

The Wiking

GRAYSON COLLEGE

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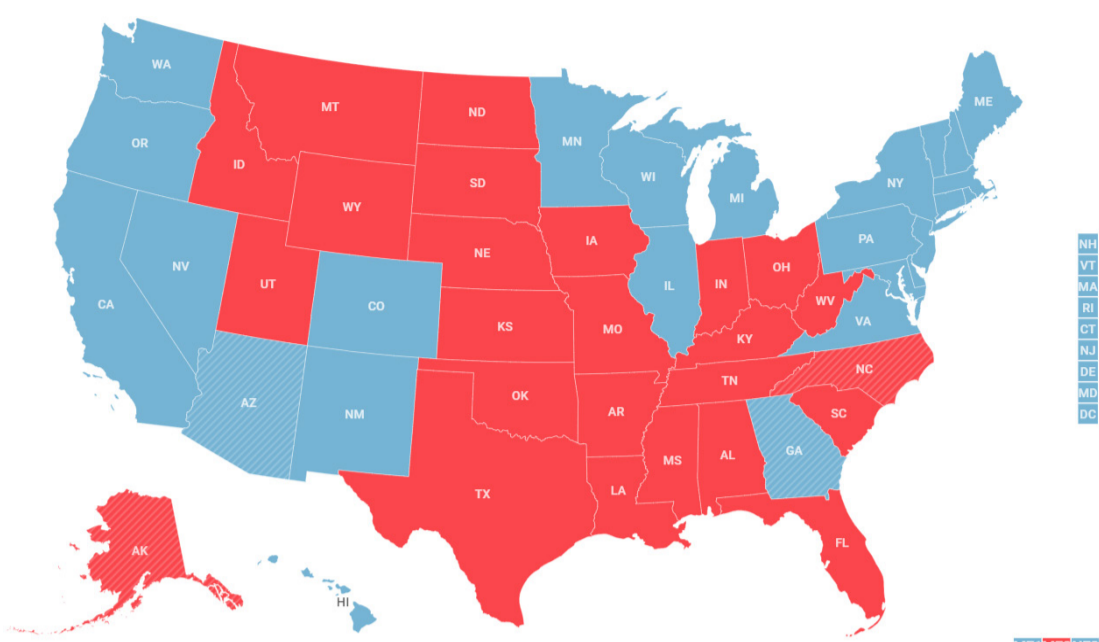
President-Elect Joe Biden shifts focus to pandemic

- Viking Staff

Joe Biden will become the 46th President of the United States. The win comes after the Democratic candidate successfully won back the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, all of which went for Donald Trump in 2016. Four states--Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Alaska--have not officially been called as of writing. However, with 279 electoral votes, Biden has surpassed the 270 needed to claim the presidency.

Following this win, the Biden team is now pivoting away from campaigning into transition. On Sunday, November 8, the Biden-Harris transition team released the statement, "We are preparing to lead on Day One, ensuring the Biden-Harris administration is able to take on the most urgent challenges we face: protecting and preserving our nation's health, renewing our opportunity to succeed, advancing racial equity, and fighting the climate crisis."

On Monday, Biden announced the creation of a coronavirus task force as the first step of his transition. This task force will be led by former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, former US Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. David Kessler and Yale University's Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith. Other board members include Dr. Luciana Borio, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, Dr. Atul Gawande, Dr. Celine Gounder, Dr. Julie



Above: Decision Desk HQ calls as of 8am Nov. 9, 2020. Striped states represent leads not official calls. (Source: Decision Desk HQ)

Morita, Dr. Robert Rodriguez, Dr. Eric Goosby, Micheal Osterholm, Loyce Pace, as well as Rick Bright. Some may recall Bright as the ousted director of the National Institute of Health who gained fame as a coronavirus whistleblower under the current administration.

Biden's task force announcement comes the same day pharmaceutical company Pfizer released a statement that their coronavirus vaccine is

showing 90% effectiveness. While this early data does not mean a vaccine is forthcoming, it does put the company in a position to potentially secure an emergency-use approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

In a statement, President-Elect Biden congratulated "the brilliant women and men who helped produce this breakthrough and to give us such cause for hope." Biden went on to remind the public that even should the vaccine be approved later in the month, it would take several more for the vaccine to roll out to the mass public. "Americans will have to rely on masking, distancing, contact tracing, hand washing, and other measures to keep themselves safe well into the next year," the statement continued. "Today's news is great news, but it doesn't change that fact."

Pandemic puts extra pressure on Fannin County non-profits

- Savannah Johnson, Student



Above: Joseph Johnson, director of the Loaves and Fishes food pantry, poses in front of the food pantry's shelves. (Photo provided by author.)

According to Feeding America's 2018 "Map the Meal Gap" studies, 14.9% of Fannin County's total population struggles with food insecurity. This need greatly affects the children of Fannin County, too: Feeding America's studies show that more than one-fifth of the children who live in Fannin County do not always have access to enough food, especially foods that are high in nutrients.

Over two-thirds of students in Fannin County qualify for free or reduced-price lunches at school. "[This amount is at least] 70% everywhere in Fannin County, and that—that tells you a lot," says Terre Curtis, the director of Feeding Fannin, a local hunger relief organization that serves all of Fannin County.

Proper nutrition important for success in school and beyond

Without enough food, a student's ability to think clearly and learn effectively is weakened. Nathan Parks, a family nurse practitioner who works in Leonard, Texas, relates the human body to a machine and compares food to fuel. People can either give themselves "really good premium fuel" or bad fuel. However, "our brains function best when we eat high-quality foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that help to nourish the brain. . . ." Parks states.

When students haven't eaten, it becomes harder for them to focus on the class that they are attending.

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Booming beauty business drives students to GC Cosmetology program

- Phoebe Fanning, Student

Cosmetology is a booming industry. According to Natasha Ketabchi, a writer for *Toptal*, the industry expects exponential growth of 13% over the next 10 years with over 175,000 future cosmetologists in the United States enrolling in cosmetology school each year.

On a local level, the Grayson College Cosmetology Program offers certificates in multiple specialties such as the nail technician program, the esthetician and skin care specialist program, the cosmetology instructor program, as well as the general cosmetology program.

McLain's special touch

Grayson's program is run by director Charlotte McLain, who has been a certified cosmetologist since she was just 16 years old. She first got involved with cosmetology when she was just 15, however, attending the Sherman Beauty School "back in the day." She owned three salons before enrolling in North Central Texas College (NCTC) to pursue her instructor's license.

