

Volume 13, Issue 2

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LHS Robotics team hopeful in Halloween Competition - Lora Wargo, Student

Last September, Daniel McGinley, assistant engineer on the Leonard High School VEX Robotics team, sat on the floor of the robot room, holding a yellow paint can completely wrapped in blue painter's tape. After helping to paint the haunted house for the team's Halloween set, he attempted to close the can of paint, first by hand, then, laughing, by kicking the lid.

Next, he whacked the lid with a hammer, followed by standing on top of the can with the lid under his feet. Finally, he decided to wrap the can and the lid in blue painter's tape in order to seal it.

McGinley, new to the team, bot from start to finish. had been worried about fitting in, but he reflected, "Looking entering at everyone laughing and having them high five me when I [finally] closed the can made me feel like part of the team." His solution to the paint-can problem showcases the mentality and determination of the robotics team.

The VEX senior robotics team accustomed to facing is unusual challenges and unique emerging with solutions. Each year, from October to March, the team competes in a variety of competitions. A new robot is typically built for every competition, and the team solely designs and creates each

This October, they are an online autonomous competition: VEX Online VRC Annotated Programming Skills. Team sponsor Terry Phifer, an engineering teacher at LHS, described the contest as "developing a one-minute autonomous program, where the judging is based upon building a program [including the robot, the set-in their case, a Halloween obstacle course-- and coding]." Phifer said the main objective was the ability to make the programming code as succinct as possible while still completing the task.

In their newest challenge,

Above: LHS Junior Bella Mott designs and constructs the hardware for this year's robot. (Photo by author.)

the parameters required the team to design their own goal that must be accomplished without anyone controlling the robot. (Continued on pg 4)

Mail Art allows local artists to stay active - Kristin Erickson, Art Professor

Every semester, Art Appreciation students at with Grayson are tasked creating small works of art and mailing them to their professors. This rather unconventional form of art has been used both by artists keeping in touch with family and friends as well as the basis of international art gallery exhibitions.

Generally, Mail Art shows are based on a theme or idea and the Art Appreciation Mail Art assignment is no different. Recently, students have been asked to recreate, in miniature, masterpieces found in some of collections of the great museums around the world.

For Grayson Art Appreciation

student body. The art professors eagerly anticipate the arrival of Mail Art submissions. With the onset of the pandemic, these works of Mail Art have become a way to tangibly connect with while students teaching remotely. Art Appreciation and Painting Professor Jesse said that, "The Reinhard tradition of hosting Mail Art exhibitions has been around for a while, but has taken on a new kind of relevancy with the current pandemic and the need for social distancing. This is one of my favorite assignments for the Art Appreciation courses at Grayson College because it encourages the students to be creative, and it is also fun to see

Above: Klimt's Death and Life by Student Marie Burditt

students, this is an opportunity to be the artist and the results are evidence of a very creative the beautiful artwork that they are able to create."

(Continued on page 4)

Gunter businesses offer pandemic-conscious **Halloween** fun

On October 31 in Gunter, Sonic and Dollar General are holding a Halloween event called "Trunk or Treat," and everyone is welcomed. This is going to be an event to remember, one to create lasting positive memories full of during a year unpredictability.

Orange string lights and spider webs will wrap the poles surrounding the car stalls, and the carhops will make food orders more exciting, delivering them while dressed up in costumes. Custom-painted face-cutout superheroes will provide community members of all ages with the perfect photo opportunity, especially those without a costume.

Games, decorated cars, a raffle, a costume contest, and many more activities will offered be to ensure everyone has a good time. People may choose to come and go as they please or stay awhile and enjoy the company of others.

Hatching a spooky idea

The idea for this event came from Shawn Deckers, general manager at the Sonic in Gunter for the past 3 years.

- Jayden Jones, Student

Before that, he worked at other Sonic locations in Prosper, Lavon, and Austin. His love for the job comes from the fast-paced work environment which always keeps him occupied.

Despite working for the company for 20 years, Deckers shares that he has never put on an event like this before. Yet, he is filled with anticipation as the days lead up to the event and is excited about "being able to bring the community together during a time of crisis."

Community outreach

Also filled with eagerness about this event is Sharayah Mullins, Sonic manager and Grayson College nursing student.

