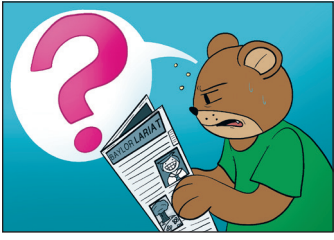




Thursday, October 31, 2024

baylorlariat.com



**OPINION | A2**

**EDITORIAL:**  
What even is the Baylor Lariat, anyway?



**SPORTS | A6**

**FOOTBALL:**  
Baylor's biggest rival comes to McLane this Saturday.



**A&L | A5**

**REVIEW:**  
Tyler, the Creator's "CHROMAKOPIA" is monumental.

## Austin Ave. or memory lane?

### The historic street has seen 175 years of change

**ERIKA KUEHL**  
Opinion Editor

Waco has seen immense growth within the past few years — growth so noticeable the town you began your undergraduate degree in is not the same one you leave. In the past summer alone, the new Foster Pavillion has sparked expansion on the other side of I-35. Many may not know, however, that downtown Waco has been a hub of development since its inception.

The well-known and loved Austin Avenue has always been an integral part of downtown Waco. Dr. Stephen Sloan, director of the Institute for Oral History, said that Austin Avenue has always been an energetic street.

"It's always been in the same place since it was conceived ... in 1849, 1850 as kind of the central part of town," Sloan said. "It's increasingly now more important as an economic district, and it's always been central as kind of a political district for Waco."

The street was once home to an outdoor mall.

"They shut off Austin Avenue to vehicle traffic and try to create this kind of open air mall sort of environment where people would come down and walk from shop to shop across Austin Avenue," Sloan said. "Generally, [it



Photo courtesy of The Texas Collection

**ON THE AVENUE** In the 1960s, Austin Avenue was still feeling the effects of the 1953 tornado, but it was no less a center of life in Waco.

was] very unsuccessful as an attempt, and eventually they'll open up Austin Avenue against traffic again."

Since 1909, Austin Avenue has been home to the beloved Baylor Homecoming Parade, as well as many others. The street hosted a myriad of events like the Cotton Palace Parade in the late 19th and early 20th century. After the tornado of 1953 caused tragic damage to Austin Avenue, city leaders had to rebuild and

innovate in a journey of repair that wrapped up in the '70s.

Iconic Waco photographer Fred Gildersleeve scrupulously documented Austin Avenue before the tornado. Geoff Hunt, audio and visual director of the Texas Collection and University Archives, said Gildersleeve, who came here in 1905, is one of Waco's best known photographers.

"He took some of the first photographs from the air in the 1910s of Waco, and he took

the first photographs by year of the Baylor campus," Hunt said.

"If it wasn't for Fred Gildersleeve's photography and photography in general, we wouldn't have the documentation that we have now," Hunt said. "So it's very important in that regard. And that goes for all photographers."

**AUSTIN AVE >> A8**

## Inside: THE SAFETY EDITION

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Dating app danger

Is your car decor risky?

## Gender gap at Baylor narrows

**RACHEL CHIANG**  
Assistant News Editor

Despite striving to "educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service," the Baylor Trends statistic reports the population of female students has been outnumbering male students for years, in line with a greater national trend.

Baylor's student population has been oscillating in the 60% to 40% female range since 2017. But after a high of 64% female population in 2021, the university has been experiencing an incremental shift towards a more evenly-spread student population.

This year, the student body makeup is 42% male to 58% female — a small change that could be a sign of a greater movement in the future.

Dr. Theresa Kennedy, French professor and director of the Women and Gender Studies department, said there

**GENDER GAP >> A8**

## Scratch black cat superstition, psychology professor says

**OLIVIA CHHLANG**  
Reporter

Superstitious students might feel uncomfortable when a black cat crosses their path on campus, but even if bad luck can be passed along, it certainly isn't from those furry felines.

Dr. Hugh Riley senior lecturer for the department of psychology and neuroscience, explained the concept behind the superstition.

"One thought is that superstition is an attempt to make something relatively unpredictable into something more predictable," Riley said. "The general idea is that unpredictability is less safe and makes us more vulnerable."

According to Riley, superstition does not have to be related to something bad.

"It's an attempt to recreate a prior set of circumstances that went well to hopefully duplicate the same outcome," Riley explained. "For example, a baseball pitcher always approaches the mound the same way or a bowler always needs to wear their 'lucky bowling shirt.'"

In the same way, people who may see a black cat may avoid the path the cat has taken

because they want to lower the chances of attaining bad luck, and if no bad luck comes their way, they will continue to avoid black cats when they see them.

According to The History Channel, this connection between black cats and bad luck can be traced back to the 13th century in a decree issued by Pope Gregory IX stating that black cats were the incarnation of the devil.

April Plemons, founder and director of non-profit rescue Long Way Home Adoptables, said that even in the 21st century, this belief still sticks with people.

At an adoption event Plemons hosted, one employee handled all the animals except for the black cats. The employee didn't want to touch their crates in case he got "hexed or cursed."

Especially around Halloween, Plemons said some older shelters and rescues implement a 30-day ban on adopting black cats in fear that they would be used in rituals and sacrifices.

Mount Vernon junior Madison Pham also held this belief about black cats until she got her own black cat Ruby, a two-year-old Bombay she

**THE CAT'S MEOW >> A8**



Mary Thurmond | Photographer

**SHE'S PURRFECT** Shadow, Castellaw's resident cat, is around 17 years old and brings joy to every person who passes her.

## Fun and Frightful: Stay safe, spooky on Halloween this year



Mesha Mittanasala Photographer

**HEY, BOO!** Treat Night brought holiday spirit to campus Tuesday night as children of faculty and staff trick-or-treated in the residence halls.

**AUDREY VALENZUELA**  
Staff Writer

As Halloween approaches, Waco residents are gearing up for a night of festivities, but it's essential to prioritize safety amid the excitement of costumes, candy and community celebrations.

Once primarily a day for little kids, Halloween has transformed into a celebration embraced by all ages, complete with costumes, parties and spooky soirées. While the excitement is infectious, keeping safety in mind is essential to ensure a fun and secure experience.

Cierra Shipley, public

information officer for the Waco Police Department said there isn't a direct link between specific criminal activity and Halloween, but it's important to be aware of one's surroundings and make wise decisions any day of the year.

League City senior Alyssa Damian emphasized the importance of being proactive about safety during the holiday.

"Be with a trusted group of friends where we can all look after each other," Damian said. "This buddy system not only enhances safety but also fosters a sense of camaraderie, making the celebration more enjoyable."

San Antonio sophomore Ashley Robinson said it's essential to stay aware of one's surroundings, especially when heading to parties. She advised taking

smart routes and making informed choices about where to go.

"If I get to a place that doesn't look safe, I would leave and find something else to do," Robinson said. "Staying in well-lit and populated areas is key to avoiding potentially dangerous situations."

Creating a safety plan is equally crucial. Robinson said to regularly check in with friends throughout the evening to ensure everyone is safe and making responsible decisions.

"If something were to happen, we'd know where to meet and how to contact each other," Robinson said.

For transportation, Damian said she often gets an Uber with friends but never

**SPOOKY AND SAFE >> A8**

**GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?**

**We want to hear it. Send us your thoughts:** Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu



James Ellis | Cartoonist

# What even is the Lariat, anyway?

Media literacy is at an all-time low. Let's take a minute to explain who we are and what we do.

## THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Though it's one of the most important skills to have in the age of disinformation, media literacy is a unicorn — we sometimes wonder if it's real or just a myth. As misconceptions of how news organizations work proliferate and suspicion of journalists is at an all-time high, we thought it would be a good time to explain the different sections at The Baylor Lariat to give a look into what we do and the role of journalism in a society that increasingly distrusts the media.

Under the News, Arts & Life and Sports sections, The Lariat publishes articles that start when a writer pitches a story to their editor. The writer conducts at least two live interviews, and when they submit their stories, it goes through two or three rounds of edits before it appears on the Lariat website or in our print edition.

The Lariat also includes a broadcast arm, Lariat TV News, which produces a weekly newscast every Friday. LTVN often covers the same stories as the Lariat's print staff, but presents them through a different medium.

Some stories focus on coverage of campus or Waco events, sports or breaking news. Other stories, especially in the A&L section, are lifestyle columns or reviews of albums, movies and TV shows. Each of the three sections contain feature stories that focus on a person or a community and highlight what makes them interesting, unique or newsworthy. Feature stories tend to be longer, and they sometimes highlight controversial topics or figures.

Because of that, it's important to note that coverage of any topic in these sections does not equate to an endorsement of that person or topic. As a news organization, The Lariat makes an effort to cover anything that qualifies as newsworthy

based on the values of timeliness, currency, proximity, oddity, impact, human interest and conflict. That means that if a story is odd or unexpected, close to Baylor and Waco, is happening currently, has an impact on the communities we serve or presents a compelling and interesting look into a particular topic, it is worthy of publication.

The value system that Lariat writers, reporters and editors are guided by is the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, which places emphasis on accuracy, truth, journalistic independence and accountability. And while The Lariat is published by Baylor University, we are grateful to have an administration that understands the importance of journalistic independence and does not dictate what content we cover in the News, A&L and Sports sections and in individual Opinion columns.

Under the Opinion section, our staff and students in the Advanced Reporting and Writing class write columns on rotation. The only permanent member of the Opinion desk is the Opinion Editor, who leads Editorial Board meetings and works with those on rotation to sharpen their columns and help them clearly explain their position. The Opinion section covers a wide range of topics from diverse political takes, religious discussions, cultural commentary and which vegetable is the best.