While at NCTC, McLain witnessed graduates coming out of beauty school but not really having the experience or knowledge needed

to do their job. That's when she decided to try and make a difference by teaching cosmetology herself and has since helped to prepare many students for their future careers. She has been teaching for 17 years now, 15 of those years being at Grayson.

Same goal, different reasons

Every student involved in the program at Grayson is there for the same goal, but each student has their own reason for being in the program. Kate Shaffer, a student in the esthetician program, stated, "I really wanted to make people feel pretty." She's always had a passion for the skincare and beauty industry as a whole. The Grayson program was "[just] the right fit" for Shaffer.

Another student enrolled in the esthetician program, Abby Terry, commented, "I was in school to be a teacher, but it just wasn't for me, and I've always loved cosmetology."

"I've been [so] shocked by how much I've learned in such a short period of time," revealed Shaffer. Terry agreed, mentioning how tactile the program really is. "A lot of students come in thinking it's just for fun.... [but] there's a lot [more] to [the program]," stated McLain.

(Continued on pg 4)

From cattle to cowboys: agricultural life takes COVID hit

- Alissa Anderson, Student



Above: Cattle graze early in the morning at Flanagan Cattle Co. in Leonard, TX. (Photo by author)

Christy Flanagan is from generations of cattle ranchers, and she and her family own Flanagan Cattle Co. located in Leonard, Texas. With this experience in the ranching industry, they have encountered many roadblocks during the last few months.

Due to COVID-19, packing plants haven't opened back to full capacity. To make up the lost cost, packing plants are charging more to grocers, and the producers--the farmers--are having to lower their prices in order to sell.

"The prices in beef being sold from the rancher go down \$.20-.30 a pound per cow," Flanagan explained. Ranchers receive two to three paychecks for their cattle a year. So while \$.20-.30 may not seem like a lot, when one is selling cattle that are over a thousand pounds with 100 cows being sold,

it comes to a lot of money ranchers are losing.

Rodeo woe

Will Grote, a cowboy from Oklahoma who grew up in the rodeo community and is now raising his son in the lifestyle, has helped with stock contractors, hauled trailers, and has his own private business, growing and selling crops for medical use within the community. He has dealt with many trying circumstances during the normal course of his work, such as finding distributors, licenses he must have and more, but COVID-19 has hindered him in additional ways.

Grote said, "When traveling, you eat on the road a lot because that is the easiest in and out with schedules and places to be. When COVID-19 came at full force, the regulations caused businesses and restaurants to close down."

(Continued on pg 4)

Health Sciences Department updates for 2021

-Cassandra Tower, Success Coach



Above: Recent graduates of the Nursing Assistant Program. (Photo provided by Marlene Phillips)

The **Vocational Nursing Program (VN)** application is now available! This program admits new students each Fall semester with an application deadline is for June 10, 2021. This is a certificate program with no GPA requirements. *Please email lvn@grayson.edu for more program information.* This program admits new students each Fall semester.

The **Associate Degree Nursing Program** application is now available! This program admits new students each Fall and Spring semester. The current Fall 2021 initial application deadline is for January 31, 2021. *Please email nursing@grayson.edu and ask for the traditional two-year Associate Degree Nursing (RN) application for any motivated student wanting to pursue their RN license, or the three-semester Transitional Entry (LVN-RN) application for current LVN's wanting to pursue their RN license.*

The **RN-BSN Program** admits new students every term, all year long. *Please email rn-bsn@grayson.edu for more program information.* You must be a fully licensed Registered Nurse to apply to this program, as well as meet other prerequisite and GPA requirements.

The two-year **Radiology Program** application is now available. This program admits a new class each Fall semester, with an application deadline of May 1, 2021. *Please email radiology@grayson.edu for*

more program information.

The one-year **Dental Assisting Program** admits a new class each fall semester. The application will be available February 1 with a priority application deadline of August 2, 2021. Certificate and associate degree options are available. *Please email dental@grayson.edu for more program information.*

The **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic Program** admits a new class each Fall and Spring semester. This is a one-semester long program with no Prerequisite or GPA requirements needed. This is a perfect program for recent high school graduates and anyone wanting a rewarding career in emergency medicine. The Spring 2021 application is now open and closes on January 1, 2021. *Please email ems@grayson.edu for more program information.*

The **Paramedicine Program** admits a new class each fall semester, with Certificate, fast-track, and associate degree options. The application will be available in the Spring 2021 semester. *Please email ems@grayson.edu for more program information.*

The **Medical Laboratory Technology Program** is a two-year Associate degree program. *Email Director Aimee Flynn for program and application questions at flynna@grayson.edu; an advising session is required for admissions consideration.*

Below: Health Science students learn hands on. (Photo provided by Marlene Phillips)



GC RN Program takes pandemic precautions in stride

-Robert Rehmet, Student

The Grayson College RN program relies heavily upon local hospitals to provide RN students the opportunity to practice nursing skills in a clinical setting. This training is a critical part of the RN students' education as it allows them to care for patients under the supervision of teachers and nurses. When the COVID pandemic began, however, clinicals ended.

"Spring semester I was at TMC [Texoma Medical Center] for clinicals, and of course, they shut down everything, and no students were allowed in the hospital," recalled Danielle Felder, a nursing student in her final semester of the nursing program at the time.

Clinicals provide hands-on experience for the nursing students, who complete over 1,000 hours of clinical practice before graduation. In addition to the hospital, students practice their skills in Grayson College's simulation lab, which replicates a hospital setting and gives the students an opportunity to practice in a controlled environment before putting skills to use in a live hospital setting.

Two Weeks to Transition

Before the pandemic, simulated clinicals in the lab had comprised only 10% of the students' clinical training experience, with the

other 90% being in the hospital, and there had been no virtually simulated clinical training at all.

Then on March 21, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott signed an executive order allowing nursing schools to make greater use of virtually simulated clinicals for students in their final year.

The RN program faculty decided to transition the program to 100% online simulation. "It was a lot of hard work for the faculty," recalled Dr. Jamie McKinney, the Director of Nursing for Grayson College.

McKinney and her colleagues began considering various virtual simulation products to determine which ones would provide the best learning experience.