From making Sonic look festive for the holidays by stringing up lights and putting tiny fall centerpieces on tables, to walking up and down the rows of the high school parking lot while neatly placing meal deals under every student and teacher's windshield, Mullins has always helped Gunter's Sonic further reach out to the community.

(Continued on pg 3)



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Sports

Trenton Tigers look to continue last seasons success

-Anthony Taylor, Student

Josh Shipman, a football coach for 21 years, the last 3 at Trenton High School, believes that his team has the potential to be great, even against tougher schools. March In 2019, Shipman was promoted to Head Coach of Trenton's football team. "It's an honor to be a part of these kids' lives and help the team be the best it's been," Shipman remarks.

Stored talent waiting to be unlocked

In their 2017 season, Trenton lost every game they played, but in 2018, when Shipman arrived, the school won three out of their ten games. The following year, the team won four games and made the playoffs, both of which became school records for the football team. "We lost a few of our games because we beat ourselves," Shipman says.

The Trenton Tigers had close games with Como-Pickton and Tom Bean that Shipman believes his team should have won. He savs the team has a habit of playing "poorly when [we] start losing and slugging around until the game is over."

Shipman became determined to make the team better than it had ever been. Practices became more intense, the team's attitude changed, and the scoreboard favored Trenton a lot more. Shipman believes that the Tigers had a lot of stored talent just waiting to be unlocked.

New season, new hopes

In the Tiger's 2020 season, however, starting quarterback of three years, Christian Verde, is determined to make his senior year the best in the school's history. His team made the playoffs in 2019 with him as the quarterback but struck out in the first round against Honey Grove. "They were a good team," Verde explains. "We held our ground to the end of the first half at 7-14."

schools that Trenton plays have had a football team for as long as they've been open whereas the Tigers have been playing for only about 10 years. With the addition of Coach Shipman, though, his team "have learned a lot more and tried to get past that point of mediocrity."

COVID strikes

When 2020 rolled around, however, the Tigers' game plan changed. COVID-19 reduced the team's schedule from ten games to nine and gone was their bye week. "COVID-19 made us change our practices to reduce the amount of contact with other players," Shipman notes.

The Tigers even had to briefly shut down their school once and move to online learning for a period, causing them to forfeit a game against Chico that the team was sure they could win. Kuykendall recalls that 3 players on Trenton's Junior Varsity team tested positive for COVID-19, canceling all school and schoolrelated activities for that week. Safety measures keep players playing

While maintaining COVID-19 continuing protocols and practice, the coaches decided on implementing safer precautionary measures to keep players playing. The Tigers now use shields more often when scrimmaging, wear masks when the athletes are not practicing, and shorten their practices to reduce the amount of exposure amongst the players and coaches. All the coaches and managers wear masks at all times to protect each other, as well as the players. It does become difficult for the players, however, as the masks can muffle the sounds from the coaches, admits Verde.

HS Football continues with heavy caution

As the '20-21 football season begins, high school football players and coaches have had to change their mindset going into it due to the coronavirus. According to Trenton High School football coach Aaron Weger, this season is going to have its challenges, as everyone is learning how to adapt to the new safety conditions, including the requirement of wearing masks in the fieldhouse and having to stay apart while training. The players and coaching staff must adjust to the new protocol while still trying to work hard to get better every day.

Testing realities

One of the main questions is whether there will be required testing for the virus. For Trenton's program, it "would be a great idea to test all football players, but the costs and logistics are unreal at the high-school level," says Weger. As a 2A school, Trenton simply cannot afford testing for their entire team. "The tests cost around \$50-200, and with the 25-30 players on the team, that would cost us about \$1,500-\$6,000," Weger explains. Without available testing for players, all high school athletic teams have to find ways to decrease the risks of the players, coaches, and fans catching the virus.

Fewer fans allowed

Another concern is a potential limit on the number of fans allowed in the stands for each game. Bailey Burks, a football coach for neighboring Bells High School, explains that the number of fans allowed to enter the stadium was significantly decreased in order to slow down the spread of the pandemic. Burks, along with the rest of the BHS coaching staff and school board, believed it was best to keep the number of fans entering the football stadium to a minimum.

