

thetalon



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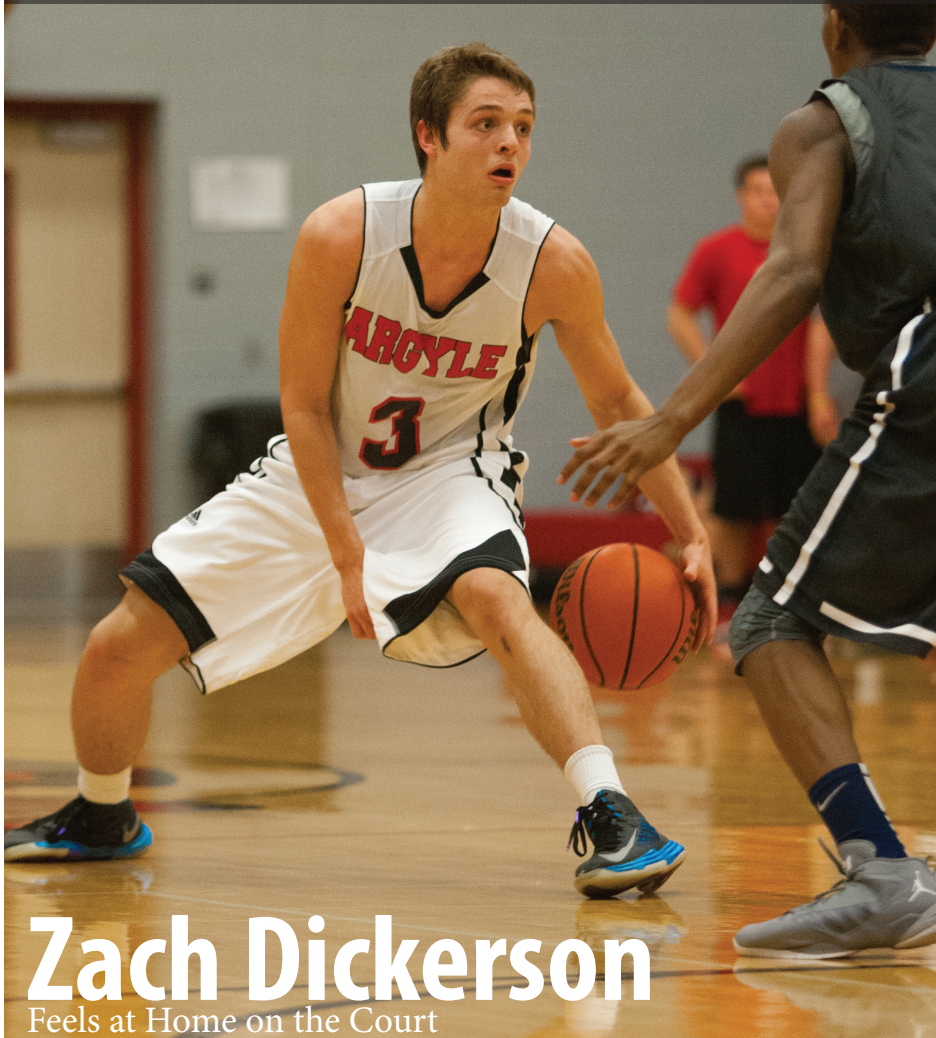
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Social Media

Do we really need all these Facebooks, Twitters, and Instagrams?



Connor Kane | Staff Writer

In the modern world, technology is evolving at an exponential rate, in terms of both capability and accessibility. So it's no surprise that there are now several forms of media that allow instantaneous communication between people around the world. Of these, there's no question that email and telephones have been successful in making the world a better, more connected place. But that certainty never seems inherent when the discussion turns toward social media. Social media has absolutely had a positive impact on our world.

During last year's Arab Spring, social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter served as powerful tools for oppositions in many countries. Before this century, nowhere could people communicate in immense numbers without leaving their homes, nowhere could oppressed citizens speak freely without fear of censorship, and certainly nowhere could those citizens organize, galvanize, and spread their messages across borders and oceans alike without any government interference. The Arab Spring has been a huge leap forward for freedom around the globe, and that is largely thanks to the influence of social media.