These products, however, required the faculty to create and develop case studies as well as protocols for debriefing the students to make the virtual experience meaningful. The faculty successfully created a virtual, online nursing program in approximately two weeks.

Safe Simulation

While acknowledging that there is no replacement for a hospital setting, McKinney was pleased with the results, noting that "[virtual] simulation is very beneficial . . . way to learn in a safe setting." Students in their

final year of nursing school completed the spring semester completely online.

Students in their first year, however, did not receive the benefit of Governor Abbott's waiver. They could complete only 50% of their clinical requirements through virtual simulation. The other half had to be made up over the summer.

With Fall comes change

This fall semester, clinicals have resumed with some changes. Before the pandemic, hospital clinicals consisted of 12-hour shifts. Now, clinicals have been reduced to 8-hour shifts and are conducted in full personal protective equipment (PPE). All simulations in the lab are conducted using PPE as well.

Danielle Mitschele, an RN student at Grayson in her third semester this fall, knows the faculty has worked diligently to resume hospital clinicals. "I know it was hard on [the faculty] to adapt . . . and make sure we can stay in the clinical setting," said Mitschele.

She also noted that the rules regarding PPE and other limitations designed to reduce the risk of spreading COVID are strictly enforced, both on the Grayson College campus and in the hospital. Mitschele is happy

to comply with the restrictions, knowing they allow clinical training to continue.

While the RN program faculty is relieved to return to live clinicals, they learned some important lessons when they were forced to become completely virtual.

"There are definitely some positive things that we will continue to do in the future . . . especially with regard to some of the case studies and discussions that we had with students . . . about patient care and understanding the thinking process of a nurse," said McKinney.

There is little doubt that the COVID pandemic will continue to evolve, but Grayson's RN program has shown the ability to quickly adapt, allowing it to continue preparing nursing students to meet the professional challenges that await them after graduation.



Above: RN students pose together in the GC simulation lab. (Photo by author)

Students with ADHD and Dyslexia discuss struggles

-Madison Vaughn, Student

Many students in high school or college often feel stressed out and at times struggle with completing their school work or have a hard time learning the material. Learning can be quite challenging for anyone. However, for students with conditions such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and dyslexia, these learning conditions make it more challenging..

While some students have it harder than others, ADHD often affects the students' attention and ability to sit still. Colt Long, a 4th-grade student at Princeton Elementary, says the hardest part about sitting at his desk all day is "having to write, especially in cursive because there are like a thousand papers in my class."

However, his doctor has provided a tool to aid his struggles. "When I take my pill [Focalin] in the morning, it helps me concentrate," Long shares. Students who take ADHD medication may show some improvement in their ability to stay concentrated; however, they still need teachers and parents to provide support and teach them essential life skills, according to the website *ADDitude*.

Unorganized/can't focus

While ADHD can affect a student's life at school, it also affects their life at home. Being unorganized is a trait that students with ADHD often have, which include unorganized desks, forgotten

homework, and missed deadlines, states *ADDitude*. "I feel a little unorganized because when I start to play with my toys, they fall on the floor, and I forget to pick them up," Long says.

Students with ADHD also often have a hard time remembering information taught in class. They may have difficulty focusing and distinguishing between important and unimportant information, relates Keath Low of *Very Well Mind*. Long often forgets "homework or spelling words for a test." For him, though, having a hard time listening is not an issue "unless it's about something I don't know."

ADHD/dyslexia link

ADHD and dyslexia often go hand-in-hand. It is proven that about 50 to 60% of people who have ADHD are also diagnosed with another learning disability, with the most common of these is dyslexia, reports Roberto Olivardia of *ADDitude*.

Dyslexia manifests itself differently in every individual, but it's most apparent in having a hard time processing words or numbers and trying to read. About 8 to 17% of the population is affected by this condition, Olivardia notes.

Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language, according to Roxanne Hudson, author of "Dyslexia and the Brain: What Does Current Research Tell Us."

"Reading with dyslexia is

difficult," 11th-grade student at Leonard High School Ricky Rackler explains. "I have to go slow and make sure everything I am reading is right. I double-check myself to make sure I don't lose focus."

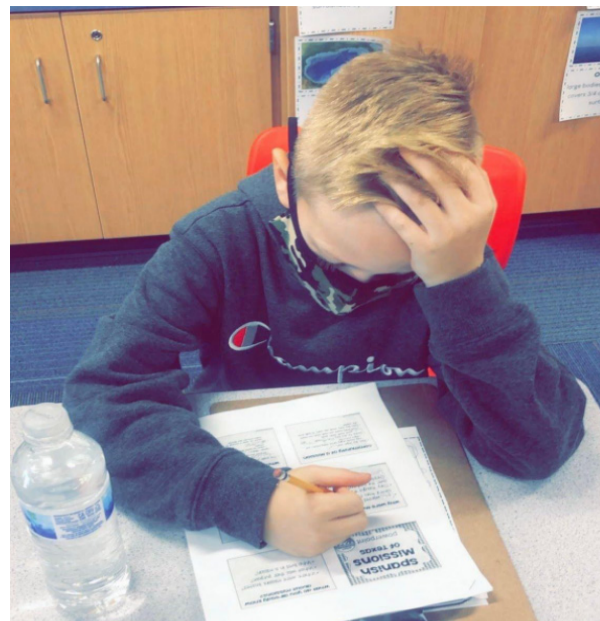
Scientists have proven that the dyslexic brain processes written words differently. Brains of students with dyslexia rely more towards the front of the brain, whereas strong readers rely more towards the back, observes Hudson.

Reading aloud is another common struggle for most with dyslexia. These students find it difficult to differentiate between certain letters such as "p" and "d" or "q." Rackler explains, "It's even harder for me to pronounce the words aloud because I will stutter, and it usually gets worse from there."

Leonard High School senior Tyson Burgess agrees with this statement, stating, "Yes, reading aloud is a challenge. I have to take my time and read slower to make sure I know exactly what I am reading."

Effects on social life and extracurriculars

Like ADHD, dyslexia affects more than just the students' school life, which can impact them socially. "It can go from forgetting what a word means to losing focus overall and getting off-topic no matter what you are doing," Rackler says. Dyslexia can affect memory, time-keeping, concentration, multi-tasking,



Above: Fourth Grader Colt Long works hard in class despite the challenges of ADHD. (Photo provided by Casey Long)

and communication, which all impact everyday life, according to the British Dyslexic Association. "Dyslexia affects people," Burgess says. "It affects me through my daily life such as stumbling over my words when I talk."