According to Burks, the school

-Braden Burks, Student

the rule will limit the support that they can give at each game. But, as Burks states about the situation, the Bells school board knows that "... in order to keep everyone safe and allow us to still continue with lives and extracurricular our activities, this is what is necessary at the current moment."

Procedure for positive test

No one wants the virus to spread across the campus and cause another shut down. This is why if a player were to be diagnosed with COVID-19, Weger, along with the other coaches, would begin to "start the contact tracing. All students that have been in contact [with the infected player] must be guarantined, and [we] could shut down a week of games if the proper precautions weren't made."

These rules about a positive case allow not only for the athlete who tested positive to stay safe, but for everyone surrounding him, such as family members or other students, to be safe. Everyone in contact with the athlete will be required to be quarantined, which should prevent a major outbreak.

Precautions to stop the spread

Players at both schools have been taking many precautions in order to halt the spread. Bohannon explains, "We put on our masks as soon as we get off the field and back into the locker room." Facilities such as the weight room and training room are not open to the football team in order to keep everyone separated. Social distancing and sanitizing have also been key to incorporate into the everyday process of football, which is "helping to prevent the spread of the pandemic." Burks expresses that the revamping of the rules has been difficult but necessary if the teams want to complete a full season of football.

With all of these changes to be made for the season to function properly, it's going to take everyone including the student athletes, coaches, and their fans to commit to the prevention guidelines. "It makes you realize how precious your time is and appreciate the fact that we get to play. No game is guaranteed, and the season could end at any time. It makes you appreciate what you have," Bohannon says.

Starting center Eden Kuykendall, four-year varsity player, а acknowledges that some

As the season progresses, though, Trenton has set another school record for the most wins in a football season with five. "If we play like we're capable of, we have a good chance of winning the next few games," Shipman says.

board was informed that Bells High School, along with all other high school football teams of Texas, were only able to "allow up to 50 percent of total stadium seating capacity. If the infection conditions worsen, we will decrease to 25% capacity."

Obviously, the capacity ruling hurts many football fans to hear, as

Trenton; Whitewright volleyball thrives despite COVID restrictions

In March of 2020, Trenton High School shut down the week after Spring Break, devastating many students, for it was their senior year. Some were ecstatic to be out of school, while others were worried about the upcoming school year, particularly about both their academics and sports teams.

While everything was still indecisive about the upcoming school year and the volleyball season, Head Coach Ashley Anderson at Trenton High said, "my first thoughts were 'Would we even have a season, and if we did, what would it possibly look like?...It was hard to plan anything with so much unknown. I just tried to focus as much as I could on the things I could control."

At neighboring Whitewright High School, however, Head Volleyball Coach Emma Smith wasn't as bothered in March. From March up until August, coaches have had a bit of time to determine whether to be concerned.

While coaches have an abundant number of seasons left in their careers, Trenton senior Gracie Holden has approached her final year of volleyball: "Back in March,

I didn't really think much about the volleyball season."

However, as time kept passing and quarantine continued, the 2020-'21 school year became an issue. "As time crept up on the season, I realized that this pandemic could potentially ruin my senior year," Holden explained. Coaches adapt to new normal

As the summer went on with no and still practices figuring information out about virus

precautions and scheduling, both head coaches were busy making changes. Coach Smith at Whitewright was busy calculating how many people could touch a ball in a group while maintaining the social-distance protocol.

Since one never knows what virus-related challenge the next day will bring, Coach Anderson and the Trenton volleyball team have adapted to the new normal by implementing several different safety measures. "Masks are required at all times unless on the court. The coaches personalized water bottles and we have found ways to keep players from sharing towels. One of the biggest changes is the amount we sanitize. After every practice we spray

down all equipment and any place Coach players have been," Anderson explained.

Parents adjust to safety protocols

Coaches were not the only ones having to make changes for the 2020-'21 season. The athletes and parents have had to stay on top of new safety protocols. For Jena Johnson, a mother of five---two on the Trenton volleyball team, a first grader, and a toddler---it has been tough adjusting to the many restrictions for sitting in the stands.

"Unfortunately, with the restrictions they've put on the games and requiring younger children to remain seated during the games, I've only been able to attend one volleyball game this year," she related regretfully.