Similarly, activism groups have used websites such as Facebook to spread their messages and reach out to potential donors. Ben Rattray's Change.org has been a catalyst for awe-inspiring social and political reform for years. Though its influence is difficult to quantify, social media has undeniably had a profound impact on the world we now live in.

It is important to note though, that social media is not responsible for all this change; it is only a contributor, an amplifier of human energy. The Arab Spring was ultimately fueled from the ground up by human commitment and passion, and strengthened by Facebook and Twitter. Change.org only helps to facilitate the reform driven by unrelenting human activism. And millions of "likes" and "shares" alone didn't do much of anything to stop Joseph Kony.

A huge gripe about social media within the U.S. is that teenagers are obnoxious. This is true. Many teens make poor use of social media, posting pictures at parties, etc., and try as I might, I can't think of any real use for Instagram. But these splurges of teenage ego-gorging are eclipsed by the earth-shaking change spurred on by social media, and in that light, the good far outweighs the bad.

Sam Ramirez | Staff Writer

From cellphones to smart-phones, laptops to tablets, and everything in between, technology is constantly evolving and so is the medium through which we communicate and interact. Websites like Facebook, Twitter, and countless others were designed to help expedite social interactions and further human relationships. But do these sites actually achieve these goals and are they really helpful at all?

The answer to these questions is no. Social networks are harmful to our culture because they debase the humanity of friendships, create more problems than they solve, and lack any real benefit in most cases. The greatest strength of social networks, the ease to communicate and interact, is also its greatest danger. There is a reason the old adage, "Think before you speak," is still around. It's because speaking—or in this case posting—without filtering your thoughts can have devastating repercussions.

With no more than a picture and or 140 characters, friendships can end and divisive arguments begin. The lack of accountability online is often the most harmful to users, allowing anything to be posted, tweeted, or uploaded. This unfiltered system of communication leads to misunderstandings,

rumors, and scores of wasted time.

Additionally, this breakdown in accountability has led to a massive upwelling in the number of people who speak without purpose. Many social network users believe that because they have the opportunity to be heard, they have the obligation to speak. The result of this flawed logic is a plethora of (generally) unnecessary, antagonistic, and unoriginal updates that provide no real benefit to users.

Furthermore, social networks have muddled the definition of relationships by implying to users that if you know information that 'friends' are willing to share, then you are actually friends with that person. This is quite incorrect. A preteen girl who incessantly follows Justin Bieber on social networks may know almost everything going on in his life, but that certainly doesn't mean the two are friends. In fact, Justin Bieber is—most likely—entirely unaware of her existence.

For a technology that has greatly progressed the availability of social interactions and friendships, it has certainly regressed the meaning of those two. A flick of the finger used to be an insult to people. Now we use it to call ourselves 'friends'.





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An Unmiserable Movie With Les Mis

Stefan Deshazo | Staff Writer

After two hours and thirty-seven minutes of singing, Les Miserables did not completely fulfill expectations. The movie could have been an hour shorter and it would still have had all the components necessary to be a great movie. But, Les Miserables had good character development, a strong

storyline and a great cast.

Director Tom Hooper did a great job of capturing character's emotions and getting those interesting camera angles. Protagonist Hugh Jackman's (Jean Valjean) singing reflected his background perfectly by showing his transformation from in the gutter pov-

erty to something grand and angelic. Anne Hathaway (Fantine) was also a highlight of the film, her raw emotion affected the audience profoundly. I would give this movie a 7 or 8 out of 10.

Reviewing 'The Heart is a Lonely Hunter'

Kylie Holt | Senior Editor

If a seemingly average twenty-three year old woman who once aspired to be a musician but then gave up her dream for writing decided to compose a novel on the trivialness of humanity with a mute engraver as the story's compass, what would you get?

Well, it should be a rambling mess— like the sentence above— of ignorant, inherited ideologies on human existence and overly dramatic assumptions on muteness. Instead, Carson McCullers delivers to the twentieth century an insightful dis-

section of life itself in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*.