In high school, sports play a large role, especially for the students directly involved. Even though sports can be hard for each person, players who don't have these learning conditions may have a better understanding of the game and can learn the plays more clearly. "[With dyslexia,] remembering some of the signs and plays for football can be challenging," Burgess says. "Other than that, everything else seems normal." Students with dyslexia often thrive more on the court or field than they do in the classroom. When it comes to falling behind in the classroom, sports can equal out the playing field, claims Eryn Feeney of *Lexercise*.

However, students who have these learning conditions can succeed just as often as students who don't! Having ADHD and dyslexia may be a challenge, believes Feeney, but with this struggle comes a lot of personal growth, and more to offer to their family, the workplace, the town, and most importantly, themselves.

For survivors, sexual assault can have lasting impact

-Racheal Wheeler, Student

"I feel like I can't trust anyone ever. It's gotten so bad that I don't even feel comfortable when my closest friends put their hands on my shoulder," Julia Melville*, a senior at Leonard High School, confessed. Melville's assault continues to affect her day-to-day life, even 10 years later.

Melville tried to ask for help when she was sexually assaulted, but everyone she talked to about her abuse believed she was lying and hadn't really been sexually abused. Her own aunt turned a deaf ear to her pleas and told her to keep her mouth shut. Melville was horrified because she had no one to turn to. She felt ashamed and embarrassed to try to tell anyone else. For a while, she even blamed herself for what had happened to her. "I feel so guilty sometimes I can't even think straight," she confessed.

Gwen Monroe*, another senior attending Leonard High School, was sexually assaulted for around five years. When the abuse first started, she was about six years old and didn't quite understand what was happening to her. As Monroe started to mature, however, she started to understand the assaults a little clearer and became devastated, as she realized she'd been victimized.

The absolute worst part about finding out what had happened was that she didn't remember everything about the encounters. "Every day for years I would sit and try to remember what my abuser had done to me. I couldn't remember, though, and it was horrifying."

Body insecurities

Students who have been sexually assaulted tend to feel insecure about their bodies, said Melville. Many times they feel the need to

wear extra layers of clothes so that they "don't provoke boys." Monroe said, "Constantly, I feel like he [the abuser] is remembering those five years of my life... I feel like I'm never wearing enough clothing, even in the middle of winter." Monroe is frightened around her abuser, whom she is still in the same environment with often and feels like she needs to be cautious around him. Being aware and anxious about what might happen again creates a very stressful and emotionally hard time for her.

Withdrawing or acting out

Trauma from sexual abuse can affect these students in their high school lives daily. "I have seen students react [to sexual abuse] in different ways. Some withdraw from friends and activities and struggle with depression, whereas some begin acting out and doing things out of their normal behavior while struggling with substance abuse, depression and even self-harm," Kacie Littrell, guidance counselor at Leonard High School, explained. Both Monroe and Melville suffered from depression, resulting from the abuse, which resulted in self-harm. In addition, the depression caused by sexual abuse can disrupt students' learning process, Littrell added.

Inconsistent effects

Although sexual assault impacts some people's lives similarly, it can affect others' lives differently. Even though Monroe's abuser was male, she feels more comfortable with her male friends rather than her female friends. She even feels more comfortable around male friends whom she has known for only a few months than female friends she's known for many years. Another difference in the way Monroe reacts is that she didn't start

to self-harm until other tragedies started to consistently pile onto the struggles she was already facing.

Trusted resources

When students are sexually abused, they are often afraid to explain to someone what has happened to them. Many students worry that they won't be taken seriously, stated Monroe. Nor do they know where to turn for help. However, Littrell feels like students shouldn't be afraid to reach out to the adults they can trust, including their school counselor, their parents (in most cases), their teachers, the police, and other adults with whom they have a close relationship.

Awareness key

Sexual abuse isn't always taken seriously by those who haven't been directly affected by it. However, students and staff at Leonard High School believe that there are a few ways that high schools can work on making sexual abuse a more widespread topic. "I think that awareness is key. Teaching students about warning signs, where to go to report abuse, and how to handle situations could help students that are faced with these horrible situations," Littrell said. Being aware of how common sexual abuse is and understanding that sexual abuse is a real problem will help students treat the topic in a more mature manner, she added.

"Sexual abuse is something that everyone... should take seriously," Melville claimed, because this attitude will not only help students who have been personally affected by sexual abuse and have come forward about the abuse, but also help those who are too afraid to inform someone who could help. (E/N: Some names in this article have been changed.)



NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

If you were affected by sexual assault, **you are not alone.**

online.rainn.org
800.656.HOPE

National Sexual Assault Hotline

No matter what stage of recovery you're at, confidential, anonymous support is available 24/7 for survivors & loved ones.

Telephone
800.656.HOPE

Online chat
online.rainn.org

- Talk to a trained staff member or connect with a local sexual assault service provider.
- Get direct, personal, one-on-one support.

- Chat one-on-one with a trained support specialist.
- Secure technology, accessible from any device.

rainn01 @rainn rainn



The National Sexual Assault Hotline is operated by RAINN, the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. This postcard was produced by RAINN under Grant No. 2014-KV-BX-6204, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this postcard are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

(Continued from Beauty Business pg 1)

Many students may think that they will just be “playing with hair and makeup” when in reality, these students are not only learning cosmetology, but they’re learning the science behind it as well. “Don’t get me wrong--we do have a lot of fun--but I think [they] might think it’s just for fun,” McLain added.

A day in the life

A day in the life of a cosmetology student may differ from what one might expect. They arrive at Grayson at 8 a.m. and start their day with their instructor, briefly going over what they’ll be learning that day. Following the initial meeting, the students are free to move from the classroom to their work environment, where they practice doing a variety of tasks, such as facials, chemical peels/exfoliants, lashes, waxing, and many other cosmetology-related activities.

Something intriguing about their practice is that the students also can have individuals from outside the program come to the school to have cosmetology work done at a discounted price. Due to COVID-19, the program is unfortunately not taking any clients right now, but the students still get to practice their skills on mannequins, as well as on each other.

The students are released at noon for their 30-minute lunch break and then return to the school until 3:30 p.m. to finish up their day. The future cosmetologists do this Monday-Thursday, making them full-time students.