Young children are always on the go. For them, sitting in the stands is like making a basket in football. They don't go together, Johnson explained. "It's been really hard to not go and support the team, especially my oldest since it's her senior year."

The adjustments to safety protocols and loss of fans are affecting the team. Holden commented that one of the

-Kali Johnson, Student

cumbersome changes they've had to make is "wear[ing] masks during points in the game and practices when we are within 6 feet of each other and are not doing any type of workout." Not only do players have to adjust to wearing masks, but they also must adjust to the changes for the fans. "The count in fans allowed in the stands had to be cut down to 50%. This causes many fans to stop showing up, especially if they have young children or if they are elderly," Holden explained.

Technology provides one way to help fans adjust. A mother from Trenton goes live on Facebook for anyone who wants to watch a game but is unable to attend in person. Johnson herself "usually tries to jump on and watch when the younger kids aren't requiring something from [her]." "Perhaps if the school went live from a tripod, providing a more steady view of the game, that would make the experience a bit better," she suggested.

Facing potential quarantine

An ongoing issue that many high schools have been facing is having to quarantine.

Loca

Halloween 2020



Ads like the one above are placed on every ordering stall. (photo provided by author)

Both Deckers and Mullins emphasize their desires to make people not only within Gunter, but the surrounding communities happy by putting on this Halloween event. Both hope this event will be successful. "There is going to be either 1 or 1,000 people show up, no in between," says Deckers.

(Continued from "Trenton, Whitewright" pg 2)

As COVID-19 grows, more athletes are exposed. Despite this, the Whitewright volleyball program is doing quite well. Coach Smith shared, "As of now, the team has been thankful the only sickness [players] have had was a sinus infection. It is a little heart dropping at the idea of [the program] getting shut down for it. Our girls have done a really good job completing their health screenings, temperature checks, and making good choices outside of school."

While the pandemic has profoundly affected everyone, Coach Anderson makes the most out of what she is given. "Most of the safety changes have been pretty easy to adapt to, but the one thing that has been challenging as a coach is the unknown from day to day. Not knowing who you will have each day or if you will have someone cancel on you makes it hard to get into a routine."

Currently adjacent to the little red order button at every stall at Sonic are laminated advertisements for this event to help spread awareness about the Trunk or Treat.

Community reaction

Kayla Jones, Gunter resident and mother of children ages 16 and 21, has seen numerous people discuss on a Facebook that they are not taking their children traditional trick-or-treating nor handing out candy this year. "I have seen a lot of chatter about the event at Sonic, though. From what I have seen, a lot of people are planning to go," says Jones. Although she would not plan on staying there for long, she is looking forward to stopping by to see how it turns out.

Also looking forward to the event is Griselda Mercado, another Gunter resident and mother of two young children who attend Gunter Elementary School. Her children, ages 3 and 5, have been restlessly awaiting a moment like this to be able to have a night of thrill this year. As a Mexican family, the Mercados do not typically partake in traditional American Halloween festivities such as gatherings or costume parties, only trick-or-treating. Given the Coronavirus this year, Mercado has been unsure about letting her children do even that.

The Trunk or Treat event, however, makes Mercado feel more comfortable about letting her children celebrate and dress up without having to worry about making direct contact with others. She believes that an event like this is the safest way to bring the community together, as it is outdoors and requires little-to-no physical contact.

Mercado says she is most looking forward to "getting to see the smiles on [her children's] faces after being isolated for so long. They constantly ask to go run around like they used to; it's hard for them to understand [why they can't] at such a young age." As a mother naturally does, however, she still worries about safety measures at the event and whether they will be in the best interest of her children.

Safety precautions

Deckers and his team have been working together to navigate a myriad of challenges, as there are going to be a lot of extra precautions that must be taken. "We are providing sanitation stations between each activity, along with providing the employees with their own sanitation spray to use as needed," he reports.

The biggest goal of this event is to spread happiness across the community, while at the same time keeping everyone as safe as possible. If Trunk or Treat reaches people out of town, Deckers feels it would be astonishing but says, "As long as it makes an impact on just one person, I know I have done my job."