In the Opinion section, The Lariat encourages its staff to be bold and write from a place of passion that is balanced with research. Multiple viewpoints are represented in this section.

Writers on rotation are not prohibited from stating opinions in their columns that may not align with the university's mission statement or Christian values, and these individual columns are just that — individual. They do not speak for The Lariat as a whole.

The Lariat Editorial Board, however,

does. It is currently made up of the Editor-in-Chief, the Opinion Editor, the News Editor, the Arts & Life Editor, a Photo Editor, the Web Editor and the cartoonist. Once a week, we come together to decide on the topics for the following week's editorials such as this one.

We hold robust discussions of political ideas, lifestyle choices, religious differences and more, and the result is a nuanced position that has made its way from one member of the board's opinion to something that takes into account the perspectives of six other editors.

All of these somewhat bureaucratic descriptions of The Lariat have a purpose. We are an organization of several moving parts and sections that publish different content, but we come together to provide an essential service to the Baylor family and to Waco.

Good journalism informs readers, keeping them updated on events and stories that are important and current. In the News, A&L and Sports sections, The Lariat publishes dozens of stories a week to accomplish that.

Another thing about good journalism is that it can be challenging. A reader might encounter stories or columns containing content that is at odds with their worldview. This is because in a city as diverse as Waco and on a campus as large as Baylor, there are countless walks of life that, as a news organization, The Lariat strives to fully represent.

The Lariat Editorial Board wrote similar pieces to this one in 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019. There's probably more, if only we had the patience to go back that far in our archives.

Suffice to say, the need for better understanding of the media is a recurring theme. We hope that this one doesn't become just another installment — like the Marvel Cinematic Universe, this is getting old.

# The high cost of healthcare

**KRISTY VOLMERT**  
Staff Writer



If you've ever had a desperate visit to the emergency room and looked through your itemized bill, you do a double-take. You take off your glasses so you can see better. Is that another zero right there?

Now, of course, healthcare is not going to be free. We can't expect health insurance to cover everything, we can't demand free prescription

medications and we can't ask for surgical operations to go on sale. After all, healthcare professionals work very hard and deserve just compensation. This is especially true given they are in such high demand. Many hospitals and care units across the country are understaffed. But even the simplest tests, treatments and items are off the charts expensive for patients. Patients are being charged much more than they should be.

A 2018 Vox article revealed their findings after looking over 1,182 emergency room bills. The conclusions suggest that it is the facility fees that account for such excessive costs rather than professional fees. These two types of expenses make up the costs of medical visits, professional fees for any service provided by clinical staff and facility fees for services that require the use of a hospital facility's assets (imaging, testing or overnight stays).

Sarah Kliff, senior correspondent at Vox, highlights the cases where patients were charged unnecessarily high costs for products that they could find for less than half the price at a local drugstore.

"The bills in our database include a \$236 pregnancy test delivered in Texas, a \$147 pregnancy test in Illinois and a \$111 test in California. The highest price I saw? A \$465 pregnancy test at a Georgia emergency room. For that amount, you could buy 84 First Response tests on



Even the simplest tests, treatments and items are off the charts expensive for patients.

Amazon," Kliff said.

In December 2022, The Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker reported that ER visits exceed affordability thresholds for many consumers, even those with private insurance. If you access this report, you will see a series of statistics showing that the costs of ER visits, especially in Texas, New York, California and Florida are much higher than you'd expect.

A March 2024 report from the KFF also reported the severity Americans are having with healthcare costs. It reaffirms the claims that high healthcare costs prevent many people from receiving necessary care.

"One in four adults say that in the past 12 months they have skipped or postponed getting the healthcare they needed because of the cost. Notably six in ten uninsured adults (61%) say they went without needed care because of the cost."

The report also addressed issues of unexpected bills and accumulating debt: "About three in four adults say they are either "very" or "somewhat worried" about being able to afford unexpected medical bills (74%) or the cost of health care services (73%) for themselves and their families. Additionally, about half of adults would be unable to pay an unexpected medical bill of \$500 in full without going into debt."

Every citizen of the United States deserves access to healthcare. I don't see any reason why it should be so financially debilitating for patients to receive the care they need. I'm aware that maintenance and up-keeping of medical facilities can be very costly at times, but these financial burdens should never be thrown onto the patients who are already in a vulnerable position.

## Meet the Staff

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## Opinion

The Baylor Lariat welcomes reader viewpoints through letters to the editor and guest columns. Opinions expressed in the Lariat are not necessarily those of the Baylor administration, the Baylor Board of Regents, the student body or the Student Publications Board.

## Editorials, Columns & Letters

Editorials express the opinions of the Lariat Editorial Board. Lariat letters and columns are the opinions of an individual and not the Baylor Lariat.

## Lariat Letters

To submit a Lariat Letter, email Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu. Letters should be a maximum of 300 words. The letter is not guaranteed to be published.

**News**

# Slow your Tootsie Roll: Candy poses health risks

**SARINA TEJANI**  
Reporter

As Halloween approaches, candy consumption spikes on college campuses, with students indulging in everything from chocolate bars to sugary gummies. It's a season marked by sweet treats, but there's more to the fun than just satisfying your sweet tooth.

While an extra handful of candy might seem harmless, the effects of excess sugar on the body, particularly on dental health, can be significant.

According to an article by Livestrong, too much candy — especially the high-sugar varieties popular during Halloween — can lead to immediate and long-term health issues. Physically, regular consumption of sugary treats can cause blood sugar spikes, leading to crashes that leave students feeling sluggish and craving more sweets. Over time, this can contribute to weight gain and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes. Additionally, sugary foods lack essential nutrients, meaning that if students are filling up on candy, they're likely missing out on more nutritious meals.

Dallas sophomore and premedical student Zoya Tharani said she has long been aware of sugar's impact on health.

"I know how harmful sugar can be to your



Emma Weidmann | Editor-in-Chief

**SWEET TOOTH** Though Halloween candy is one of the holiday's highlights, its effects on health can include damage to the teeth and high glucose levels in the blood.

body," she said. "I have family members who struggle with diabetes, so I've always grown up being mindful of the sugar I let myself have."

Tharani noted the importance of self-awareness and self-control when it comes to sugar intake.

"Your body will automatically reject anything that you eat too much of, either by getting an

illness or feeling sick," she said.

Baylor biology Professor Mark Taylor expanded on some of the effects candy consumption can have depending on the frequency and amount consumed.

"Occasionally eating a high amount of candy has not been shown to cause long-term effects, but it can definitely have short-term effects if

the person is prone to hyperglycemia," Taylor said. "On the other hand, eating an excessive amount of sugar over the long term can have detrimental effects."

Taylor said that high sugar intake is especially linked to weight gain, which can lead to other health issues.

"The most notable effect is weight gain, as chronic high levels of glucose in the blood can promote the conversion of sugars to fats, which contributes to building more adipose tissue," he said. "Long-term exposure to high blood glucose levels has also been linked to increased insulin resistance."

He also mentioned that high sugar levels can cause other health issues.

"There has been scientific documentation related to decreased immune function due to hyperglycemia," he said. "High glucose levels can alter the shape of certain chemicals used for the body's defense, impairing their functions."

Houston sophomore and premedical student Alishba Momin emphasized the need for dental care, especially around Halloween.

"I grew up being taught that on Halloween it was so important to brush your teeth," Momin said. "No matter how much candy you eat, it is very important to take care of your teeth."

## 'Who you gonna call?'

### Psychology professor follows longtime ghost-hunting passion

**STEPHY MAHONEY**  
Reporter

Psychology lecturer and professor by day and ghostbuster by night, Dr. Cynthia Little follows a personal passion for researching the realm of paranormal activities while also teaching psychology classes at Baylor.

Austin graduate student Hannah Kaputaniuk is a research assistant for Little and said she has never had a professor like her.



Photo courtesy of Baylor University

**PSYCHOLOGY AND GHOSTOLOGY** When she's not grading papers or making lesson plans, Little is scouring Waco for ghosts and paranormal activity.

Little's passion for the supernatural began at a young age. Her current hobby has nearly always been a part of her life.

"It started when I was about 9 years old," Little said. "I was one of those nerdy little kids who spent her lunchtime in the library reading real ghost stories."

Little said she originally became fascinated with ghost stories when she opened her first story, Gef the Talking Mongoose.

"I immediately thought, 'A talking animal, how cool!'" Little said. "That pretty much had me hooked ... I really didn't start doing ghost hunting or paranormal research until about 18 years ago when the ghost-hunting shows started."

Although Little shares this passion for ghost hunting with some friends, no family members join her in this passion. Due to

the stigma and culture, Little said that growing up, she kept her passion for ghosts to herself.

"I grew up in the church, and that type of stuff was really discouraged by the church," Little said. "[They said] I shouldn't be looking for ghosts and it's demonic activity."

According to a story from the Dr. Pepper Museum, many unusual things have occurred while Little was ghost hunting in the building. Doors have slammed closed and toilets have flushed on their own. Video recordings have shut off and zoomed in without being prompted.

Though she participates in spooky activities, Little said she doesn't feel much fear because of her Christian faith.

"If there is a demon in the room, then who better than a child of God [to hunt it]?" Little asked.



It's fascinating getting to go in these creepy old buildings and see if something weird happens.

**CYNTHIA LITTLE | LECTURER, PSYCHOLOGY**

"She's funny and talks about the ghost hunting all the time in class," Kaputaniuk said. "She is super personable and always happy to talk to us."

Little's activities aren't limited to just ghost hunting, though. She also researches paranormal activity and communication with ghosts.