The students in this program have big goals for their futures. Shaffer plans on continuing her education to learn how to do Botox as well as esthetician work. Terry plans on working in a med spa after earning her degree. Shaffer and Terry are both confident that when their expected graduation comes around in May of 2021, they will be fully prepared to join the workforce.

Both students have bright futures ahead of them with big goals in cosmetology. The passion both women share for the industry, along with the knowledge they’re gaining from the program, will benefit them indefinitely in their future careers. McLain explained how rewarding it is to see this drive from her students: “When they graduate, I love [seeing] how excited they are about their new careers.”

Editorial Information

The Viking is published by Writers Unlimited and Sigma Kappa Delta as an ongoing service project to the college. This newspaper is provided as a forum for public opinion. Participation in the production of **The Viking** is open to all students, faculty and staff of Grayson College.

The views expressed in **The Viking** do *not* necessarily reflect the views of the editor, Writers Unlimited, Sigma Kappa Delta, the Board of Trustees, the administration or the faculty and staff of Grayson College.

Submissions and corrections may be sent our editor, Storm Anderson, by email at stnanderson@vikings.grayson.edu

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK IN The Viking?

Any work received between publication of this issue and the start of Spring 2021 will be considered for the Volume 13 Issue 4 of **The Viking** to be released in early February.

WE ARE HERE TO COMFORT AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN TIMES WHEN IT GETS HARD FOR PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Black Print

The purpose of Black Print is to bring individuals together to help improve the lives of African Americans and give them opportunities to let their voices be heard. Also, we will bring change and diversity to Grayson College.

We meet every wednesday at 1pm virtually.

Please contact Shenna Taylor for meeting link at taylorsta@garyson.edu

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATH!

Phones and Precautions: Medical Professionals stay flexible

- Catherine Finley, Student

In January, we could walk into a hospital with our loved ones who had important doctors’ appointments and sit in the waiting room with them or visit a friend who had had a baby. Circumstances have dramatically changed in the past 11 months. While our medical workers continue to do what they can to combat this time of crisis, the uncertainty of the crisis has put additional strain on their profession.

Labor pool

When the pandemic began, we went into lockdown so that the medical field wouldn’t be overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. However, for those healthcare workers who don’t work in the Emergency Room or Intensive Care Unit, it was difficult to find jobs to do during their work days.

Chuck Finley, a radiologic technologist at a hospital in Allen, Texas explained that when the radiology department stopped doing elective procedures in March, the hospital created a “labor pool.” The purpose of the pool was to keep employees on the payroll by giving them odd jobs around the hospital, some of which included disinfecting, receiving medical supplies, or screening patients at the front door. Finley revealed that he and his coworkers felt grateful that they were able to continue to earn money and that not a single worker at the hospital was laid off.

Phone visits and drive-thru testing

Dr. Andrea Lawson,* a physician at a family practice office in Frisco, said that in-person visits stopped at her clinic for about 5 weeks when the pandemic began. Much of the office staff were furloughed, and the doctors worked for almost no pay. Lawson’s clinic has been doing phone visits and drive-through testing since March, and they currently offer antibody testing as well. Governor Greg Abbott has allowed doctors’ offices to be compensated for phone visits in order to keep them open; however, Lawson admitted that the compensation does not make up for the lack of regular business.

Pre-procedure COVID test

Towards the end of June, the governing officials in Texas deemed it safe to resume elective medical procedures with precautionary measures in place. “Every patient that comes in for any procedure--elective or emergent-- gets a COVID test. If it’s a scheduled procedure and the patient tests positive, they get rescheduled. The COVID tests for the emergent patient usually come back after the

procedure has started, so we treat those patients as if they’re positive,” Finley explained. About one out of every ten elective procedures the radiology department scheduled has had to be postponed due to a positive COVID test, and about one third of all emergent cases are patients with the virus.

According to Dr. Lawson, doctors’ offices were also allowed to begin scheduled visits again, but only those visits that were necessary for patients to have in person. Patients who have known exposure to the virus and multiple symptoms are offered a phone visit. Lawson’s office has reduced office staff to around 50 to 60 percent on shift at a time to minimize contact between people. “Phone visits were not a long-term fix, but they were better than not being able to provide care,” observed Lawson.

Better PPE and precautions

“Surgical procedures are a much bigger deal now,” Finley remarked when talking about the necessary safety equipment used by doctors and nurses. According to Kirsten Samuels,* a registered nurse at a hospital in North Texas, before the pandemic, the required personal protective equipment during surgery included surgical caps, gloves, eye protection, gowns, and the all-too-familiar blue medical mask.

Now, when doing procedures on infected patients or those who have not had COVID-19 tests, medical teams must wear N-95 masks as well, which are proven to protect both the doctor and patient from any possibility of infection. “We also minimize equipment in the procedure room and pretty much get it to the bare minimum; we also utilize extra staff to be the clean person to hand us catheters and wire we need for the procedure,” said Samuels. Masks are worn around coworkers and patients who have tested negative for the coronavirus. While the hospital has not run out of protective equipment, they have had to ration their equipment since the start of September.

Nearly eight months into the US COVID pandemic, medical professionals continue to work and treat patients with the best quality of care they can provide. That includes slowing the spread of the virus, both to protect themselves and others. Samuels professed, “I make it a personal responsibility to take care of myself and to not be infected by doing what the Center for Disease Control, the health department, and the hospital tells me to do.”

(Continued from Cattle and Cowboys pg 1)

Grote continued, “There were only so many places to go, and when pulling a trailer, it was limited where you could get into.”

Similarly to how the cattle industry was affected by COVID-19, stock contractors sell or rent livestock to rodeos, so when events were canceled, their jobs and contracts were broken. This left contractors and competitors who rodeo for a living unable to fund their livelihood, Grote explained.

Welding jobs dry up, farming uncertain

Jobs in the agricultural industry such as welding work have also been affected by the pandemic.

Travis Morrison graduated with an associate degree in welding and is a certified welder. Yet he has struggled to find jobs in the welding industry due to COVID-19, and instead turned to farming. Morrison explained, “[Farming] parts have gotten harder to get in with the price going up due to import and export.” While prices have gone down for selling crops, the parts and supplies needed for farming have gone up or stayed stationary, making them harder to afford.