Page 3

Leonard Football recovers from early safety setbacks

COVID-19 had already affected the school year of 2019-2020, and now it has trickled into the 2020-2021 school year at Leonard High School. When in-person classes started, it seemed as if the Leonard ISD had thought everything through and taken every precaution to ensure safety. The new guidelines included requiring everyone to wear masks and adhere to social distancing. Plastic dividers were set up between all tables and desks to ensure the students stay safe.

standards

Leonard School District, with the help of the University Interscholastic League guidelines, has been able to let the football program play this year, so the students can participate in their regular activities. Some complications have arisen, though, as some families are not comfortable allowing their child to play in a contact sport at this time.

Guidelines set by the UIL include making hand sanitizer, soap, and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in the performance areas, locker rooms, and other congregate settings. Masks should be worn at all times except when the students are practicing or in a game setting, and it is recommended that

when possible. Equipment should be kept in the students' lockers, disinfected regularly, and the school should have a school official in place to monitor that this is being done, according to UIL football guidelines for COVID-19.

As the year has progressed, these guidelines have made playing football more difficult for the players.

Challenges of playing with precautions

Tyson Burgess, a defensive UIL Guidelines set strict back for the Leonard football team, states, "The biggest challenge was not being able to have contact with our teammates during practice." Without such contact, the practice would not be as effective as with full contact.

> The linemen would not be used to blocking an actual player, and the defense would not be comfortable tackling. Full contact in football is crucial in the progression of a team, believes Burgess.

Now, in the fall, the football players come to the locker at certain room times, depending on whether they go to school in person or take classes online. Once in the building, they must remain masked while they are stretch changing, during periods, during scheduled

students stay 6 feet apart rest times, and during drills. Since the offensive linemen are so close to each other, they must wear a mask at all times.

> Coach Rae Holden, an athletic trainer and Defensive Back coach at Leonard, says, "It has made the entire football world change in the room locker and just downtime," reflecting on the locker-room atmosphere during the pandemic. "The actual play has not changed, but it's everything that goes into it."

Team quarantine

Early in Leonard's season, a player tested positive for the virus, causing the entire football program to selfquarantine for two weeks. Leonard was forced to forfeit two games during this time. "Not knowing if you will have someone test positive is the big mystery. If that happens, it makes it very difficult for programs to run smoothly," Holden says about the struggles of being a coach during the pandemic. "One kid can cause a ripple that changes the future for all the players and coaches."

Sacrifices

Everyone in the Leonard program knew the sacrifices that needed to be made to have a healthy season. Renee Allison, a registered nurse in a



-Bryce Baker, Student

surgical intensive care unit in St. Louis, Missouri, states, "I've talked to the infectious disease doctors a million times over this. We cannot keep living in fear and can't keep the world shutdown. The risk-reduction strategies that the CDC [Center for Disease Control] has recommended is what's best for preventing COVID."

Allison notes the key to ensuring Leonard's football program remains in play: "What everyone needs to remember is if they wear their masks correctly, we can massively reduce the spread of COVID-19."

Despite ongoing struggles, the Leonard football program has been doing the best they can to follow all safety guidelines implemented by the CDC, UIL, and the Leonard School District. Since the Leonard program has been following all these rules, the team did not need to be shut down after another athlete caught the virus. Leonard hopes their team can finish their 2020-2021 season strong.

Community

Page 4



Above: LHS VEX Robotics Team's Robot carries blocks while balancing on its hind wheels the 2019 Tower Takeover Challenge. (Photo provided by author.)

Everyone's got a job to do

The team's main engineers-the members who designed the bot's hardware and constructed it--were LHS junior Bella Mott, LHS senior Lora Wargo, and McGinley. However, Ferdinand Phillips, a LHS senior who drives the robot during remotecontrolled competitions and occasionally assists the engineers, stepped in to offer advice.