"Most recently, she worked with some other researchers to investigate communicating with ghosts in abandoned, sacred and normal spaces," Kaputaniuk said.

Election Day is almost here! Scan here for all things election from The Lariat!



## GO FOR A STROLL



Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor

**GET IN LINE** Phi Beta Sigma performed their routine in the Royal and Pure Stroll-Off on Friday in the Bill Daniel Student Center.

24-25 YEARBOOK

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# Homecoming Highlights



Mary Thurmond | Photographer

Sam Brown (top)  
Riley Boozer (bottom)



**ROYAL COURT** The Baylor University 2024 Homecoming Court poses during the All-University Pep Rally.  
Caleb Garcia | Photographer



Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor

Dawson Pendergrass



**LIGHT THE WAY** Baylor student torchbearers (left to right) Cameron Sturkie, Alexiz Moncada, Benjamin Lopez and Kendall Lally walk the eternal flame to the bonfire.  
Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor



**FUTURE FLAME** The fire marshal on duty watches the bonfire from afar with his son.  
Mary Thurmond | Photographer

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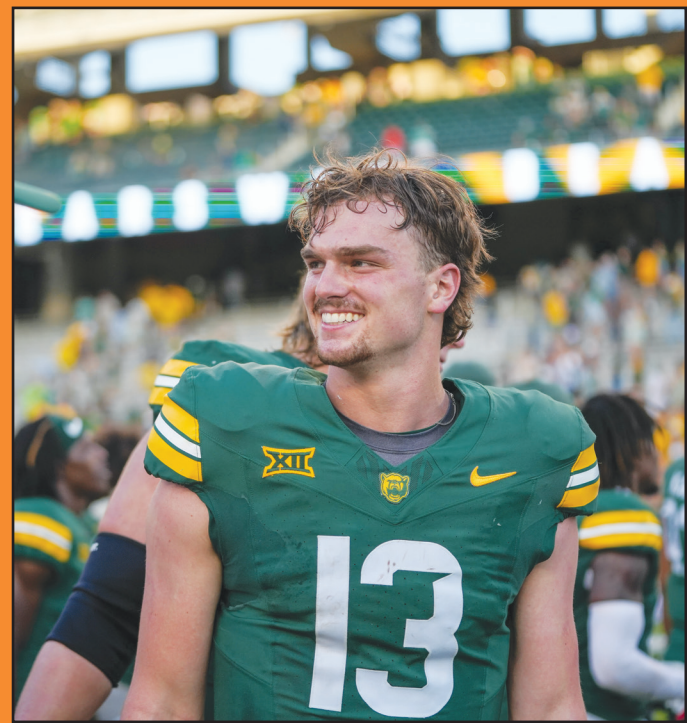


**BACK TO THE FUTURE** Baylor Tri Delta and Delta Tau Delta homecoming float predicts Baylor's win against Oklahoma State on their "Back To The Future" themed float.  
Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor



Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor

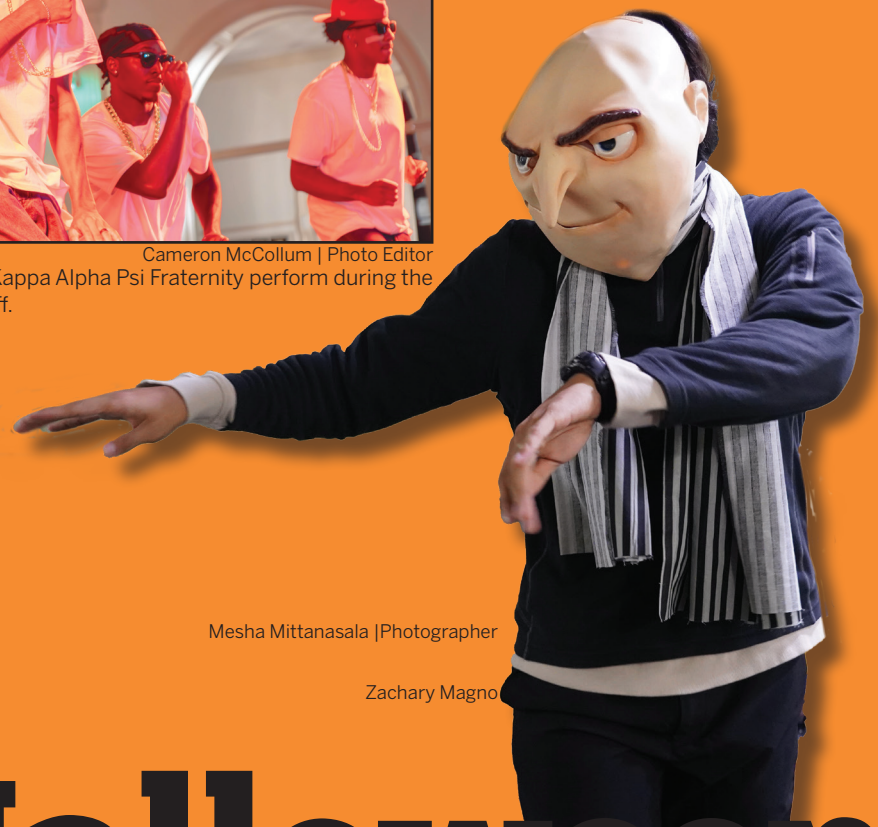
**SHAKE IT UP** San Antonio junior and secretary of Kappa Delta Chi Heavenlee Guerra performs during the Royal and Pure Stroll-Off.



**SMILE FOR THE CAMERA** Sawyer Robertson celebrates a 38-28 victory against Oklahoma State.  
Mary Thurmond | Photographer



**IN-SYNC** Members of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity perform during the Royal and Pure Stroll-Off.  
Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

Zachary Magno



**THEY DID THE MASH** Cast members of the Silent House Theatre Company's Halloween event dance in the ballroom.  
Shane Mead | Reporter

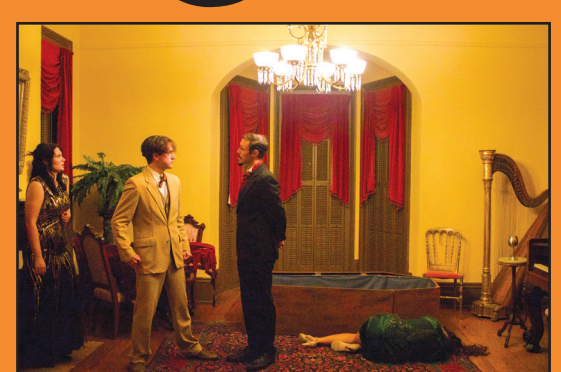


**SWEET MEMORIES** Traditions such as trick-or-treating through Baylor dormitories create core memories for generations to come.  
Rory Dulock | Staff Writer



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**COZY COSTUMING** San Antonio sophomore Elena Semler and Corsicana sophomore Jaden Smith dress up.



**MURDER ON THE DANCE FLOOR** Dracula threatens guests while their friend lays lifeless on the floor.  
Shane Mead | Reporter

# Halloween Frights

## Austin Avenue Art Fair returns for second year to showcase local artists

**KATHERINE HATCHER**  
Staff Writer

Since its commencement last fall, the Art Avenue Art Fair has cultivated community and enriched culture through showcasing artists and musicians. This year, community will come together from Nov. 1-3 to celebrate and admire the talents of local artists.

The fair is put on by Wendy Michelle Davis, a local Waco artist and painter. Davis said that she strives to make the fair an annual event for years to come.

The event will be hosted at Anthem STORIES but will have vendors and tents up and down the stretch of Austin Avenue.

On Friday night from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Davis said that one of her favorite local bands, Suede, will be performing during the fair's kickoff party at Anthem STORIES. Additionally, there will be 16 booths with artists painting live, showcasing and selling their work, along with other kinds of art. Davis said these artists will include ceramicists, glass-makers, printmakers and more.

In addition to live music, Davis said that there will also be food catered by Anthem STORIES and beer from Waco Ale. She said that those who attend Friday night will get a top-notch experience.

"They're going to get a great concert. They're also going to be the first ones to experience the art and first opportunity to purchase art too," Davis said.

On Saturday, the artists' booths will still be open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Davis said that the event's highlight on Saturday will be the Art Walk of Waco on Austin Avenue which lasts from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"If you come Friday, you might as well come Saturday because it's a whole completely different thing," Davis said.

At the art walk, attendees can stroll down Austin and Washington Avenues, where 20 artists will be painting and selling their art in businesses on the street. People can pick up a map at Anthem STORIES and compete to be entered into a raffle for prizes.

"Some of the prizes are a one night stay at a



Lariat File Photo

**ART ON THE AVENUE** From Friday to Sunday, Waco's second annual Austin Avenue Art Fair will showcase and sell work by local artists.

luxury vacation rental in Waco. The second one is a \$150 gift card to the Butcher's Cellar, which is an incredible restaurant that is beautiful and the food is amazing. There is a great \$50 Spice Village one," Davis said.

As much fun as the prizes are, Davis emphasized that the focus of the Austin Avenue Art Fair is to support small businesses.

"We need local businesses to show art, to include artists and the things they're doing," Davis said. "But also, we want to see these businesses thriving and benefitting from the artists being in their space too," Davis said.

As an artist herself, Davis said that she knows how difficult it can be to receive emotional or

financial support, and she wanted to create a space that offers that to artists and help them sell their art.

"I want this to be an opportunity for the community to come together, because when we come together and support artists, there's always good things that come out of that," Davis said.

Washington Gallery owner Alan Scott, who is partnering with Davis for the art fair, said that he finds it important to invest in the arts, considering Waco's continual growth.