From making it hard for agriculture employees to get jobs to ranchers losing money day by day, COVID-19 has taken a toll.

(Continued from Fannin Co. Non-profits pg 1)

“[When I’ve had very little to eat before attending class,] all I can think about is how much I want to go eat instead of focus on the lecture. I don’t care as much about learning when I feel hungry. . . .” says Kaylee Mitchell, a sophomore at Collin College.

“You can’t study if you’re hungry. You can’t work. You can’t do anything when you’re hungry,” observes Curtis. People of all ages need nutritious food to ensure that they are maintaining good health, yet it is even more important that children, teenagers, and young adults have access to healthy foods. According to Parks, people in these age groups are still developing both physically and mentally, and “without the proper amount as well as type of foods, some of that growth could be limited or delayed.”

Food charities in Fannin County addressing food needs

The food charities in Fannin County make it their goal to provide Fannin County residents with food and other necessities. “The first goal would be to help people that are in need,” says Joseph Johnson, director of the Loaves and Fishes food pantry in Leonard. Similarly, Curtis states that Feeding Fannin’s mission is to “get healthy food to people, as [Fannin County is] kind of considered a food desert, where [residents are] not necessarily getting healthy produce. . . .”

The hunger relief organizations across Fannin County offer a variety of services and use several different methods of food distribution. For example, Feeding Fannin holds resource fairs and dinner nights, and they also provide a brochure with a list of food and resource charities across Fannin County. At resource fairs hosted by Feeding Fannin, volunteers set up tables covered in bags of food in an area that residents can drive through, and those who are in need of food are given a bag of pantry staples and, sometimes, fresh produce. “We also had someone here from the Ag Extension Office from Texas A&M [in March], and she did a cooking class for people while they were waiting to go through the line [at a resource fair],” states Curtis.

At Feeding Fannin’s dinner nights, Feeding Fannin partners

with local restaurants to provide free suppers to citizens in need.

The Loaves and Fishes food pantry also has several methods of making food available. When the food pantry is open, local residents can come in and browse the shelves for the items that they want. Loaves and Fishes also offers delivery services. “A lot of the folks that need food are shut in or they don’t have transportation, and so we set it up so that we maintain contact with them. Then they can contact us so we can take food to them, which is helpful,” Johnson says.

Functioning during the pandemic

According to Curtis, since the pandemic began, 325 new families have signed up to get donations from Fannin County Community Ministries, another food charity located in Bonham, Texas.

Local food charities have been giving out large amounts of food. “I actually got numbers yesterday from the North Texas Food Bank, and since March—since our first emergency disaster relief—we’ve served 160,000 pounds of food,” says Curtis. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Feeding Fannin’s resource fairs were held in a large building, but they are now drive-through events. Feeding Fannin had pre-pandemic plans to start teaching all Fannin Independent School District students how to garden and raise their own food. Those plans have been postponed.

The Loaves and Fishes food pantry has continued to offer the same services that it offered before the pandemic began, but it is now exercising more caution. When delivering boxes of food, Johnson washes his hands often and is careful to give the residents the opportunity to maintain social distancing.

You can help food charities combat the hunger needs in Fannin County in a variety of ways. According to Johnson, “helping spread awareness that there are needs, making donations, [and] encouraging folks to donate to food pantries” are some of the ways that individuals can aid in fighting food insecurity in Fannin County.

For more information, contact Terre Curtis with Feeding Fannin at 903-583-7694, Joseph Johnson with the Loaves and Fishes food pantry at 903-227-6195, or Fannin County Community Ministries at 903-583-3663.

Trenton H.S. robotics team gears up for season

- Kailee Bennett, Student

November 14 is fast approaching. The B.E.S.T. Robotics Hub competition preparation has begun. As the Trenton High School robotics team gears up for the upcoming season, new struggles have emerged during this pandemic. Many students are having to work on different areas of the competition that they had never had much to do with in the previous years. Students who used to work on only the spirit aspects of the competition are now facing new challenges of finding a job to work on. The spirit portion of the competition was mainly produced by making signs, props, and chants to say while the competition is happening. But since the organization eliminated “spirit” from the competition, those students now have to take on new jobs that include writing an engineering notebook, creating an online marketing booth, manufacturing a robot, or creating a marketing presentation.

New jobs and roles

Team members who have worked on the robotics program all of their high school career are having to develop new skill sets, specifically, Haylee Forgione, the Marketing Director, who is normally in charge of creating the marketing booth. The once in-person physical booth has now been moved completely online, to a website form.

“Instead of gathering the information and putting it inside [an actual] booth that we built, my team and I have to put everything into a website,” said Forgione. In previous years, the booth would be built out of plywood and put together at the site of the competition and then presented to a set of judges. However, “this year our booth will be a website that the presenters show the judges through a Zoom meeting,” said Forgione.

Struggles during preparation

Trenton Robotics has faced many struggles during the preparation of this year’s season due to the pandemic. Catherine Finley, the president of the team, stated that “[the team officers] broke our team up into groups based on what they would like to work on and what their talents are. [This system] allows us to work and not be concerned about having to quarantine our whole team or having the coronavirus spread.” Fabrication Director James Day noted that “the hardest thing this year is not having everyone there at the same time” because without the ability of all team members meeting at once, some ideas to improve the project were not heard.

A major struggle that all team members are facing during this season is motivation. Forgione said it best: “It is hard to be motivated to do something that you aren’t as excited about,” especially compared to her previous competition experience. “Last year was [her] first year to really be in charge of something, and the marketing booth was successful,” she recalled. Since the marketing booth was victorious the previous year, it is hard on those who worked on it to be motivated to try and make this year’s online booth successful. Forgione admitted that “[she] was ready to be able to do that again, but because of the pandemic, it just won’t be the same experience.” (Continued on pg 6)



Above: The Trenton Robotics Team cheer on the robot driving teams during last year’s state competition. (Photo provided by Haylee Forgione.)

A.L.I.C.E. brings sense of safety back to TISD

- Gracie Holden, Student

Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate, or A.L.I.C.E. is a program that has been adopted by many schools across the U.S. to combat the increasing threat of school shootings. Trenton ISD, prior to the A.L.I.C.E. program, would advise their classes during a lockdown due to an active shooter to turn the lights off, move to a corner hidden from the door and windows, then proceed to cower in hopes of surviving.