Published in 1940 by Houghton Mifflin, young McCullers manages to embody a depth in each of her characters that is the base of her book's success. Mute John Singer carries the lead of the novel, followed by four others that each find solace in their one-sided conversations with Singer in a small Georgia mill-town. For 368 pages, McCullers details the ups and downs, predominantly the later, of her characters' stories. She explores the effects of life

on their very essence and ultimately highlights their true isolation.

While *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is no doubt a brilliant work, it is yet again a center-piece-of-the-cake book. There is no definite beginning or ending to the novel, resulting in readers left wondering what happened and what will happen in the character's lives. Though anyone is capable of enjoying this read, only mature audiences will appreciate McCullers' wisdom.

Hunter's Grammy Picks and Predictions

Hunter Thompson | Staff Writer

With the Grammy's around the corner, I've got my predictions. This past year was great for music. Hit albums released including *Babel*, *Red*, and *El Camino*. New up and coming bands include The Lumineers, The Alabama Shakes, and FUN. This is shaping up to be a great Grammy's that will air on Feb. 10.

Song of the Year Nominees: "A Team" by Ed Sheeran, "Adorn" by Miguel, "Call Me Maybe" by Carly Rae Jepsen, "Stronger (What doesn't kill you)" by Kelly Clarkson, "We are Young" by FUN.

Hunter's pick: "We are Young"
Best New Artist Nominees: Alabama Shakes, FUN, Hunter Hayes, The Lu-

mineers, and Frank Ocean.

Hunter's Pick: The Lumineers
Album of the Year Nominees: *Babel* by Mumford and Sons, *Channel OR-ANGE* by Frank Ocean, *El Camino* by The Black Keys, *Some Nights* by FUN., and *Blunderbuss* by Jack White.

Hunter's Pick: *Babel* by Mumford and Sons

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What Happened to the Web That We Used to Know?

Matt Garnett | Editor in Chief

The web as we know it is quickly shifting under our feet. It's shifting under our feet and shifting under many major corporations' feet, and at the heart of the movement is innovation and greed.

Per month, the world is consuming upwards of 4 billion hours of YouTube, they're tweeting around 2 billion times, 90 million active users are on Instagram, and Facebook is getting a trillion hits. Behind each of these incredible statistics are equally