"I don't know how big Waco wants to grow, but to keep this growth that has been going the last 10 years, arts and culture are what create that foundation to build on," Scott said.

In order for Waco's growth to maintain a positive trajectory, Scott said that everyone ought to support artists.

"And so I see all this momentum building, and we really hope that the public wants and understands that their local support is key to making this happen," Scott said. "Show up and support the artist."

That event will continue on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with booths, live music, painting all day and a silent auction that will close at 3:45 p.m.

Davis said there is a \$10 entry fee on Friday night and that Baylor students get \$2 off their entry with a student ID. Additionally, Friday night is free for children under the age of 16.

## Review: Tyler, the Creator turns back time with monumental album "CHROMAKOPIA"



**OLIVIA TURNER**  
Arts & Life Editor

For over a decade now, Tyler Gregory Okonma, better known as Tyler, the Creator, has been, well... creating. "CHROMAKOPIA" is the latest of his creations, and my — is it a monumental one for the world of music. Tyler covers several themes in this series of songs ranging from the curse of fame to self-discovery. He tackles topics of his past not yet sung, making for an enlightening listening experience.

For many fans, this album likely came as a surprise. Since the start of his music career, Tyler has been putting out albums every two years, but "CHROMAKOPIA" was the exception, coming out three years after his previous album, "Call Me If You Get Lost." While fans might've had to wait an extra year this time around, it was undoubtedly worth it.

The context of "CHROMAKOPIA" follows his new alter ego, St. Chroma. With "chroma" meaning color and "kopia" meaning abundance, the album's name promises much variety, and boy, does it deliver. The contrast in themes can be seen right from the album's strong start — the first three tracks.

"St. Chroma" is a magnificent start to such a long-awaited album. Opening with inspirational words from his mother, marching and chants of "Chromakopia!" creates the sense that destiny awaits — what that will be we don't yet know, but it feels hopeful. This uplifting theme carries through the entirety of the song until the stark contrast of magical intertwining melodies featuring Daniel Caesar crash into the warped brashness of "Rah Tah Tah."

With all its boastfulness and badassery, "Rah Tah Tah" feels like the old Tyler, and I think it's supposed to. It details his rise to fame, throwing in a reference to Kendrick Lamar on the way.

The vibe of this track goes hand-in-hand with party anthem "Sticky," this track which contains the addition of Sexy Red and Lil Wayne.

The general feel of "Rah Tah Tah" comes across like Tyler is thriving in his riches and couldn't have a care in the world, but his lyrics say otherwise. As he draws boundaries singing lyrics like "never let them see the color, model, make, your semi-truck," there's something building, something he can't prevent. This leads into "Noid" with a seamless paranoia-themed transition.

"Noid" is a stand-out, detailing the paranoia Tyler experiences due to his fame. For those who hear the melody before the lyrics, this track is a head-nodding hit that almost sounds joyful, with its thumping psych-rock guitar riffs and gossamer backup vocals from a sample by the Ngozi Family's "Nizakupanga Ngozi." But for those who find lyrics more memorable, the song becomes a nightmarish chase. With lyrics like "left shoulder, right shoulder, left shoulder, look" and "someone's keepin' watch / I can feel it, I can feel it," Tyler creates a sense of panic without hope for peace.

Ripping the listener in and out of dark and light-hearted sounding songs seems to be a theme in "CHROMAKOPIA," and here Tyler does just that from "Noid" to "Darling, I." Singing of his romantic relationships over the years, Tyler realizes if he continues down this same track of loving and leaving, he will one day be alone with nothing but his Grammys to keep him company.

"Hey Jane" gets even heavier, as it delves into a specific instance in which Tyler experiences an unplanned pregnancy within a no-strings-attached relationship. He explains the situation from both his and her perspective, packing in powerful lyricism and storytelling skill to envelope all the emotions that go into making the decision of keeping or terminating a pregnancy. This decision is later contemplated to the tune of classical guitar riffs in "Tomorrow," as Tyler goes back to that same theme found in "Darling, I" of having no one to grow old with him. By the end of "Hey Jane," Tyler leaves the listener hanging, but due to the song's double meaning as the name of an online abortion pill, one can only guess how the story ended.

Instantly recognizable on "I Killed You" was Santigold's signature voice, though she is not credited in this specific track. Also collaborating towards the end of the track is Childish Gambino, implementing whimsical ad libbing. Similarly, dealing with the theme of Tyler's inner self and accompanied once again by Daniel Caesar is "Take Your Mask Off," urging Tyler,

"I hope you find yourself." While I appreciate the self-reflection he expresses, for me, these two tracks pale in comparison to the literary masterpiece that is "Hey Jane."

Whether this next track truly is about an absolute vixen Tyler came across at some point in his life, or if it's just based on a lesson he learned in his music career put into sex metaphors, "Judge Judy" has certainly seduced me. The moans which become increasingly louder and more numerous as the track continues forces me to believe the song was intended to be about the former. This song brings down the tempo a bit for the first time, a much-appreciated change of pace.

Tyler bashes all expectations in "Thought I was Dead," featuring Santigold once again — this time with Schoolboy Q. Brassy and sassy, Tyler shows some of his silly side in this track.

Jerked into the somber song "Like Him," Tyler reveals the truth behind the relationship with his father. After "chasin' a ghost" his whole life, Tyler's mother admits apologetically to him that the reason he doesn't know his father is no fault of this estranged man — it's her (Bonita Smith) who was responsible for their distance.

Tyler may be the star of the album, but DoeChii takes front and center when spitting her audacious verse in "Balloon." Who better than these two bisexual icons to bravely explore the individuality and authenticity this song discusses?

Closing out the album is fan favorite "I Hope You Find Your Way Home." This track presents a full-circle moment for listeners, tying together several themes sung about throughout the album and re-introducing the chants of "Chromakopia!" heard at the start of "St. Chroma."

“With all its boastfulness and badassery, “Rah Tah Tah” feels like the old Tyler, and I think it’s supposed to. It details his rise to fame, throwing in a reference to Kendrick Lamar on the way.”

Wondering what to do this weekend? Scan here for the hottest happenings in Waco!



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Cameron McCollum | Photo Editor

**FEELING THE PRESSURE** Redshirt junior quarterback Sawyer Robertson evades the rush during Baylor football's 38-28 Homecoming win over Oklahoma State on Saturday at McLane Stadium.

# Baylor football set for blackout battle with TCU

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

Looking to claim a three-game winning streak for the first time since 2022, Baylor football will host its first true "blackout" game since 2016. On the 10 year anniversary of the Bears' 61-58 victory over TCU, the green and gold will take on their rivals at 7 p.m. Saturday at McLane Stadium.

Under head coach Dave Aranda, the Bears (4-4, 2-3 Big 12) are winless against their in-state rivals and have just one win in the last nine clashes between the teams. TCU (5-3, 3-2 Big 12) beat the Bears by only two points in 2021, one point in 2022 and then a whopping 25 points a year ago. But to keep the rivalry going, new Bears are ready to make their mark on The Revivalry.

"That's something I've been talking to the team about. Even though I haven't played in this, we should have a chip on our shoulder," junior offensive lineman Omar Aigbedion said. "We haven't won in five years and won one in 10 years. That's pretty embarrassing when it comes to the rivalry aspect. So this year, we're looking to change that."

After double-digit wins over Texas Tech and Oklahoma State, the emergence of redshirt junior quarterback Sawyer Robertson has fueled the Baylor offense. Since taking over in Week 3,

Robertson has completed a pass to 13 different targets and thrown the most touchdown passes of any Big 12 quarterback in conference play.

"When it is the way it is right now, I think everyone feels they got a piece and a part of scoring points and winning games, and so it's a more positive and probably better environment moving forward," Aranda said.

While the passing game has been a strength for the Bears throughout the season, a three-headed monster in the backfield has emerged. Thanks to redshirt freshman Bryson Washington, sophomore Dawson Pendergrass and junior Richard Reese, the green and gold have tallied 598 rushing yards in the past two games. The mark is the highest in back-to-back conference games since 2016.

"We should finish the rest of our games out the same way, be explosive in the run game and [it] will open up the pass. And the pass compliments the run game," Washington said. "I just feel like those two things correlate with each other and we need both of them."

The Horned Frogs are coming off a 35-34 win over Texas Tech and will also be in search of a three-game winning streak on Saturday. Both Baylor and TCU sit tied for second in the Big 12 in touchdowns (34), while the Frogs have averaged 32.5 points per game behind the No. 1 passing offense in the Big 12 (333.0 passing yards per game).

"They have a lot of elite guys and an elite receiver group. It's going to be our job to stop them," redshirt sophomore linebacker Keaton Thomas said. "We've got to come out strong, start fast and hinder the receivers. If we do that, I think we'll have a really good chance of winning this game."

Even on a two-game winning streak, Thomas and the Baylor defense have kept the memories of tough early losses at the front of their mind. Looking to use the tough start as motivation and experience, the Bears want to go with the flow and let the game come to them.

"We understood that when we were losing games, we were only a couple plays away from winning, and when we're winning, we were only a couple of plays away from taking care of business," Thomas said. "We can't get too high. We can't get too low. We've got to stay level-headed, humble and ready to work every day."

The Bears wore their new anthracite uniforms during a 31-3 rout of Air Force on Sept. 14, but the game was dubbed "Mission Black Ops" for Baylor's Salute to Service Weekend. Baylor Athletics "encouraged" fans to wear black for the promotion but at no point called the game a "blackout."

With the title back for the first time since 2016, the green and gold are cashing in on wearing black and letting it fuel their excitement for

the contest.