Meanwhile, juniors Kaleigh Winn and Karen Contreras incorporate a chose to Halloween theme into their set. Winn described her work as "not necessarily building the robot, but building the set the robots go on." The set contains a pumpkin patch, a cobweb tunnel, red pillars, and a haunted house. The robot's objective is to choose a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, drive through the cobweb tunnel, avoid the pillars, and place the pumpkin in front of the haunted house. Hell's stalagmites

one school morning in September creating "hell's stalagmites," as the team calls their red pillars, meant to represent the landscape of hell and flaunt the robot's red sensor capabilities. Yet, they ran into a slight issue. The pillars were being built from by 6" plastic cubes. 6" Contreras would take two blocks and saran wrap them into a pillar. But "when [Mott] attempted to spray paint the blocks, the paint wouldn't stick. [Moving forward,] we had to wrap the blocks in paper, [in addition to the saran wrap]," Contreras explained. Minor issues such as the slippery spray paint are addressed on a daily basis by the team, yet they must find a solution that is effective and efficient, often using their creativity to do so.

Coding teamwork

Rachael Wheeler, Leonard High School senior and team programmer, coded the bot for her team-meaning she connected the different parts Contreras and Mott spent of the software to make the

personal laptop incompatible with the coding another. find she lent Wheeler.

teammate to skim the code in team. order to spot the errors. functioning.

Collaboration key

The VEX robotics team has learned to work efficiently, either alone or together, to solve problems. Winn often enjoys painting the sets for the competitions while "listening to music or a Dungeons and Dragon podcast," whereas Mott, Phillips, McGinley, and Wargo prefer to work with a teammate. Other members, such as Wheeler and Contreras, favor working alone while another teammate supervises. Contreras explained how, "one [member] is input, while the other is working."

Many members of the team initially struggled to find out how they work best but have since developed in this area as young programmers, drivers, and set-builders. Phifer stated that

robot do what the team had in "more decisions are reached as a team and mind. However, Wheeler's completed with all involved doing their job." was Finding fun facing challenges

Social distancing and masks have been program, so she scrambled to implemented this year due to Covid-19, but Thankfully, the team maintains their connection by Wargo had a laptop with the finding creative ways to bond. In addition to coding programming, which working hard on the Halloween competition, the team--namely Wheeler, McGinley, Wargo, Despite her initial setback, and Phillips--have implemented October Wheeler eventually managed Olympics. Every day, Wheeler and Wargo find to write and upload the code. a new challenge, such as blindfolded golf, for But then she discovered that Phillips and McGinley to "compete" in. the code had several bugs. Providing laughter and relaxation in these Frustrated, Wheeler asked a vexing times has become a priority for the

Facing many challenges this season, the LHS Wargo offered to assist her Robotics team has made their experience and resolved many of the bugs adapting to unusual situations useful. Through by changing the rotation or their creativity, they have thrived. "The team the velocity of the motors. has gone to the next level in being mature After Wheeler's and Wargo's and developing procedures as a group," Phifer collective efforts, the bot was summarized. "[They have] made [tremendous] strides in being able to use [problem-solving and creativity]."



engineers, Above: LHS Junior Kaleigh Winn hones her painting skills as part of the robotics club. (Photo provided by author.)



(Continued from "Mail Art" pg 1)

If you are interested in creating some Mail Art of your own, The Denison Arts Council and the MK Gallery is hosting a Dia de Muertos mail art exhibit.

Submitted works should incorporate imagery and themes associated with Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) including sugar skulls, skeletons imitating the living, ofrendas, and papel picados. Mail art is not juried, all submissions are accepted, and no fees are required of the artist for entry. Mail art must go through the mail (postal) and though it is considered original art, it has no monetary value.

All work should be created on heavy weight postcard, blank paper, or index cards measuring 3"X 5" or 4"X 6". Other surfaces are acceptable as long as they are of one of the dimensions mentioned previously and it can be mailed.

The imagery and/or words can be drawn, painted, collaged, or stamped on one side of the post card and the mailing address on the other side. Remember to place a stamp on your mail art piece.

The mail art piece must be received no later than Monday, November 2 in order to be in the "Dia de Muertos 2020 Exhibit".

Mail to: Dia de Muertos 2020 Exhibit / MK Gallery, Attention: Mary Karam / 404 W. Main Street / Denison, Texas 75020

> *Left: Delaunay's Rhythme Sans Fin by student Miranda Casteel* Below: Picasso's The Red Armchair by student Karla Hernandez

Editorial Information

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NEXT DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 6TH



Pablo Picasso anish, active France, 1881-1973

The Red Armchair 1931 Oil and Repolin on panel 51 5/8 × 38 7/8 in. (131.1 × 98.7 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago