial to me by having things close to me at my parents' house," Brandon said. "I will have extra horses and tack, tack bits, spurs, blankets and saddles."

Cisco is a two-year college, so Brandon will need to move on to something else when he completes his basics.

"I plan on transferring to a university and continuing my rodeo dream there," Brandon said.

Collegiate rodeo includes a variety of events such as tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bronc riding, saddle and bare, bull riding, and barrel racing.

"My main event is tie-down roping," he said. "It is where you rope a calf, hop off your horse, flank the calf, and tie down three of the legs."

Brandon will also be competing in another event.

"I will also be team roping with



Senior Teagan Brandon ropes his calf to win first place at Duncan, Oklahoma (top), then rewards his horse with hay (left). Brandon will attend Cisco College in the fall to participate on the Wrangler's new rodeo team, which has been resurrected after a 20-year break. Brandon also received a rodeo team scholarship to attend CJC.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TEAGAN BRANDON

National Finals Rodeo," he said.

Cisco College is resurrecting the rodeo team after an almost 20 year break in the fall.

"I'm excited to be a part of something new," Brandon said. "I'm ready to start up something big with my teammates."

Since the rodeo program will be brand new, Cisco has constructed new facilities as well as new housing.

"Living in brand new dorms is going to be legit," Brandon said. "I will be living in basically a house with three other people."

Cisco is now offering scholarships to help start up the rodeo team.

"I was dead set on going somewhere else, but when Cisco offered me a scholarship to do something that I love, I just couldn't turn it down," Brandon said.

In the 1970s, Cisco College was one of the top rodeo teams in Texas. Their school mascot, Wranglers, pays tribute to the agriculturally rounded school, and reintroducing the rodeo team will only add to it.

my teammates," Brandon said. "Team roping is where two people start in the box and you have a header that ropes the horns of a steer and a heeler that ropes the two back feet."

Brandon believes that his heart for rodeo started at an early age.

"My whole family is in it," he said. "We have lived on a ranch my entire life."

Rodeo as a sport doesn't come without practice.

"I grew up doing things in that field, so I decided to try my luck with competition," Brandon said.

Having a dad and brother in rodeo as well has made Brandon want to follow in their footsteps.

"My dad and brother have participated in numerous ranch rodeos," he said. "That's where I get my drive to win in the arena."

Brandon knows he has the potential to be something big, but he just has to keep working.

"My dream is to make it to the

Summer workouts begin in June

Athletes to keep fit over summer with conditioning program

BY RACHEL HILL
Copy Editor

As the school year winds down, student athletes trade their laptops, calculators and books for cutoffs, gym shoes and sweat stains. The summer has begun, and with it, endless days of early morning preparations for the upcoming seasons.

"Every summer the coaches put on a summer workout program," coach Kimberly Hill said. "The weeks are scattered because of busy summer schedules and activities such as camps and vacations. The UIL limits you to six weeks, and also limits you to the dates you can begin workouts."

The UIL also has limitations on what type of workouts can be done.

"You aren't allowed to do sport-specific workouts," Hill said. "It must be general, such as strength training, sprint work and cardio. All the workouts we put them through will benefit the girls in any sport they choose to do."

The workouts start at 7 a.m. and usually last an hour to an hour and a half.

"We will start workouts June 15 and workout for six weeks," head football coach Denney Faith said. "There will be a break before two-a-days



Eighth grader Tyler Beard puts in hard work to start the off the summer. Summer workouts begin June 15 at 7 A.M. for students entering grades 7-12 in the fall, with non-sport specific activities designed to help with conditioning.

PHOTO BY RACHEL HILL

starts."

"Starting the day with tough training makes you feel good about the rest of the day," junior Kelsey Tollett said. "It prepares you for two-a-days and keeps you in a routine in order to stay in shape during the summer."

Sophomore Hunter Owen agrees.

"The workout programs increase not only your physical strength, but also your mental strength," Owen said.

Michael Cotter, who will be a senior next year, says the programs are very beneficial.

"I'm really glad the coaches put on a workout program for us," Cotter said. "I find it hard

to get up and push myself on my own. Having the coaches there helps me to work harder."

The workouts are available to incoming junior high students through seniors.