"I feel like you can feel the fans love it when we're in black," Washington said. "The Air Force game, it was just a different environment for me. I've never felt it before. It felt good. We needed it."

In addition to the "blackout" theme, Baylor Athletics will honor the players from the 2013 and 2014 Big 12 Championship teams. The university will only host the players from those teams as the coaching staff led by former head coach Art Briles was left off the invitation list. The players are planning to host a closed-to-the-public event with coaches, including Briles, at George's on Saturday afternoon before tailgating, according to KWTX.

Aranda paid for suites for all of the players to enjoy the game on Saturday and was excited that Baylor had the opportunity to honor the first Big 12 Championship football teams wearing the green and gold.

"It's going to be really cool. I know a fair amount of them just through my experience here," Aranda said. "But I remember watching those games. I remember the excitement that goes on, and I know there's a great love here in the community for those teams and players. It'll be exciting to have them back."

Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. Saturday at McLane Stadium, with the game being broadcast on ESPN2.

## Celebrating 2013-14: 10 years since 61-58



Lariat File Photo

**GUNSLINGER** Former Baylor quarterback Bryce Petty threw for 510 yards and six touchdowns during No. 5 football's 61-58 win over No. 9 TCU on Oct. 11, 2014. Down 21 points in the fourth quarter, the Bears scored 24 points in the final 15 minutes to hand TCU its first loss of the season.



Lariat File Photo

**COMIN' OUT HOT** Slot wide receiver Corey Coleman (1) led the Bears out of the tunnel at McLane Stadium. Coleman hauled in eight passes for 144 yards and two touchdowns.



Lariat File Photo

**FLOODED WITH GREEN AND GOLD** After kicker Chris Callahan made a 28-yard field goal as time expired, fans stormed the field at McLane Stadium and sang "That Good Old Baylor Line."



Lariat File Photo

**MOSSED!** All-Big 12 wide receiver Antwan Goodley led the green and gold with eight catches for 158 yards and two touchdowns. Goodley was a 2013 Biletnikoff Award Semi-Finalist with Baylor.

# Simmons works back to full health during fall ball

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

After an injury-riddled 2024 season, some familiar faces have worked their way back onto the field for Baylor baseball during fall practices and established themselves as cornerstones heading into the 2025 season.

Last season, head coach Mitch Thompson entered his second year feeling confident his team had vastly improved and had the pieces in place to compete in the Big 12. Unfortunately, several key players failed to make their way to conference baseball.

Second baseman Jack Little and outfielder Gavin Brzozowski suffered season-ending injuries during the week leading up to the season, and outfielder Hunter Simmons suffered an injury trying to make a highlight reel catch in the outfield just a few weeks later. While the trio had different paths to 100%, each player made the decision to come back to baseball after a redshirt year.

“Getting those guys healthy from last year has been a big plus, and getting their feet back underneath them, but it’s been a great fall,” assistant coach Jim Blair said. “Team chemistry has been great. New guys are showing a lot of promise. The returners have done exceptionally well getting their feet back underneath them.”

Simmons’ right leg injury led to a summer of recovery and surgeries to repair an ankle fracture. But between all the hardships, he was still cheering on his teammates and working his way back.

“That was a very traumatic injury, and not one that’s easy to come back from. And initially, when it happened, we didn’t know what it was really going to look like if he’s going to have an opportunity to get back on the field, but he’s taken his rehab very seriously and worked really hard at it,” Blair said. “He’s a big-time piece to this team.”

Players from the team including infielder Cole Posey, outfielder Kade Fletcher and redshirt junior right-handed pitcher Gabe Craig would visit Simmons while he was still in the hospital recovering. They talked with Simmons about his future and how he wanted to approach school and baseball.

“The day after I had gotten surgery, a lot of them showed up at the hospital. They kind of sat there for a while, sitting there talking to me,” Simmons said. “It was really kind of easing the mind, knowing that there’s still guys that are wanting to be there supporting you.”

The power hitter went into the 2024 season with the mentality that it was his last shot in college, but during the talks with his teammates they asked him about attending grad school. Simmons liked the idea of one more shot.

Simmons, now a graduate student, and Brzozowski started their Baylor careers primarily as corner outfielders and designated hitters, but during rehab found a new home. Thompson and Blair tried each of them out at first base and throughout fall intrasquad scrimmages, the veterans have played exclusively as the first basemen for team green and team gold.

“I’ve really enjoyed it. I don’t have to worry about any walls out there coming to get me, but it really is nice over there,” Simmons joked. “I have a good time with it, especially when I’m closer to the place. I can sit there and talk to all the guys in the infield because usually when I’m in the outfield, you can’t see me. I’m just talking to myself and dancing. So, now I can do that in the infield.”

During his career with the Bears, Simmons has a .303 batting average, five home runs and 40 runs batted in. When he went



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**A SCOOPY SHOT** Nicknamed “Scoob,” redshirt senior first baseman Hunter Simmons trots around the bases after swatting a home run at Baylor Ballpark. Simmons is a career .303 hitter in the green and gold and has hit five home runs with the Bears.

down with an injury in the fifth game of the season in 2024, he was the team leader in AVG (.353), hits (6) and RBI (6).

“I think last year we had a really solid lineup one through nine. I thought we had guys that we could interchange. The problem was, obviously, injuries set that back,” Simmons said. “I’m very, very, very intrigued like I was last year. I’m excited

and very confident that we’re going to have guys go compete with anybody.”

Baylor baseball will hold free intrasquad scrimmages open to the public through mid-November. First pitch times and dates will be announced weekly on Baylor Baseball’s social media channels.

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## AUSTIN AVE from A1

Hunt said Gildersleeve's photos have been paramount in the revitalization of downtown in recent years.

By looking at older images of the street, builders were able to redesign downtown

Waco accordingly. Hunt said that architects have used old photographs of downtown to redesign the facades of many buildings in a similar fashion.

"With the images of Austin Avenue, it made Waco

realize that Austin Avenue has so much great potential and because it was the main thoroughfare in the city of Waco at one time, it could be that again," Hunt said.



Photo courtesy of The Texas Collection

**BLAST FROM THE PAST** Before the tornado in 1953, Austin Avenue was a bustling street lined with vintage cars and storefronts.

## GENDER GAP from A1

has been a growing sentiment in homes, families, school and church dissuading young men from pursuing higher education.

"I guess maybe not a mentality but kind of a growing attitude amongst younger boys in middle school and high school ages where they just feel like studying — doing well in school — is not really manly," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said this idea of anti-intellectualism in men has been growing for about 40 years.

"It's really interesting, because the opposite has been true for girls. Girls are now thriving in school," she said.

"You can probably trace it back to the feminist movement in the '60s and '70s when a lot of girls weren't even getting on college campuses. But now there's women's centers across the universities. There's so much support for girls' education, and more and more girls are starting to participate in government on campus."

Kennedy cited a 2021 article from The Wall Street Journal titled, "A Generation of American Men Give Up on College: 'I Just Feel Lost,'" that addresses this issue on a national level and highlighted Baylor as one of the schools facing the issue.

At the time, Baylor had launched their "Baylor Males and Moms" campaign to keep high school boys' applications on track. The campaign sent texts to mothers encouraging them to get their sons to send in transcripts and complete their applications.

"In the article, they had interviewed young men around the U.S., and they quit school or didn't enroll because they just didn't see the value in a college degree," Kennedy

said. "They just thought it was too expensive for what you actually got, and they decided, 'I just want to make money after high school.'"

Kennedy said this type of mindset is a problem because it is short-sighted, but the rising cost of education has played a part. Some men fall into a trap of wanting to be a breadwinner and are afraid that they will be too busy paying back student loans, Kennedy said.

"In our culture — in our society — we have such strong ideas about which gender should pursue which

Baylor. Because gender is not a differentiator in admissions, classes tend to reflect the national ratio of 60% to 40% at Baylor, making the university a small-scale example of the large-scale problem.

"Certainly, we want to recruit a class that brings us the very best and brightest students," Jackson said. "We still, with our admissions team, work really hard to get out and to work with the different high schools and the counselors and really encourage the broadest level of student application pool that we can."

In order to create a more balanced population, Jackson said action must start long before recruitment and admissions deadlines.

"One of these that we want to encourage is just, in general, more males to aspire to go to college, and that work is work that's early on. It's working with families, [and] it's working in schools," Jackson said.

Baylor's new strategic plan, Baylor in Deeds, details its commitment to improving specific aspects of the university. Vice president and provost Nancy Brickhouse said parts of the plan will help create more even numbers.

"With the expansion of engineering, that's also likely to add some diversity to the undergraduate class," Brickhouse said. "It tends to be a more male population and actually a very diverse population as well. So, it's another good argument I think for adding engineering to our profile of options for all of our students."

“They just thought it was too expensive for what you actually got, and they decided, ‘I just want to make money after high school.’”

**DR. THERESA KENNEDY | DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES AT BAYLOR**

occupations that it's hard for it's hard for people to change and to be aware of that," Kennedy said. "I think we need to change expectations and make people more aware of those gender expectations."

In her class, Kennedy said they call the idea that men must fit in a certain role to be strong, manly breadwinners the "man box."

She said these expectations create a lot of pressure and anxiety for men, and being in the 21st century, there is no reason to believe that anymore.

According to Kevin Jackson, vice president for student life, this ratio is prevalent in universities across America, not just

## SPOOKY AND SAFE from A1

gets into one alone.

Waco Police Department said choosing a safe Halloween costume is another vital consideration.

Costumes should allow for easy movement, and masks or wigs that could impair vision should be avoided. Additionally, it's wise to steer clear of fake weapons or items that might resemble real weapons, as these can create misunderstandings and cause alarm among others.

The City of Waco said visibility is crucial, especially for those trick-or-treating. Avoid poorly lit areas and stick to high-traffic zones to ensure that others see you.

Families are encouraged to use reflective gear or carry flashlights to enhance visibility in the dark.

For those attending or hosting parties, several practices can help create a secure environment. Keeping an eye on drinks and never accepting beverages from strangers is essential.

If you're drinking, it's important to do so responsibly, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. Robinson said that it's always best to stay with friends and keep an eye on one another to ensure everyone gets to their destination safely and feels comfortable.

When hosting, ensure that your home is safe for guests by using glow sticks instead of candles for decorations and keeping pathways clear in case of an emergency. Familiarizing yourself with fire exits at any venue can also be beneficial.

Moreover, as the festivities unfold, it's vital to keep noise levels to a minimum and respect neighbors. Halloween can be a lively night, but being considerate of others will ensure that everyone can enjoy the holiday. Whether it's being mindful of loud music or controlling excited chatter, showing respect for the community will contribute to a positive atmosphere.

## THE CAT'S MEOW from A1

rescued off the street.

"I totally decline all those stereotypes and stigmas about black cats now," Pham said. "They are not what people say they are. Once you have a cat, you realize how much better they are than dogs."

An entire population of black cats can't be stereotyped, Pham said, because each cat has a different personality.

"Ruby greets me at the door, and he rubs his body and tail around my legs," Pham said. "He meows

plays a lot too, just like dogs do."

“Once you have a cat, you realize how much better they are than dogs.”

**MADISON PHAM | MOUNT VERNON JUNIOR**

whenever he sees you. He noticed that the black cat

and new-age, you've got to have a black cat."

superstition has no supporting evidence. Recently, shelters have started to lean into mystical ideas about black cats.

Shows like "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" and "Wednesday" as well as movies like "Hocus Pocus" are used by shelters to advertise the benefits of adopting a black cat.

"Instead of trying to avoid the people that have this outdated ideology, we're seeing a lot more people leaning into it," Plemons said. "If you're cool and witchy and new-age, you've got to have a black cat."

## FIRST FAMILY



Emma Weidmann | Editor-in-Chief

**CAMPUS ROYALTY** The first pup, BU, took a golf cart ride with her family on Monday afternoon to look at the row of homecoming floats.

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# BU BAYLOR LARIAT

*News for the students by the students*

James Ellis | Cartoonist

## THE SAFETY EDITION

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# Lifetime Fitness self-defense course equips students to take safety into their own hands

**PIPER RUTHERFORD**  
Staff Writer

The self-defense course offered at Baylor helps equip students with the necessary verbal skills, body language positions and physical maneuvers to combat those seeking to harm them.

Jon Antunes, instructor of the self-defense course and third-degree black belt in martial arts, said that what he predominantly centers the course around is and how students can avoid escalating potentially dangerous or life-threatening situations.

“The first thing I always tell my students is that they should always be aware of who is around them and what is going on around them,” Antunes said. “I’m not suggesting that they live a paranoid life, but that if they are in an abnormal situation, such as walking home alone at night, they need to pay attention to their environment.”

In teaching his students how best to act in these abnormal situations, Antunes said that he frequently looks at FBI statistics to see the common threats against college students, which most often include physical altercations, robberies and, particularly for young women, an individual trying to attack or abuse them.

“With these kinds of situations, I first emphasize the use of body language,” Antunes said. “It can look like standing or positioning yourself in a specific way so that if I see someone is walking towards me, I can take a step back, angle my body, put my hand out and ask what it is that they need to see if they continue walking towards my center line or not.”

In teaching these non-physical cues, Antunes hopes that he can help his students not engage in the normal human reaction to a threat, which can



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**TAKE IT IN YOUR OWN HANDS** Students taking the Lifetime Fitness self-defense course — instead of sitting at a desk— practice techniques they learn.

often be a physical response because it not only puts the other person in danger, but them as well.

“When people are taken by surprise ... the first instinct of someone would be to stand back, when they really should lean into it to avoid absorbing the full force of the blow,” Antunes said. “Similarly, for a young lady, if someone grabs a hold of them, the worst thing that they could do would be to slap or hit the person, since that will not significantly harm them, but will make them angrier.”

There are also legal repercussions that Antunes said he warns his

students about, specifically in the instances that they have to engage in the last resort of physically harming another individual.

“Even though this would be in self-defense and you would not face criminal charges, you do not want to severely hurt someone unless it is absolutely necessary,” Antunes said. “You have to change your way of thinking to ‘How can I eliminate the threat and do as little damage as possible?’”

Lifetime Fitness Program Director Dr. Mary Ann Jennings said that there are limited seats available in this

class each semester.

“We only have one section and one instructor for the class — in which there are typically 16 to 18 spots — and not a lot of students drop the course after signing up for it,” Jennings said. “This limited enrollment is in large part due to the fact that the course is so hands-on and instructor-intensive, especially when dealing with sensitive topics that may emotionally trigger certain students and working with potentially dangerous maneuvers that can harm someone if they are not careful.”

If a student is not able to get into the self-defense course that Baylor offers but still wishes to learn about ways that they can protect themselves, Antunes said that there are local places in Waco that offer self-defense training.

“I recommend a school called Shins Martial Arts, which prides themselves in their commitment to teaching self-defense,” Antunes said. “They don’t necessary encourage competition, but instead show their students how they can defend themselves by taking matters into their own hands.”

# Vice President for Campus Safety, Security to retire

**JOSH SIATKOWSKI**  
Staff Writer

After a decade of protecting the Baylor community, Associate Vice President for Campus Safety and Security Mark Childers is retiring.

Childers — whose last day will be Dec. 31 — joined Baylor in 2014 after a 26-year career in government law enforcement. Childers has provided leadership during Baylor's sexual assault scandal, increased the scope of the campus camera system and consolidated and oversaw Baylor's five public safety divisions.

When he was hired, Childers was tasked with overseeing Baylor's various security groups. In 2014, the Department of Public Safety was not as consolidated as it is today.

"[Baylor] had a police department, they had emergency management, they had fire safety and parking and transportation, but they were all scattered throughout campus, reporting to different division heads," Childers said.

Now, Childers oversees over 100 staff members across five divisions on campus.

At Baylor, he has focused on improving relations with outside organizations and providing top-tier security to campus. With a background in the Secret Service, he used his network to create a stronger connection between Baylor and government law enforcement organizations like the FBI, Secret Service and Waco Police Department.

Chief of Waco PD Sheryl Victorian commended Childers' efforts in a statement.

"Director Childers is the epitome of professionalism



Emma Weidmann | Editor-in-Chief

**SERVE AND PROTECT** Former Secret Service agent and campus security director Mark Childers leaves behind a strengthened and prepared safety department as he retires.

and collaboration. He has had an incredible impact on Public Safety at many levels and is leaving an inspiring legacy in Central Texas. His presence and leadership will be missed," Victorian said.

Childers improved campus security, and Baylor became a leader in active shooter defense.

"Over the past three years, [Baylor] has conducted full-scale exercises and invited Big 12 first responders," Childers said. "Baylor's proactive approach has significantly influenced emergency preparedness across the Big 12 Conference."

After eight years as a U.S. Marshal, Childers took up various roles in the Secret Service, where he spent the next 18 years. He served on President George W. Bush's detail, investigated white-collar crimes in Washington, D.C. and supervised President Bush's ranch in Crawford. And just before joining Baylor, Childers was prepared to accept a new position in The Hague, Netherlands.

Childers was about six

weeks from departing when he was contacted by a close friend about the new position at Baylor. After four or five interviews, Childers said they offered him the position to stand up the new Department of Public Safety, and he is glad he made that decision. Though the switch was sudden, Childers said he was grateful for the change.

"10 years at Baylor has been an unbelievable experience," Childers said. "It's helped me grow spiritually, professionally, personally ... I think if I would have stayed in the [Secret] Service, I wouldn't have had that opportunity."

As Childers transitions into retirement, Assistant Chief of BUPD Don Rodman will act as interim director. In the meantime, Childers will continue working with his security consulting firm.

"Whoever takes my spot will continue to build that and take it to the next level, and that is the way it should be," he said. "I'm very excited about whoever takes over, and I look forward to supporting them in any way I can."

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# Home sweet home: Who has access to our dorms?

**MACKENZIE GRIZZARD**  
Staff Writer

Living on campus can be a startling change for many. In a new environment with less supervision, students might find themselves wondering about their own security within the four walls of their dorm room.

Dr. Rob Engblom, senior associate director for resident learning, explains the safety measures practiced by Baylor's 18 different residence halls on campus.

"There [are] a lot of different features, and I'd say the first line of defense are the card-swipe accessible entryways," Engblom said. "That's not just external doors but internal doors as well that lead into the residential areas of the community."

A little piece of plastic

— your Baylor ID — is responsible for keeping students safe across all corners of campus.

According to the 2024-2025 Guide to Community Living, residence hall staff adds access to students' Baylor ID card during move-in and only does so for their assigned residence hall and room.

Except for University Parks, which uses physical keys, Baylor IDs are coded by Information Technology Services for an additional layer of security. However, there are different situations where other individuals might have access to your room or residence hall, according to Engblom.

"Depending on the hall, there are some that might have a chapel credit or classroom usage," Engblom said. "For classes specifically, we have

the ability to grant access to those students in that limited time frame."

This ability — coded by Baylor ITS — allows limited residence hall access to keep students safe at all hours, according to Engblom.

"In that limited time frame, [students] would have access when they're supposed to be there, but wouldn't have access when they're not supposed to be there," Engblom said.

Dr. Terri Garrett, associate director for academic initiatives for Campus Living and Learning, said that these systems play a key role in making Baylor's campus living safe and effective.

"Facilities, programs and services all combine the residential facility," Garrett said in an email. "[This] enhances students' in — and out — of class experience."

In addition to ID swipes, residential halls employ other safety measures to ensure the security of students living on campus.

"The student staff conduct rounds every night, which is an additional safety check for us," Engblom said. "A lot of our policies, ... escorting guests, visitation hours, stuff like that all contribute to your safety."

As for individual dorm rooms, Engblom assures students that residence hall faculty, including individual floor community leaders, cannot swipe into students' rooms whenever they want.

"The average CL or faculty member couldn't just swipe into every single room. We don't grant [access] to everybody," Engblom said.

Engblom outlined several situations where residence hall faculty would need to



Mary Thurmond | Photographer

**SWIPING IN** A student swipes into Baylor & Beyond LLC, a dorm where classes are held for non-residents.

have access to a student's room, including lock-outs and medical emergencies.

"We grant permission to use a master access for room lockouts and medical response," Engblom said.

Engblom urged students to

be responsible for their own safety as well.

"Our policy [is] not letting folks into the building that you don't know," Engblom said. "We call that piggy-backing, which is one of the policies we try to emphasize as well."



Emma Weidmann | Editor-in-Chief

**FACE-LIFT** The southwest exit of Castellaw Communications Center has been closed off since Thursday until further notice. The closure has caused inconvenience for some students as the entrance, which faces campus, is frequently trafficked.

## Castellaw southwest exit indefinitely closed due to deterioration, weathering

**ASHLYN BECK**  
News Editor

Damage to the exterior of Castellaw Communications Center drew the attention of campus facilities on Thursday afternoon, and the southwest exit of the building has been closed off until further notice.

As the graduating class of 1974 celebrated its 50-year reunion this homecoming, Castellaw Communications Center also celebrated 50 years on campus. The building — dedicated on May 16, 1974 — is home to Baylor's journalism, public relations and new media, film and digital media and communication departments.

Castellaw Communications Center was named for Jack Pender Castellaw, one

of Baylor's Immortal Ten who lost their lives in a tragic accident on Jan. 22, 1927. The building construction was partially funded by a \$700,000 gift by his mother, Lila Jane Castellaw, before her death in 1969, according to a Waco Tribune Herald clipping from May 12, 1964.

But the building doesn't seem to share the immortality of its namesake. Thursday afternoon, construction workers stood outside Castellaw to inspect issues on the second floor wall facing Moody Library. According to university spokesperson Lori Fogleman, there are no structural or building issues, and campus facilities arrived to investigate "exterior ceiling surface deterioration due to weathering over the years."

Facilities did not provide an estimated time for when the southwest exit of the building will be usable again.

The wooden pillars and caution tape around the building are inconvenient, Phoenix, Md., junior Emma Cefalu said. Students can no longer enter Castellaw by the entrance facing the majority of campus — and students are noticing.

"It's a little bit of an inconvenience," Cefalu said. "It really impedes on my ability to get in and out of the building."

Cefalu said the construction makes her a little nervous to walk around the second floor of Castellaw.

"Seeing the pillars makes me feel like I'm going to fall through the floor," Cefalu said.

# Better safe than sorry: Ditch these risky car decorations

**KATHERINE HATCHER**

Staff Writer

The term “self-expression” may bring to mind how people dress and style their bodies, speaking volumes to their personality and individuality. There is also another area of everyday self-expression that has become popular to style: cars.

Cars are like mini homes and can express who people are through cleanliness, decor, smell, music, colors and more. As fun as it is to take the interior and exterior of a car and have it reflect your personality, people should consider which types of car decor are actually safe.

According to the World Health Organization, 1.19 million people die each year as a result of road traffic crashes. Although these crashes are caused by a multitude of things, drivers getting distracted by their own belongings, including their interior decorations, is one of them.

With some tweaks and tips, different kinds of car decor can reflect one’s personality while remaining safe and preventing harm.

## STEERING WHEEL COVERS

The steering wheel is a great artistic space to create a certain vibe in a car, whether that’s more preppy, boho or manly. Steering wheel covers allow self-expression because they come in various colors, patterns and textures. However, not all materials are effective for safety while driving.

According to Capital One Auto Navigator article, “loose or ill-fitting wraps could slip while driving, and watches or jewelry could get tangled in crocheted steering wheel covers.”

Drivers should steer away from covers that are hard to grab onto or that prevent full range of movement in the arms. Instead, seek to purchase steering wheel covers that look nice and create strong grip strength.

## PHONE HOLDERS

Many cars today have displays where maps, music and more are on their dashboard screen. However, not all people have cars with a screen or some may have older models. If you’re one of



Mary Thurmond | Photographer

**SAFE YET STYLISH** To ensure the safety of your car decor, purchase car expert approved steering wheel covers and decorations.

these people, then a phone holder is the way to go for you.

They can be a nice flair to a car’s interior while also increasing car safety since they prevent staring at a phone to see where to go. While effective, these phone holders could also be dangerous depending on where they are placed. For instance, phone holders that can only be placed on the dashboard or windshield affect a driver’s peripheral view of driving.

Instead, drivers should invest in phone holders that attach to their vents. Travel + Leisure, a travel magazine, accredits the AINOPE Car Phone Holder Mount Vent 2024 as the best vent phone holder. It can be purchased from Amazon for \$13.

## HANGING AND DASHBOARD DECOR

Some of the most popular ways to transform a car’s interior space are through hanging and dashboard decorations. Many people either hang air fresheners from the rear view mirror or place little characters on the dashboard, like the

classic hula woman that dances while you drive.

While these are normally the most fun decorations, they are also probably the most distracting. According to Capital One Auto Navigator, dangling car decor could prevent a driver from operating the vehicle safely and could even become a harmful projectile in the event that a crash happens. The website suggests leaning away from decor like fuzzy dice or transparent crystals that could reflect into drivers’ eyes.

To minimize danger, looking for hanging decor that is heavy enough that it won’t move

too much in your peripheral vision, fly off the mirror or block your vision from the road is the way to go. There are lots of safe and unique hanging decor options that can be found on Etsy.

Car decor should be fun and transform a little space of everyday life. However, what is the risk of fun if it could cost you your life? Cars are a wonderful way to express personality, but drivers also need to be responsible and use discernment when choosing decorations that are reflective of who they are and extremely safe.

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Photo courtesy of Charles Reagan Hackleman for A3/LNE

**HOT WITH NOWHERE TO GO** The crowds at Chappell Roan's Austin City Limits Weekend 2 set were some of the largest the festival has seen. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with temperatures in the 90s, however, poses its own risks.

# No panic at the disco

## A complete guide to concert, event safety

**KALENA REYNOLDS**  
Staff Writer

Whether your ideal concert is Chris Stapleton at Red Rocks or a local jazz singer at Segovia Wine Bar, there's always a risk of danger when seeing live music. Here are some tips for an upcoming music event you might be attending to keep you safe and maximize enjoyment.

### STADIUMS

We are all eager for Chappell Roan to do a headlining stadium tour, but while we are all in the process of manifesting it, let's talk about some guidelines to ensure you return home in one piece.

Stadium concerts are usually quite safe due to the high levels of security, but in the case of an emergency, make sure you know where the nearest exits are.

Stay hydrated, make sure you've eaten and in case anything happens, flag down the nearest security personnel. Remain self-aware, and you will be just fine.

### WRITERS' ROUNDS

If you've ever been to Nashville, you might have heard of "writers rounds." They include three to six different songwriters who sit in a row and take turns playing. Even in a large crowd, it's an incredibly intimate experience to take part in.

There aren't any safety rules that aren't common sense when it comes to these. However, make sure you stay cautious of getting drinks from random people, and if you get a drink yourself, make sure you keep an eye on it the entire night.

### FESTIVALS

Ahhh festivals... the land of hair glitter and no dress codes. If you want to be loud, sweaty and wear light up shoes during your favorite artists' set, festivals are the place to do so. However, with great fun comes great responsibility.

Festivals are risky to attend alone. Between the heat and large crowds, having a group of people to go with ensures that you are accounted for. On that note, make sure to stay with your

group and communicate with them. If you need to find a porta potty, take a buddy with you.

While it might be tempting to leave your group and go watch an artist by yourself, the lack of cell service at festivals makes this risky. Stay with your group and plan for which artists you'll want to see.

Make sure to stay hydrated. Festivals usually take place during the warmer months — combined with large, tight crowds, they're a recipe for overheating. Most festivals allow hydration packs or empty water bottles, but make sure to check the rules before you go or bring money to buy plenty of water.

### SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The School of Music can be a fun and free way to attend a music event as a student. Most events take place in the evening, so make sure to plan where you're going to park, that way you aren't walking across campus alone. In the event that you are, download the BU Campus Guardian app which serves as a mobile safety device across Baylor's campus.

# Trends can provide safety in numbers

**OLIVIA TURNER**  
Arts & Life Editor

On college campuses across America, trends play a part in what students wear every day. From TikTok, television or famous designers, trends determine what is popular.

Dr. Jay Yoo, a professor who teaches classes on fashion theory and consumer behavior, said trends have been around ever since humans started wearing clothes.

"Following a trend provides some sort of status because you have to pay for clothing that actually is in trend," Yoo said.

Trends start when one person tries something new that no one else is doing, Raleigh, N.C., senior Molly Roberts said. Roberts, a fashion design major, said some of today's hottest trends are recycled from previous years and seasons with slight alterations to appear revolutionary. For fall, some of these include chunky sweaters, baggy, embellished jeans and midi dresses.