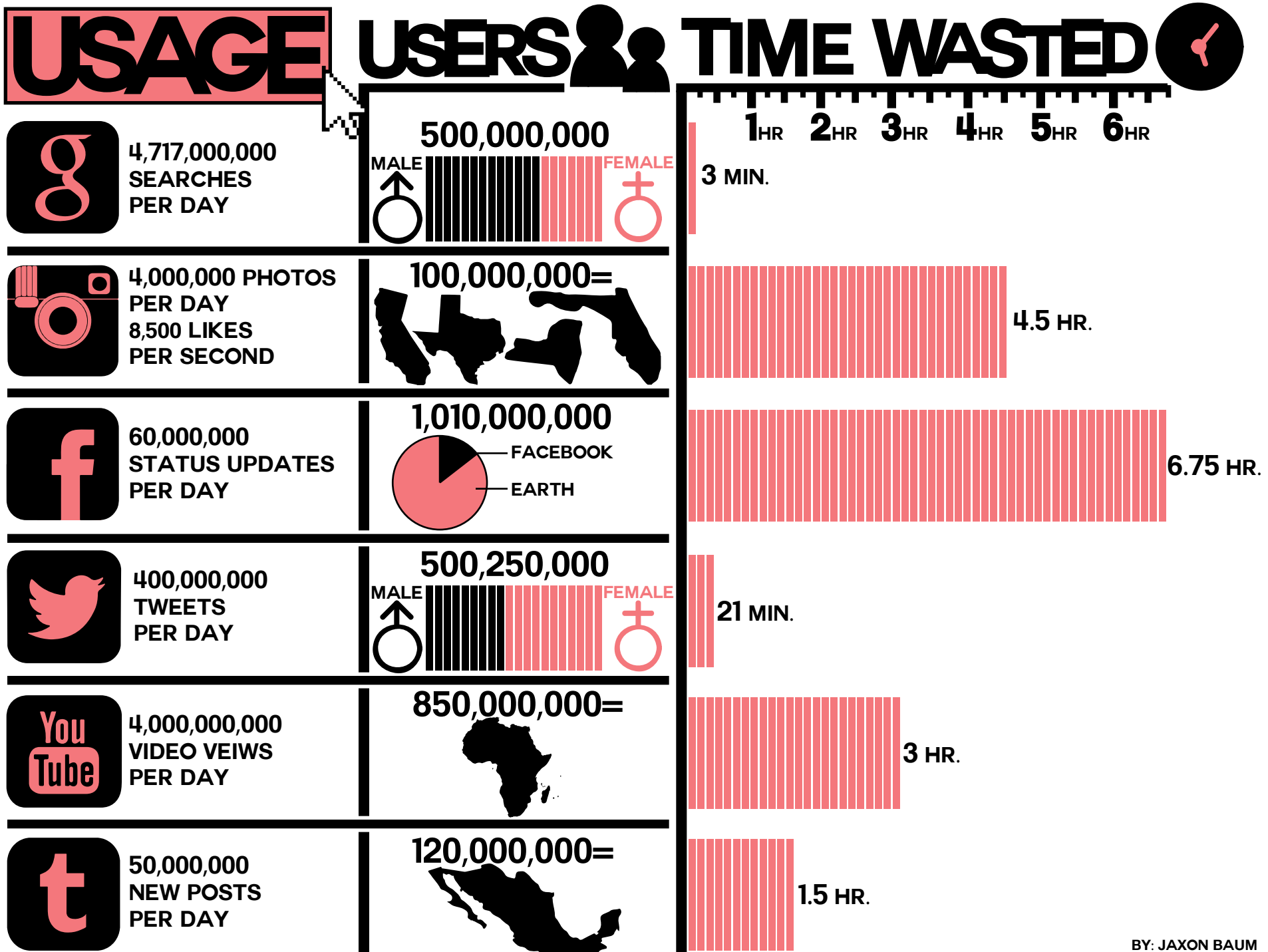
incredible data centers. However, based on a recent study by Nemertes Research, these resource intensive sites are wreaking havoc on the Internet's slowly decaying infrastructure.

What was once thought as limitless is already starting to see its bounds. In the past year, two of the three major telephone companies have switched from an unlimited price plan to a monthly allotment. AT&T has already been plagued by the iPhone phenomenon. Before the iPhone, mobile internet use was minimal, but after the iPhone was introduced it absolutely blew AT&T's infrastructure out of the water. Only now, five years after the iPhone was introduced, are they caught back up with the other companies, but their image has forever been stained.

As people start consuming more data and larger data, the datacenters and the fiber optics that distribute the content must grow. Many large corporations have been more concerned

about the bottom line during this recession and they think that upgrading their bandwidth capabilities is superfluous. Unfortunately the damage has already been done and it will take some time to get back to where the capabilities need to be.

Until the bandwidth catches back up to the need, consumers are going to be stuck with paying premiums for blocks of data and plenty of "unable to connect" alerts.



BY: JAXON BAUM

Zach Dickerson Feels at Home on Court

Stefan DeShazo | Staff Writer

The familiar dribble of the basketball. The sharp squeak of rubber on wood. The steady pounding of adrenaline.

These things represent home to senior point guard Zach Dickerson who has been playing basketball since second grade and hopes to continue through college.

"Trying to play college basketball—that's on my mind every day and keeps me motivated to work hard," he said. "Playing college basketball is that important to me."

Dickerson is still not sure he has plenty of colleges to choose from.

"I've got some colleges looking at me right now," he said. "Like Lee High, New Hampshire, High Point, Fairfield, Texas State, Sam Houston State, and

Rice. But I'd really like to go play at Lee High."

Dickerson has put in years of training to get where he is today.

"I feel like I have come a long ways and worked hard," he said. "It's been a wild journey."

Head boys coach John King, who has been working with Dickerson for four years, thinks he's a key player and outstanding leader.

"Zach is an extremely hard worker," King said. "He has dedicated his summers and much of his life to the game of basketball, and as a result, anyone who watches him play can see how much he has improved over the years."

As part of the state winning basketball team last year, Dickerson played a key role on the team.

"Once we were on the same page," Dickerson said. "We went undefeated

for the rest of the season."