However, a few years ago, TISD adopted the A.L.I.C.E. program. Senior Kailee Bennett says the A.L.I.C.E. program made her “feel more safe and secure, knowing that [her] school is prepared at all times” and that students now can “[take] action and [stand] up for [them] selves” in case of an active shooter incident. The program ensured different levels of training for the different age groups so that the students could assist in their own safety and protection against school invasions.

Staff and students’ role

The A.L.I.C.E. program has brought many safety procedures and new implementations to the school district. Around November 2018, Trenton ISD welcomed their first School Resource Officer (SRO), Officer Nicole Hunter. Her job ranges from making sure all outside school doors and gates are closed and locked to making arrests when crimes are committed and educating students and staff on A.L.I.C.E.

An SRO is important so that the A.L.I.C.E. program can be taught; however, for the

program to be successful in problematic circumstances, the students and staff become key. Bennett shares that in an active-shooter situation, the students have jobs such as “putting [a] fire hose over the door bar, stacking heavy desks or cabinets in front of the door, having a hammer ready to break the window, or even just grabbing all of the heavy [objects] to throw at the attacker when they enter the room.” TISD’s now following A.L.I.C.E. gives students the opportunity to protect themselves. Bennett states that she “really enjoy[s] having a program like A.L.I.C.E. in place for the unthinkable situation.”

Additionally, TISD counselor Amy Shaw has a “specific role” during an intrusion, when “[her] first thought [is to] check the hall and get any students near [her] to safety.” Shaw believes the A.L.I.C.E. program is a “sound one” and that the “A.L.I.C.E. program gives [Trenton ISD] the balance of preparedness and safety without creating fear.”

Trenton High School Principal Steven Foster and Officer Hunter have taken this year’s A.L.I.C.E. program and made it more strategic. Foster states that “[the school is] having monthly lockdown and fire drills and will have a storm drill and an evacuation drill later on in the [school] year.” The school district is working to make Trenton ISD safer for all students and staff members.

Additional safety improvements

Both SRO Hunter and science teacher Aaron

Weger share the idea that changes can be made to make Trenton ISD students and staff safer. Weger believes that the “glass windows next to the rooms [should be] updated for security purposes” with thicker, up-to-date safety glass while SRO Hunter believes TISD needs to add “more cameras in and around the campuses and to hire an additional SRO so TISD can have an officer at both campuses [elementary and high school] at all times.”

Some other area campuses have implemented additional safety measures. In Texas, it is legal for school districts to have several trusted staff members carry guns, along with the law enforcement within the school. Officer Hunter, Principal Foster, Weger, Shaw, and student Bennett all believe some TISD teachers have the capability of being armed and would make the right decision in a chaotic situation.

However, all agree that teachers who would be armed could be “...burden[ed]...with carrying a gun,” states Shaw. “It makes much more sense to employ other security measures, most importantly having an armed officer on campus at all times.”

The A.L.I.C.E. program is recognized by the Trenton ISD staff and students as the best and safest choice for the district. Students now can “feel more confident... and safer,” states Bennett so the teachers can do their job effectively, and students are able to learn in the safest environment.

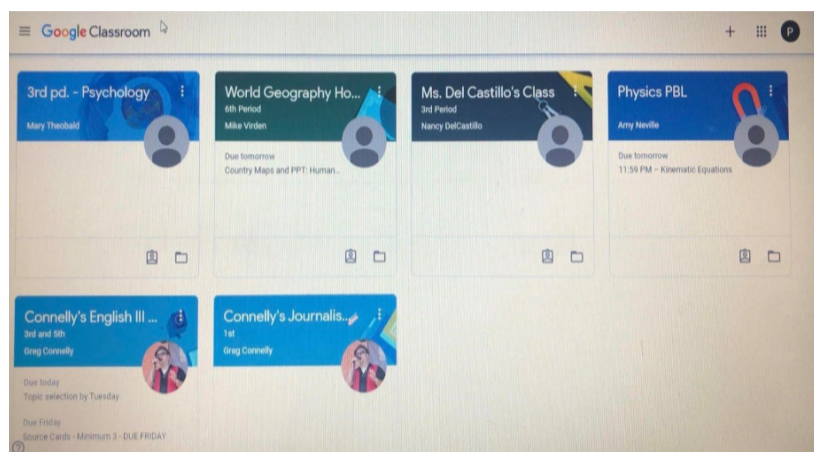
High failure rates online send some students back to class

- Brenley Sadler, Student

Due to COVID-19, many school districts have decided to let parents and students decide whether to attend school in person or work online. Leonard School board member Angela Sadler professes, "I do not like online learning. I think it is

at school by themselves, which can be understandable, Sadler acknowledges. Who wants to go to school where you sit alone every day and have no one to talk to?

Sudderth confesses, "I'm online because I didn't want to be at school. All of the people I talk to



Above: Leonard High student Paition Sudderth shares her Google Classroom web portal. (Photo provided by author.)

more effective for students to be in person with the teacher during instruction and to ask questions face to face." She has seen many students failing and not able to do their work due to miscommunications.

Many Leonard students, such as high school junior Paition Sudderth, are struggling to learn through online learning. "I'm switching back to in-person this week...because I'm struggling in one of my classes and I want to see if it will be different to learn it in person," Sudderth explains. Other students are even failing their classes due to their not turning in work or participating in their learning as they would be if learning in person, Sadler says.

Whitesboro ISD is sending all their online students back to in-person schooling, requiring them to switch schools to a different district or requesting they be homeschooled if they wish to stay online due to such a higher percentage of students failing.

Whitesboro Superintendent Ryan Harper explains, "Whitesboro High School has 74 online learners. Of those 74 learners, 48 of them are failing more than one class. With a 60 to 70% failure rate, the last 5 weeks have unequivocally proven that 'remote learning' is not educationally sound for [these] students."

Online students are often unable to communicate with teachers clearly; therefore, they often don't turn their work in on time. Online learning gives the students too much room for excuses and mistakes, believes Sadler.

Most students don't take online learning seriously because they know that there are so many excuses they can come up with for why their work is late or wrong, either because they didn't know what they were doing or they just didn't try, Sadler suspects. "I feel like I'm going through the motions most of the time," claims Sudderth.

Friends' influence

Not all students are staying home for online school because they are scared to be exposed to COVID-19. Some students just stay home because all of their friends have decided to learn online, and it's boring to be

were at home, and it just seemed nice to stay at home instead."