"It's not mandatory, but when the athletes show up anyways, it speaks volumes to the coaches," Hill said. "We usually start strong with about 15 to 20 girls who come consistently, but as the summer draws out, the girls start to fizzle because of busy schedules."

There are many benefits from the program.

"The more time a team spends together, the more bonding that takes place," Tollett said. "With the early morning workouts, we get to spend more time together."

Hill agrees that time spent together pays off later.

"Our goal is to try and keep the girls motivated for the upcoming season," Hill said. "When they show up and work, it keeps the athletes accountable to each other."

Many of the girls are planning to participate in volleyball in August.

"This volleyball season looks promising," Hill said. "We have got the same tight-knit, cohesive team from last year, with the exception of losing two from graduation. We will not look much different, because we have the majority of the team back. The girls all have a common goal of winning, and they won't worry about who gets the glory. There is no drama, and that is huge in order for a team to have chemistry."

Baseball advances past area round

Lions earn first
playoff win
in five years

CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

The Lions finished third in district with a record of 11-3 to advance to the playoffs. Coach David Fairchild and the Lions battled against the Winters Blizzards in a three game series for bi-district. Due to bad weather, the first game was called with three innings remaining. The Lions picked up in Hermleigh where they left off, winning the first game 11-5. The Lions came up short in the second game 3-2, but rallied for a 6-2 win in game three to advance. This is the Lions’ tenth year to advance to the post season. “It’s always a good feeling to secure a spot,” head coach David Fairchild said. Last year’s playoff run helped the Lions this year. “We have a lot of players returning, so the experience that they received from last year’s run helped them throughout this playoff season,” Fairchild said.

The underclassmen have improved during the season. “I have put our freshmen and a few sophomores in tough situations,” Fairchild said, “and they have prevailed and also have grown up.” Fairchild believes that the pitching won the series over Winters. “Our pitching staff did a phenomenal job,” Fairchild said. “Xavier Coronado only allowed one walk in the first game. Michael Cotter pitched well in the second game, and freshman Brian Hamilton had seven strike outs and only allowed one walk.” Another key factor was defense. “Our second baseman Alex Faith made several defensive plays that were critical,” Fairchild said. The Lions lost the lead in the second game. “We couldn’t get our bats going in the second game,” junior Michael Cotter said, “I tried to pitch better than I already was.” The Lions came back in the third game. “I could tell that we wanted to win more than the other team,” Cotter said. “I’m happy that we went out and played our hardest.”



Junior Drew Neece stretches to make a catch at first base against the Winters Blizzards during the bi-district round of the playoffs. The Lions won the three-game series moving on to the area round where they defeated Forsan in three games as well. PHOTO BY KATHRYN HAMILTON

The team was not expected to win the game. “Since we were third in district and Winters placed second, some people thought that Winters would be going home with a trophy,” Fairchild said.

Cotter focused on the next series with Forsan. “I stayed after practice to get extra reps in,” Cotter said, “and I focused more when I practiced pitching as well. The Lions then played the Forsan Buffaloes, 19-2, in the

area championship, losing the first game 9-4. Albany battled back with wins of 11-3 and 4-2 to take the series. Albany advanced to the regional quarterfinal to face Hawley. Results were not available at press time.

Track teams compete at state meet

Both squads
take athletes to
Austin

MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

Despite numerous weather delays and injuries, both the girls’ and boys’ track teams finished the season successfully. On the boys’ side, this season was a long list of setbacks that frustrated both the athletes and the coaches. “This season was just pretty frustrating,” head track coach Rod Britting said. “We did win district, which is something we haven’t done since 2009. However, with all the injuries and other issues there just wasn’t any normalcy.” Having runners out and in other sports was a problem for the team. “What most young athletes don’t understand about track is that it is all about the consistency of the practices,” Britting said. “With all the different activities our athletes participate in, it’s really hard to get more than two good practices during a week.” Even with the multiple setbacks and distractions, the Lions’ season was still a successful one.

“The season started off slow, and I was struggling to get personal records early on,” junior Levi Britting said. “But, as the season progressed, I have one of the best jumps in the region and have gotten my personal record.”

Britting said. “Their attitudes were a lot better toward the workouts, they really came a long way from where they were at the beginning of this year.” On the girls side, the season went more along the lines of how it was expected to go.