Dickerson's leadership skills show up off the court as well, and players try to follow his example.

"I feel like I get everyone involved," Dickerson said. "But when it's crunch time I want the ball in my hand."

Like last year, this year started out a little rocky and Dickerson is well aware that there is work to be done on the court.

"I need to step up in scoring and assists and really get everyone involved offensively," he said. "Staying motivated, treating every day like it's just another practice, and not letting the pressure get to me is important."

Seniors Spencer McCloud, Carson Cline and Luke McMullen all agree Dickerson is a great leader. The Eagles are currently ranked 15th in State and 1st in District.



Top: Zach Dickerson goes up for a layup against Denton Ryan. Bottom Right: Allea Harris lays it up against Ranchview. Photos by Matt Garnett Bottom Left: Allea Harris, Jessie Sheridan, Bailey Eschle, Laurie Beth Chalk, Morgan McInaney, and Corie Liggett pose for photos before their game.

Moving Forward, Dribbling Through Life

Ashley Book | Staff Writer

She has spent her entire life dribbling a ball.

Captain of the Lady Eagles' basketball team, senior Allea Harris, has been playing basketball for thirteen years and hopes to continue in college.

"I think I'm just really competitive," Harris said. "And basketball is a sport where you can be really competitive, so I think it's really fun. It's also hard and challenging, you have to have different skills for parts of the game."

Harris' passion for the sport started as a baby.

"I'm the youngest of 8, and all of my brothers and sisters had played basketball, so it was kind of the thing to do," Harris said. "The day after I came home from the hospital, I went to my brother's basketball game. So since the day after I was born I've been in basketball gyms."

After four years, this is Harris' last year of high school basketball.

"I think it's going to be weird not playing high school basketball anymore," Harris said. "We kind of have the same team we had last year, so playing with these girls for so long and then leaving them is sad."

However, she doesn't plan on ending her basketball career in high school.

"I want to play in college, but not everything is settled yet," Harris said. "I'm really excited to hopefully be playing on a new team soon, but I still want more college coaches to come out to look at me play. I just want to go to a good school, and it would be great if playing basketball would help me get there."

Allea's coach also hopes she will be playing basketball next year.

"She'll get to play somewhere," head girl's coach Skip Townsend said. "I would like to see Allea go someplace where she's gonna enjoy playing, have a chance to play a lot, and be under a good coach."

In this year's basketball season, Harris has been helping the team move towards success as one of the top scorers each game.

"If you're not doing your best in a game, Allea encourages you, and it really helps us," senior Corie Liggett said.

However, Allea doesn't just help her teammates by encouraging them.

"This is Allea's second year to play for me," Townsend said. "In the captain's position, she's done an awesome job being a point guard, and not



just that, but being a good leader and setting a good example on how to work hard."

Because the Lady Eagles have been working so hard, they have beat several state ranked teams and have a current record of 23-4.

"What we've been doing in practice is working, so we just need to keep it up to get ready for our next opponents," Harris said. "But I think we can beat them and hopefully we win district."



One-on-One Battle as Wrestlers Strive for State

Sam Ramirez | Staff Writer



As the wrestling team members look toward the impending region and state competitions, coaches and veteran wrestlers look forward to the coming weeks.

"The competition has changed this year," Jake Fischer, wrestling coach, said. "The UIL split 5A into one class then 4A into another."

This new divide makes the competition for the 4A title a little less tough, and the team is looking to capitalize on this new opportunity.

"I think we've got a good chance because we are in a different classification," Fischer said. "Now there is a chance at getting in that top four and we ought to be able to place quite a few more kids. The expectations are high this year, because of the changes and because of the personnel we have."

The district tournament takes place on Saturday, Feb 2, with region on Feb. 7 and state following on Feb. 16. Before each of these matches, wrestlers try to attain a certain state of focus and determination.

"You've got to zone everything out," senior Clark Lanning said. Before every match, Lanning puts on his headphones and listens to a special playlist.

"I listen to techno," senior Cutler McMartin said. "Then I say, 'alright, just do what you know how to do.' And

then I do it."