Others are just staying at home because they don't like school. They think the school year will be one big vacation if they stay home and learn online, and they will just magically make good grades, Sadler reveals.

Students are using COVID-19 as a reason to slack off, thinking there will be more leniency with their grades. This school year, as we all know, is different from the years past, but students still need to learn as effectively and efficiently as possible, Sadler maintains.

Teachers' struggles

Not only are some students struggling with online learning, but the teachers and staff are as well. "Because my job has forced me to teach both in person and online at the same time, COVID has taken a toll on my health and my family. I am working approximately 65-75 hours a week and have no time to spend with my family. I have no time to take care of my house or any other family needs," reveals Rita Smith*, Leonard Junior High English teacher.

Teachers are struggling with teaching because they want the online learners to be just as productive as the in-person learners. Teaching as a whole was already going to be hard enough with no sharing, no group work, and having to wear masks while teaching.

But now it is an extra struggle, having to teach a whole separate set of students virtually after teaching in-person all day. Smith explains, "I basically have to recreate everything I teach in an online version." She spends at least 75 hours a week on grading, creating lesson plans, and communicating with parents and students. This is all overwhelming and draining for her.

Sadler sympathizes with teachers' plight. "The teachers who have reached out to me do not feel like the current online learning method is effective. They feel like they are working two full-time jobs and missing out on time with family. There is no overtime pay, and the pay isn't that good to begin with, especially when working enough hours for two full-time jobs." A teacher's greatest joy is being able to interact with his or her students, but with COVID-19, not only do they not get to interact, but many other parts of their lives are affected as well, expresses Sadler.

(Continued from Trenton H.S. Robotics pg 5)

She is not the only one who struggles with this malaise. The notebook team, marketing brief team, and robot team members are all experiencing the same feelings. The motivation that the team had during the previous years has dwindled with the new obstacles. "Some setbacks include the learning curve on new programs and perfecting the process of an online interview," stated Finley.

No kickoff

Another big difference this year is that there wasn't "a kickoff this year. Instead we had a pickup. Teams were able to pick up materials with minimal contact," explained Finley.

In previous years, Kickoff Day was when teams from all counties around the Dallas/Fort Worth area came together to learn the competition rules and see the competition course for the first time. In contrast, this year, due to COVID-19, materials were received when a staff member of the robotics organization put the materials in the back of the team's vehicle. The course was also set up outside so teams could drive by and view it to ensure that there is the least amount of person-to-person contact. Even though the Trenton Robotics team is facing new obstacles, they are still striving for success.

Behind the curtain of LHS *Asylum*

- Daniel McGinley, Student

One-Act Play (OAP), the oldest University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition, involves more than actors and actresses. Astonishingly busy weeks of preparation, lights, and sounds are all required for a 40-minute performance. More than acting happens in theatre, much of it behind the curtains of the performance.

This year, Leonard High School hosted auditions for OAP on September 10, although their competition at Denison High School isn't scheduled until March 16. Director and actor senior Lora Wargo explained, "Typically, [OAP] begins 6-16 weeks before the competition, putting stress on the actors and pressure on the cast as a whole. I initiated theatre months in advance because I want to have time to adapt our play, and I want a shot at advancing to bi-district."

OAP began 2 weeks prior to auditions when the play *Asylum*, by Jerome McDonough, was chosen by Wargo. The stage was immediately booked for auditions, and the paperwork begun to attain performing rights. Next, the technology crew was recruited. In theatre, the tech crew is responsible for illuminating the stage, providing sound cues mid-performance, and building a soundtrack for all choreography.

Lighting challenges

Asylum has extensive light cues and changes, especially when compared to last year's LHS play, *Overtones*. Light director Josue Ramirez claimed, "The amount of work needed for this year's play is double what it was last year" because *Asylum* is composed of many short scenes, and the scene changes vary from light snaps to dim fades.

Each scene has different lighting, so Ramirez will be required to constantly be on the lights board. He revealed, "It takes about a week to learn everything such as what lights to use and where to point them on certain scenes."

In prior performances, Ramirez admitted that

he has struggled with spotlighting actors, especially during intense scenes due to many actors' tendencies for quick movements.

Sound matches choreography

Along with the lights, sound plays a key role in this play in particular. Currently, the sound crew is developing the soundtrack to the play, and their work consists of cutting the music in order to match the choreography developed for the play. However, the work will not end once the music has been finished. Whether it is playing the music on a certain time frame or making sure the right sound effects go off, the crew needs to know the play thoroughly.

Sound director Riley Lyday explained, "Being in charge of sound is a major job to do because you need to be perfect in order to do the job correctly." The actors depend on sound to perform their roles. She added that "it is a harder job than most people think, as you are not just pushing buttons at random times. [In *Asylum*], the sound is most important in the waltzing scene because if the sound does not play at the right time, it will leave the actors without any cues or a beat to move to."

No tech booth

Another problem for OAP is practicing the lights and sound. Wargo claimed, "Leonard [High School] is under-funded in their theater program and does not even have a properly functioning tech booth." She would like to take the tech crew and cast to another school in order to use a real tech booth, but this dream has fallen flat every year. She explained, "The tech crew is not used to the extensive system in other high schools and has to be very flexible on the day of the performance."

Committed actors needed

Leonard High School's theater program is not only under-funded but faces a lack of participation as well. Most actors perform up to five different roles in the play because there are not enough students involved in OAP. Furthermore, OAP is often not the only extracurricular activity actors and crew fit into their schedule.

Wargo insisted, "It is very important that everyone shows up to rehearsal as everyone has a crucial part to play." Everybody involved in OAP has to be committed to do their best so they will have a functioning play before the UIL competition in March. "We cannot make our cast run laps or do push-ups for not showing up. It is truly all on the actors to take initiative in their roles," Wargo explained to the cast after a rehearsal one afternoon.

Leonard High School's play will take more practice and effort to pull off than any play in the past few years. *Asylum* is much longer than prior plays with its twelve total scenes and more complicated with its many tech details. Often, most of the attention goes to the actors during OAP; however, without the hard work from the tech crew, the actors wouldn't be illuminated. The tech crew have a massive amount of work, and a successful play requires every member to know their part thoroughly, as LHS's cast and crew undoubtedly will.



Above: Director and actor Lora Wargo in last year's *Overtones*. (Photo provided by author.)