Junior Michael Cotter clears the bar at the regional meet in Odessa to advance to the State competition held at Mike A. Myers Stadium at the University of Texas at Austin. Cotter received bronze at Region and then took silver at State with a jump of 6-5. PHOTO BY RACHEL HILL

The success wasn’t just in field events. Despite all the runners who were out, the guys who remained really showed their competitive sides in events they usually wouldn’t compete in.”

“It was a really good season,” girls’ track coach Ginger Norton said. “I was very pleased with my girls, and I’m proud we took four to regionals and state.” The team set high goals for

themselves. “The team and I would set individual goals before each meet and worked to beat them,” sophomore Rachel Hill said. “I expected to run at state again this year, but I was still overwhelmed when I made it in three events.” The team was happy with their improvements throughout the season and were certain they had done everything they could. “I couldn’t ask for anything more to improve on,” Norton said. “Their work ethic and want to win speaks for itself.” The girls lost a very important runner in Kami Norton last year and had to find a new leader. “Valerie Gandara really stepped up her game this season,” Norton said. “Rachel Hill also came up big in leading the team. She stepped into some really big shoes this season, and I thought she did great.” Both the boys and the girls competed at regionals in Odessa and did well. Michael Cotter and Levi Britting advanced for the boys. Cotter cleared 6 foot 4 inches to earn the wildcard spot, while Britting cleared 14 foot 6 inches to take second place. The girls advanced several competitors to state. Rachel Hill advanced in both the 300m hurdles as well as earning the

wildcard spot in the 100m hurdles. Valerie Gandara advanced in the 800m run. The girls mile relay team shaved 9 seconds off their time to take second place and a ticket to Austin. Michael Cotter and Levi Britting both jumped well. Britting tied for fifth with a jump of 14 feet in the rain. Cotter earned a silver medal with a personal record jump of 6 feet 5 inches. “They really competed well,” Britting said. “I know Levi would’ve really liked to jump better, but I am proud of both of their accomplishments.” The girls also competed well, bringing home both gold and silver medals. Valerie Gandara won the 800m run with a time of 2:17.08. Hill ran personal records of 14.99 in the 100m hurdles placing second, and 45.49 in the 300m hurdles just missing the award stand in fourth place. The girls’ mile relay team, which consisted of Rachel Hill, Baley Green, Sarah Taplin, and Valerie Gandara, ran a 4:10.5 and finished in sixth place. “It was a privilege to compete with such talent,” Hill said. “To know that I had the second fastest time in the state is unbelievable. I am proud of the work that everyone put in this season.”

Softball ends season at bi-district



Freshman Reyna Garcia reaches to snag a catch for a close play at first base against Anson. The Lady Lions moved on to take third in district, losing to the Archer City Lady Wildcats in the bi-district series played in Jacksboro. PHOTO SUBMITTED

Lady Lions battle
through tough
season

MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

The young Lady Lions had a successful season despite having a very young team, improving greatly throughout district and earn a playoff spot. “We really improved on our overall knowledge of the game,” head softball coach Jimmy Fuentes said. “Our defense was really solid all year, and Lori Davis really picked her game up and kept us in games from the circle.” The team lost six seniors, who comprised the entire infield last year, forcing younger players into challenging positions this season. “It was a real learning process for us all,” Fuentes said. “The young players had to learn on the fly, and I think they did a really good job. We will have a good foundation to

build on next year.” The team understood the importance of developing players quickly in a tough district. “It was really tough earning a playoff spot with mostly underclassmen playing,” sophomore Alexis Munden said. “All the teams in our district were really good, so there wasn’t much room for errors.” The girls knew going into the playoffs that they would be playing tough teams starting with the first round. “We did reach our goal of beating out Stamford for a playoff spot, but we definitely wanted more out of this season,” Munden said. “I think we did do our best to prepare and stay focused.” Although the girls had a solid defense all year, they had some problems on the offensive side. “We never really got the bats going,” Fuentes said. “We never really got any rhythm or consistency going, and we couldn’t find that person to be our offensive catalyst.” The players also realized

the need for more offensive production. “We really needed to improve on making solid contact and start getting runners on,” Munden said. “We needed to hit line drives instead of popping the ball up all the time.” While having areas that needed improvement, the girls had a good season overall. “I think we did a good job of preparing,” Fuentes said. “We did well and won the games we needed to and did our best to compete in the games no one thought we would win.” Despite not having seniors, others stepped up to lead the team. “Our juniors did a really good job of leading the team this year,” Fuentes said. “Lori Davis did a really good job in the circle and off the field.” The girls finished their season with a district record of 9-5 which earned them third place. Albany lost in two games during the bi-district round of the playoffs to Archer City.

Project Graduation evolves over time

Parents compare changes made in all-night party

BY KYLEA GARDNER
Feature Editor

After all the schoolwork is over and they take their final bow, the seniors will gather together on graduation night for one last hoorah. Over the course of the last few years, Project Graduation has been a major part of graduation activities.

For over 35 years, schools around the country have been involved in protecting their students, children, and friends on graduation night with an alcohol-free all-night party.

Melissa Fields took charge of the 2015 graduating class's Project Graduation.

"The first and most important thing is to have money to fund project graduation," Fields said. "In order to get donations, my husband Shane sent out a letter to all of the merchants and individuals that donated last year and sent a self-addressed envelope so that they could send a payment back if they were interested in helping out. The seniors from last year also left around \$1,500 for the next class. Albany is a great place to live, and everyone is so generous, especially when it comes to the kids, so it was easy to get support from the community."

After getting commitments for the money they need, parents and volunteers get together to start the planning process.

"After you get the money, you have to start planning for all the food, activities, and gifts," Fields said. "On April 26 there was a parent meeting held where we split into



Last year's seniors race to finish a game of "over-under" in the city pool at a stop during their Project Graduation. This year's graduating class will also travel to different venues around town for their Project Graduation held after the graduation ceremony on May 29. PHOTO PROVIDED BY TERI HUDSOIN

three committees and designated a chairman for each."

This year organizers have decided to stay close to home.

"We have decided to stay in Albany for the second year in a row," Fields said. "It seems to be the most successful way for the kids to enjoy their last celebration together."

The activities planned for students will be a surprise, so details were not mentioned.

"We would like to keep the activities secret, but the locations will be scattered around places in town such as the football field, City Park, the City Pool, and other popular places for activities," Fields said.

The food committee looked to previous planners for ideas on what to prepare.

"Parents from last year and the previous year told us the kids enjoy finger foods and that they

don't eat much because they are so tired by the end of the night, so we are planning on following that advice. Students must stay at Project Graduation until 5:00 a.m., and we will be serving breakfast before they leave," Fields said.

The gift committee must discuss possible gift ideas for the new graduates.

"This year, every senior was asked what they would buy with \$100 for their dorm, and we're going to try and comply with their requests," Fields said. "They will also be given Albany Bucks, which can be spent on anything from gas to clothing in town."

The Albany Drug and Alcohol Task Force has made many contributions to help with Project Graduation over the years.

"The main purpose for Project Graduation is to provide a graduation celebration that is drug and

alcohol free, and the Albany Drug and Alcohol Task Force has helped make that a reality," Fields said.

Project Graduation has evolved since its local inception.

"When my daughter Bobbie graduated in 2001, I helped plan her Project Graduation," high school teacher Danita Johnston said. "We started raising money really far in advance, and one of the other mothers went around town and got lots of contributions from different businesses."

The 2001 graduates had a variety of activities held at the high school.

"We had a photo booth there, along with a concession stand and various games going on, and we also bought lots of inflatables that filled up the new gym," Johnston said. "We always had a theme, and that year was about going on a vacation, so we transformed the gyms

into different destinations and used the hallway near the new gym as the plane. We also had a band that one of our ex-students was involved in play a concert."

Community involvement has been crucial to the Project Graduation.

"When we were staying in Albany for Project Graduation, it was a lot more than just driving somewhere and dropping the kids off; there was a lot of work and money that went into it," Johnston said. "The faculty was always involved, and they would put on a skit or do a song for the kids."

Johnston remembered funny moments from the skit teachers did in 2001.

"My husband borrowed a woman's skirt for the skit to dress like a woman, then he snuck up behind Mr. Davis and gave him a big kiss on the cheek," Johnston said. "I don't think I have ever seen someone so embarrassed. We still joke with him about that."

To ensure the kid's safety, the organizers set strict rules.

"Every kid had to sign a contract that said they would not leave before 5:00 a.m.," Johnston said. "After the students got there, we took their keys from them, and if they needed to leave, then we would call their parents to get them."

Fellow teacher, Jennie Bailey, was involved in the project graduation in 2006.

"We had a poker-themed Project Graduation for the 2006 graduates, and there were game stations, food, blow up inflatables, and prize giveaways throughout the night," Bailey said. "We also served breakfast the next morning around 5:00 a.m."

Since Project Graduation began, the main idea has always been to insure the safety of the graduates, at least for one of the milestones of their lives.

Lifelong classmates say goodbye

Seniors recall memories of time spent together

BY KYLEA GARDNER
Feature Editor

As students from the graduating class of 2015 begin preparation to face new adventures, several have taken time to remember the journey they have been on for the last 18 years that they will soon be looking at from the rearview mirror.

When growing up in a small town, it is not uncommon to have a good part of your senior class be the same people that graduated kindergarten by your side, so saying goodbye can be a difficult task.

"It is going to be difficult to leave my mom and all of the friends that I have made, because they have been with me every day since kindergarten," senior Rachel Kitchens said.

Shelby Barton agreed. "I'll definitely miss all my friends that I have known since we were in diapers," Barton said. "Not seeing them every day is going to be really hard for me."

The friendships that have grown over the course of their entire lives are going to be especially hard to leave for senior Thalia Dudley.

"Our senior class is such a tight knit little community, and we have grown so close over the years that I think it will be hard to adjust," Dudley said.

Unlike most other fellow classmates, senior Kaylee Waters has a positive outlook on the change.

"I don't really think that it is going to be too hard to leave Albany," Waters said. "I think it is a great town, and I will miss my friends, but I am trying to be optimistic about the whole experience."

Senior classmate Colin Read is going to miss many of the aspects of his small

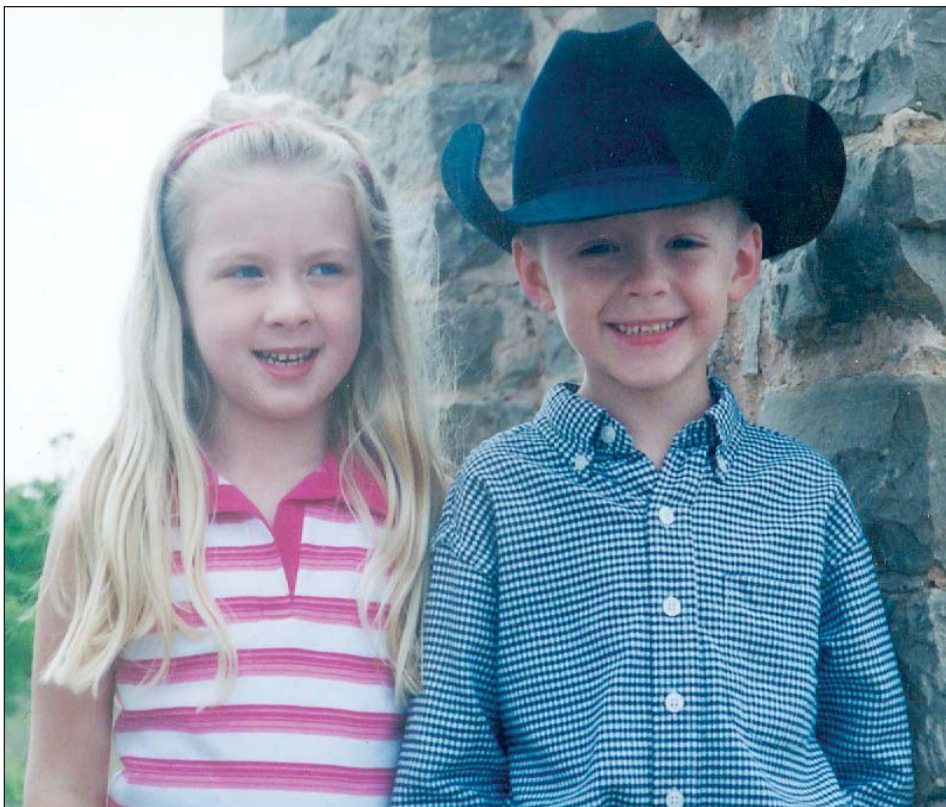
town life.

"I am going to miss seeing all my friends and playing sports for Albany, as well as making the drag and having late night Allsup's runs with the guys," Read said.

Although leaving the town they call home is bittersweet, the classmates had no trouble explaining the positive impacts that grow-

ing up here has had on them.

"Since all of my family is here, I think Albany really teaches you how important family really is, even to those who may not be related to you," Barton said. "It has made me want to come back and start a family of my own because of everything that I have learned and experienced growing up here."



Seniors Shelby Barton and Teagan Brandon (top) pose for a pre-graduation picture. The pair have been lifelong friends and classmates since kindergarten (above), sharing memories of their time in Albany schools. Many of the 23 members of the class of 2015 have gone through grades K-12 together and will walk across the stage one last last time during graduation on Friday. TOP PHOTO BY MOLLY LEE, BOTTOM PHOTO SUBMITTED

Kitchens is thankful for her hometown, too.

"Growing up here was a great experience," Kitchens said. "Since it is such a small place, there is never a stranger, and everyone knows who you are."

Growing up here has given some greater opportunities in life.

"I think that growing up in Albany has given me the opportunity to experience things that other people don't get, like really getting to know everyone and making close relationships with people," Read said.

Senior Teagan Brandon is looking to bigger and better things.

"I think that growing up here has made me really excited for the future because it opened my eyes to the fact that there is so much more to life than living in a small town," Brandon said.

Leaving for college is going to be a difficult task for a few of the graduates.

"It is going to be so hard

to leave everything I know behind," Kitchens said. "One of my friends and I have been together since daycare, so I have literally seen her almost every single day of my life, so it is going to be very hard for me."

Brandon felt the same way.

"It is going to be hard to leave for college because I know that the friendships will grow distant and we won't be as close as we once were," Brandon said.

Read is being optimistic about the new chapter in his life.

"I think it is going to be hard to leave, but I will make new friends and I know I am always going to have my friends from high school," Read said.

Through the years, the class has had their ups and downs, but coming up with memories they have shared together was not a struggle.

"My favorite memory was when we had a fake wedding in sixth grade with a couple of our classmates," Kitchens said. "All of us participated; there was a preacher and a photographer and everything."

Waters' birthday party during junior high was her most memorable experience.

"A lot of my classmates came with me to Six Flags for one of my birthday parties, and we all decided to go ride the parachute ride," Waters said. "Teagan (Brandon) was screaming and freaking out the whole time, and when he finally got off the ride he swore he would never ride another roller coaster again."

One of Read's birthday parties was also a memory he will never forget.

"The best memory I have is when we went camping at Fort Griffin for my birthday party in elementary school. Chandler (Fields) fell into a big patch of prickly pear, and Dylan (Petree) got glow stick juice in his eye," Read said.

Brandon felt that his favorite memory was a time he spent with a group of his good friends.

"Sitting around the camp-

fire at the ranch with all my friends and getting spooked by every crackle of the leaves, along with all the long heart-felt conversations we shared on the camping trip we took a few weeks ago will be a memory I will never forget," Brandon said.

Although many aspects of their lives will be changing the day that they walk across the stage, one thing will always be true—once an Albany Lion, always an Albany Lion.

"ILPC"

Continued from | PG 1

on our side," Lucas said. "We have figured out how to produce the best product we can and build on that."

But even with all of the hard work, there is still some room for improvement.

"Our photos and captions were our weaker points," Lucas said, "but the judges were very complimentary of our writing and layout."

This was not the first time *The Lions Roar* has been recognized.

"This was our tenth Star Award," Lucas said. "We have six Gold, three Silver, and one Bronze. I think the reason why we receive many Star Awards is our consistency with the paper."

The yearbook staff also turned in entries from last year's yearbook to be evaluated for awards. Four staff members received the honorable mentioned award.

"I received Honorable Mention for one of my sports photos," junior Tobi Nall said. "I felt surprised that I was even recognized, but I was excited at the same time."

Also at the convention, students and advisors attended classes to help improve their publications.

"The classes gave me more ideas and options to help me produce a better yearbook," junior Savannah Perez said. "Also, it gave me a new perspective on how to take better photos and to try to capture the perfect moment."