Coaches insist that in order to achieve success on the mat, wrestlers need to get into the mindset that focus and confidence win the match.

"The focus is actually mental," Fischer said. "You have to have the confidence going in, that you can get in there one-on-one and get the job done."

Naturally, all wrestlers strive to achieve that focus, and ultimately, victory, but different wrestlers have different motivations for winning.

"It's good to be the winner of a competition with another human being, just to prove that you're better than him," McMartin said. "You get to see the total look of defeat on his face."

"I think the main thing about winning is that it feels a heck of a lot better than losing," Lanning said.

The wrestling team plans to maintain their determination and motivation throughout the coming weeks, as they prepare to take on tough wrestlers from all around the state.

This past weekend, the district was held in Azle. Seven wrestlers will be moving onto regionals in Frisco this weekend.

Top (Left to right): Seniors John Forrest, Cutler McMartin, and Clark Lanning. Photos by Matt Garrett. Middle: Junior Micah Capra pulls down his Prosper opponent. Bottom: Senior John Forrest grabs his eagle opponent. Photos by Stacy Short



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Students Build Prototype for Tradeshow

Stefan DeShazo & Kylie Holt | Reporters

On Thursday, Jan. 31, students from Principles of Business, Marketing and Finance and BIM II presented their prototype window-covers to the teachers and students of the district.

After the recent shootings in schools across the country, teacher Brenda Spain asked her students to create a window-cover to protect classrooms in the case of an emergency.

“I realized we needed something to cover our windows for drills or lockdowns,” Spain said. “These covers prevent intruders from seeing inside the classrooms, so that hopefully they will not know if anyone is in there. That’s the goal.”

The students were divided into

14 teams to design and produce their prototypes.

“We ended up with all different materials and designs,” Spain said. “The 14 groups went through a preliminary elimination review and then got it narrowed down to the 9 best designs. As teachers come in to see the showcase, they will choose the three they would like to use in their classrooms.”

Ibaka Industries, a student group consisting of seniors Jesse Jones, Emma Havrilka, and junior Gabby Bennett, were at the event presenting their product.

“Our window covering is cloth,” Bennett said. “We lined it with Velcro,

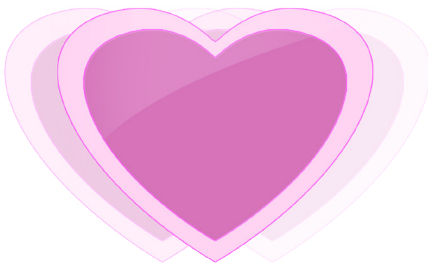
and the other side of the Velcro will attach to the door. When it’s not in use, it ties at the top with a string.”

Cullen Patterson, project manager of his group, had a different idea.

“It came to me in the shower,” Patterson said. “Our window covering is like a shower curtain. To keep it out of the way when teachers don’t need it, it pushes to the side and ties with a ribbon.”

The student’s work will hopefully become more than just a school project.

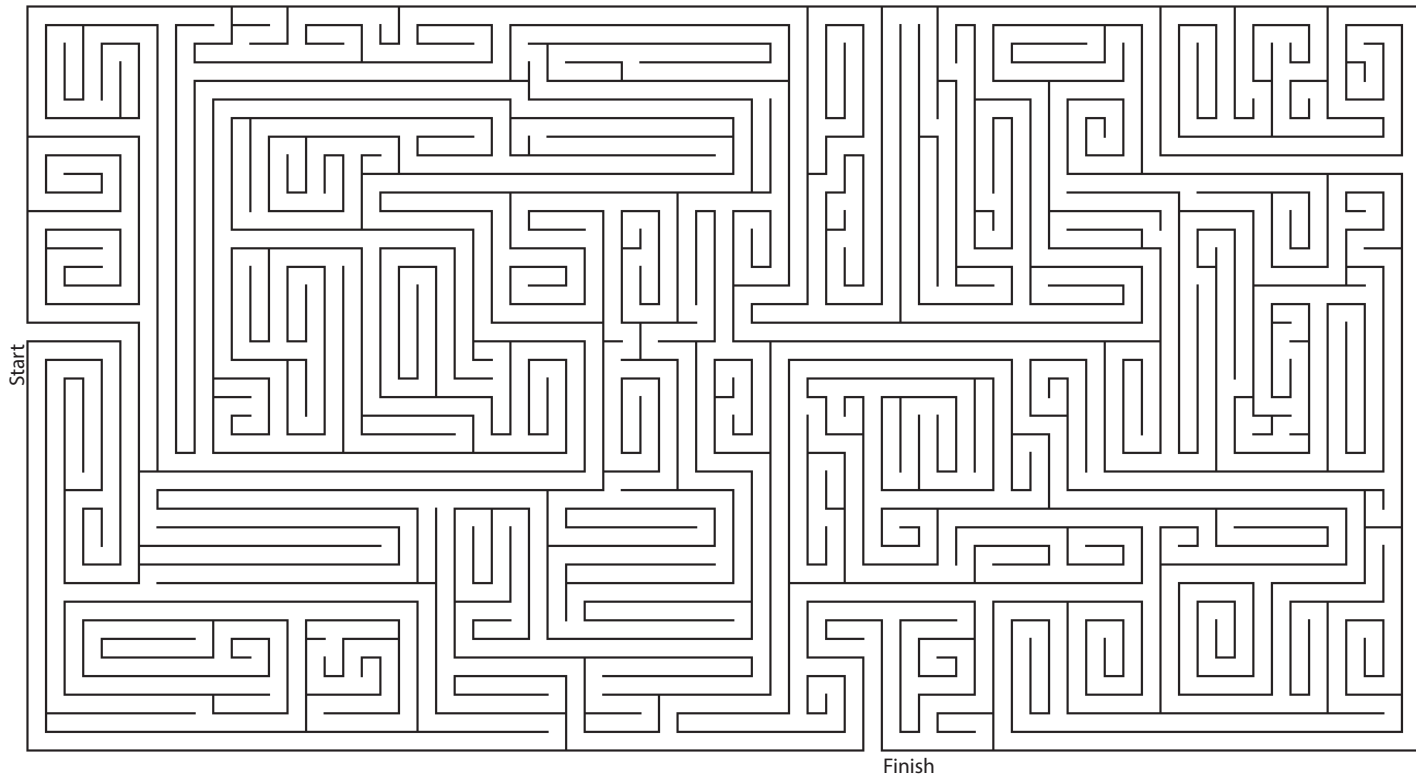
“Once the teachers have picked their top three,” Spain said, “We’re going to try to find some way to get them manufactured.”



Febraury Calendar

- Feb. 8—Boys Soccer @ Birdville
HS Boys Basketball @ Home
- Feb. 8-9 Boys Varsity Wrest. @ Frisco
HS Boys Varsity Golf @ Austin
- Feb. 9—Girls Soccer @ Birdville
Boys Varsity BSball @ Wylie
Girls Varsity SBall @ Home
- Feb. 11—Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
- Feb. 12—Girls & Boys Soccer @ Lake Dallas
Girls Varsity SBall @ Home
HS Boys Basketball @ Home
- Feb. 14-16—Girls Varsity SBall @ Home
- Feb. 14—Track Dual with Byron Nelson @ Home
- Feb. 15—Girls & Boys Soccer @ Home
Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
Varsity Ten. @ Byron Nelson
- Feb. 18—Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
- Feb. 19—Girls/Boys Soccer @ Denton
Girls Varsity SBall @ Home
HS Boys Bsktball Play Off
- Feb. 21-23—Boys V Wrest. State
Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
Track @ Denton Guyer
- Feb. 22—Girls & Boys Soccer @ Home
Girls Varsity SBall @ Decatur
- Feb. 23—Girls JV SBall @ Home
- Feb. 25—Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
Boys JV Golf @ Trophy Club
Girls Golf @ Trophy Club
- Feb. 26—Girls Varsity SBall @ Wylie E
- Feb. 28-Mar. 2- V SBall @ Denton
- Mar. 1—Girls & Boys Soccer @ Home
Track @ Arlington Sequin
- Mar. 4-8—HS Cheer tryouts
- Mar. 5—Girls & Boys Soccer @ Home
Boys Varsity BSball @ Home
Boys JV Golf @ NRH

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