One reason people are so dedicated to trends is because they want to seem knowledgeable on what is popular, which is why trend forecasting is so important, Roberts said.

"People want to be on the next hot thing," Roberts said.

People feel safe and comfortable by wearing commonly-seen and loved

styles and brands, Yoo said. Simultaneously, it provides a means for people to express themselves, creating a balance between conformity and individuality, Yoo said.

"I express myself to look like everybody else," Yoo said. "So fashion is trying to conform with other people, and at the same time trying to look different from everyone else."

Yoo said following trends can boost individuality when people can take a common style and make it

their own.

"I would like to make sure that they can sort of mix and match and look at what type of style will enhance them to appear to be more attractive and express the individuality of the person," Yoo said.

Roberts said the same goes for her when expressing both trendiness and individuality. She suggests trying to pair clothes and accessories that aren't trendy to create a more elevated look, she said.

"Definitely always stay true to yourself when you're dressing and just be yourself," she said.

Yoo urges students to consider quality over quantity when shopping and to be mindful of the environment and their wallet.

"Investing in quality provides some sense of a quiet luxury, rather than what's the opposite — the flamboyant kind of style that is more disposable," Yoo said.

“People want to be on the next hot thing.”

**MOLLY ROBERTS |  
FASHION DESIGN  
MAJOR**

# Swipe right on safe online dating

**ERIKA KUEHL**  
Opinion Editor



It's cuffing season, a season consisting of sorority and fraternity formals, flannels and the look of desperation. If you've looked everywhere and still can't find your perfect match, the immediate instinct is to go on a dating app. But before

you get swept off your feet, consider proceeding with caution.

The Pew Research Center did a comprehensive study on online dating in 2022. The study read: "63% of men in this age group [under 50] who have used dating sites or apps think they have encountered a scammer on them."

The study also found some troubling statistics regarding online harassment towards young women.

"57% [of women] report that another user has sent them a sexually explicit message or image they didn't ask for. Other negative interactions are more violent in nature: 19% of younger female users say someone on a dating site or app has threatened to physically harm them — roughly twice the rate of men in the same age range who say this."

So, before you meet with your perfect match, search for their name on social media. In the age of AI-generated images, people can pretend to be anyone. Comparing their dating profile to their Instagram or Facebook can be a good way to confirm their identity. If the profile doesn't have any posts and looks suspicious to you, it may be a fake account.

I think this goes without saying, but if they

ask for any financial information — run. There are many scammers on dating sites looking to scam people instead of helping them find love. On the topic of sharing information, under no circumstances should you share your home address. Even if "Chad" says he's sending you flowers, you really never know what they could be using your address for.

OK, so the person you matched with isn't a scammer; what next? I would suggest video chatting before meeting up. Although you think you know this person, they are still a stranger. By video chatting first, you can confirm they are a real person and don't have a weird voice for that matter. If they say no to a call without explanation, take that as a hint that maybe things aren't what they seem.

The video call goes great and now it's time for the first date. Having someone pick you up is sweet, but showing them your house isn't. You can politely decline by saying you'll be in the

area earlier that day and can drive yourself.

Before you leave, share your location with a friend whom you trust. Make up a code word that signals you need to get out of the date just in case things go sour. I would recommend a first date somewhere public and during the day. If your match doesn't like this idea, well, now you know what they really wanted.

If you feel like you are in danger during the date, get the attention of a waitress or someone in the area. They can help you create a distraction and get you home safely. Trusting your instincts when meeting people for the first time is always important. If your gut says no, be rude and walk out. Your safety is much more important than your kindness.

As always, if you are in immediate danger, call 911. If you have been sexually assaulted, RAINN provides a 24/7 free hotline at 800-656-HOPE.

## Don't let people follow your digital footprint

**EMMA WEIDMANN**  
Editor-in-Chief



We increasingly live online. Scrapbooks used to be a collection of personal memories and photos that lived on a shelf or in a forgotten box in the basement. Now, they're on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok, and they exist at least semi-publicly.

Using social media as a virtual diary can make it easy to connect with long-distance friends and family, especially in college when the miles between us feel like a galaxy. But, living so publicly has very real repercussions that tend to be forgotten or downplayed.

Let's return to the very basics of stranger danger and internet safety that we learned as children. Be careful what personal info you put on social media, like the name of your house and how many of you live there.

Even posting TikToks about your dorm — which one you live in and how you decorated it — can pose potential danger and invite the wrong eyes. Common trends like "Day in the Life" videos give an accessible look into your daily routine — where you are at certain times of day, when you leave home and when you return. That is one of the most dangerous things you can publicize: and while these videos can be fun to make and interesting to watch, when they go viral, they make you vulnerable and exposed.

Your digital footprint is your trail. Don't let someone follow it.



# Title IX Office honors Domestic Violence Awareness Month, encourages student advocacy, cognizance

**KRISTY VOLMERT**  
Staff Writer

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Baylor's Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office seeks to communicate the severity of domestic violence and educate the Baylor family on how they can stay aware of it and what to do in the case that they suspect or witness it.

Domestic violence constitutes any form of abuse by a family member, close friend or romantic partner. There are many types besides just physical abuse — it can also be emotional, verbal, sexual, financial or digital.

Title IX Education & Prevention Specialist Valerie Willis emphasized the importance of understanding that domestic violence is not limited to marital conflicts. Willis addressed “preconceived notions” about the definition of domestic violence, noting that it can occur within a variety of relationships.

“It can occur between same genders or different genders, people who are in a long term relationship or even people who are going on a first date. It really could be any dynamic,” Willis said. “It’s really closely related to any kind of violence.”

To some, the phrase “if you see something, say something” may seem redundant and overused, and for many it’s just getting old. But the reason why it is so often thrown out there when discussing these matters is because it really does hold more meaning than many people realize.

According to statistics updated on Oct. 28, 2024, nearly one in two women and more than two in five men in the United States have reported experiencing intimate partner violence at some point in during their lives, and more than 16 million people in the U.S. become victims of intimate partner abuse every year.

Break the Cycle also reports that every minute, around 32 people in the United States experience intimate partner violence.

Furthermore, a fact sheet from the Texas Council on Family Violence reports that in 2023, 205 Texans were killed by their intimate partners.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline also reports statistics about domestic violence: 57% of college students who report experiencing dating violence and abuse said it occurred in



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

**DON YOUR LAVENDER** Go Purple Day is a national day of recognition for domestic violence victims which takes place annually on the third Thursday in October. This year, it was on Oct. 17.

college. 43% of dating college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, digital, verbal or other controlling abuse.

Women ages 18 to 34 generally experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence. 38% of college students say they don't know how to get help for themselves if they experience dating abuse as a victim.

Additionally, 58% of college students say they don't know what to do to help someone who is a victim of dating abuse.

“We don't want to see any individual in our community harmed by this form of abuse,” Willis said. “If you see anything that's unhealthy, we want you to be able to recognize it and have strategies to either intervene yourself or report anonymously.”

The ability for bystanders to report unobtrusively and anonymously has led to a significant decrease in the number of cases that go unreported. This may be in part because many bystanders are afraid that if the perpetrator they are reporting finds out, they may threaten them. This fear is why Baylor's Title IX Office offers an anonymous reporting tool.

According to Willis, there could be a number of reasons why research shows that individuals aged 18 to 24 are most likely to become victims of domestic violence.

“College environments create a unique environment that I think predisposes them,” she said. “They're newly independent. They have the stress of academics, huge financial constraints put on them and they're navigating personal relationships without their usual support networks for the first time, so that puts them at a further increased susceptibility.”

It is important that students know they have support systems here at Baylor that are full of resources to help them through whatever new challenges they are facing.

“Domestic Violence Awareness Month at Baylor seeks to empower students to recognize unhealthy behaviors and provide them with the necessary support and resources in case anything does happen,” Willis said. “We foster an environment where violence isn't tolerated — even by bystanders — and really recalibrate norms to make sure that our campus community is one that is aware and preventative of any cases

of domestic violence.”

A report from FOX 44 last week featured a group of Baylor Law students who were taking action to advocate for Domestic Violence Awareness. Students participated in Go Purple Day, a national day on which people would wear purple to honor victims of domestic violence and outwardly demonstrate their dedication to spreading awareness and providing support. Purple is the color used for domestic violence awareness because it symbolizes courage, peace, survival and honor.

This group of law students has been organizing a variety of events and fundraisers that give 100% of profits to an organization in Waco that is dedicated to preventing and spreading awareness on domestic violence in the community.

Santa Barbara, Calif. first-year law student Grace Neale is one of the students highlighted in this group. Neale has earned a master's degree in criminology and has directed her research specifically towards cases focused on coercive control and victimology.

“We tried to organize as many students as possible to be involved by wearing purple to show their support on Go Purple Day and then the day after,” Neale said. “The following week, we did three days of tabling where we had students and faculty members donate baked goods that were sold for proceeds, all of which became donations to the Waco Family Abuse Center.”

Neale said that as a law student, her future career motivates her to advocate passionately for causes such as domestic violence and to help support victims. She said she believes that anyone who is able to help and do anything to raise awareness has a responsibility to do so.

According to Neale, we commonly hear “everyone knows someone” or “one in four women in the U.S. experiences domestic violence.” Neale said these phrases don't do a lot to actually portray the effects of domestic violence.

“I think that by raising awareness and and sharing it with the people in your everyday lives, not only are you supporting people that are going through it, but also you can really bring to light those phrases that you frequently hear in a practical way. It brings reality to the statistics,” Neale said.