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EDITORIAL



James Ellis | Cartoonist

The dilemma burning through national parks

In 1872, the United States Congress passed a bill designating Yellowstone as the first National Park. President Woodrow Wilson created the National Park Service in 1916 to oversee the 35 National Parks at the time.

Since then, the National Park System (NPS) has grown to 433 sites in all 50 states. Of those 433, only 63 are considered “national parks” and many of the rest are monuments, battlefields or historic sites. In total, the NPS owns over 84 million acres of land nationwide.

As the national parks have been a crucial part of American history and culture, recent budget cuts are putting these monuments in significant jeopardy; however, few people are aware of this.

In the 2025 Federal Budget, passed during the Biden Administration, \$3.6 billion was set aside for the NPS. The 2026 budget significantly reduces that amount to \$2.1 billion. At the beginning of the year, roughly 20,000 people worked for the National Park Service. By July, 24% of the workforce had been let go. Despite this vast reduction, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum ordered the parks to remain open.

As a result, national parks are significantly struggling to stay maintained and open. The remaining workers have been stretched thin, working strenuously to ensure visitor services are available. According to the National Parks Conservation Association, Big Bend National Park has lost half of its employees. The Pioneer History Center at Yosemite National Park was forced to close this summer because artifacts had been stolen, due in part to reduced staffing.

For the most part, the budget cuts have yet to massively affect the visitor experience. But as more employees are laid off, parks may have to stop offering services or cease maintaining less popular hiking trails.

In July, President Trump signed an executive order entitled “Make Our National Parks Great Again.” The order increases the entrance fee for foreign visitors at the 100 sites that currently have one. The administration claims this increase will help the NPS and fund critical infrastructure projects. In reality, this could discourage foreign tourism and harm the NPS. If foreign tourism decreases, the fee increase

could be transferred to American citizens.

The Federal shutdown has the potential to worsen the problem. In September, the Department of the Interior published the “National Park Service Contingency Plan for a Potential Lapse in Appropriations.” Most parks will remain open, but worker cuts will increase as time goes on. Park websites and social media will not be updated, nor will regular notices of road/trail closures be posted.

If the government remains shut down, the lack of regular notices could lead to catastrophic disasters. In the event of an avalanche or hazardous weather, visitors might not know until it is too late. Each national park normally provides daily weather forecasts, but this is not the case during the shutdown.

As noted in the plan, 9,296 of the 14,500 current NPS employees will be furloughed, leaving 5,200 people to oversee the care of 84 million acres of land.

In 2024, approximately 331 million people visited a site within the National Park System, a 6 million-person increase since 2023. Data from the NPS website shows visitation has increased nearly every year since 1916, with exceptions during wartime and COVID-19.

The Great Smoky National Park led all other parks, with 12.2 million visitors in 2024. Zion National Park and Grand Canyon National Park each had 4.9 million, Yellowstone had 4.7 million and Rocky Mountain National Park rounded out the top five with 4.1 million. On the other end of the spectrum, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve had fewer than 12,000 visitors, making it the least-visited national park.

The NPS is an economic boom both nationally and for the regions around the park, known as “gateways.” Visitors to these regions contributed \$29 billion to the economy in 2024, creating 340,000 jobs in the process.

National parks are a crucial part of American society and reducing funding only showcases the lack of care toward this country’s roots. Failing to protect our land ultimately means losing our legacy, as decreasing funding for national parks is a direct hit on history.

“National parks are a crucial part of American society and reducing funding only showcases the lack of care toward this country’s roots.”

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

‘The Lord of the Rings’ will restore your hope

DYLAN FINK
Sports Writer

When I was five years old, my father sat me down and began to read me “The Fellowship of the Ring.” I didn’t realize it at the time, but my introduction to J.R.R. Tolkien’s world of Middle-earth would change my life for the better.

“The Lord of the Rings” trilogy embodies a rich tradition of humanity intertwined throughout its pages.

Tucked away in a story that has wizards, hobbits and orcs is a lesson on what it means to be inherently human.

In today’s world of social media debates, seemingly endless national conflicts and government shutdowns, a look into Tolkien’s masterpiece can remind society that good does exist in the world.

When my dad first read “The Lord of the Rings” to me when I was young, I was given life lessons through those pages that have shaped who I am. When times seem bleak, a look back into Tolkien’s words reminds me of the hope I was taught.

I learned about the importance of friendship from four hobbits who each refused to leave their best friend’s side.

I learned about the courage of leadership from a ranger who was called to be king.

I learned about processing grief and loss as the great wizard Gandalf said to the four hobbits, “I will not tell you not to weep, for not all tears are bad.”

These are the lessons that the world today needs. Lessons that inspire hope and promote inherent goodness towards others,

even in the darkest times.

The beauty of “The Lord of the Rings” for today’s world lies in Tolkien’s distaste for intentionally allegorical writing.

“I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence,” Tolkien said. “I much prefer history — true or feigned — with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse applicability with allegory, but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposeful domination of the author.”

Tolkien uses his work to provide the reader with an opportunity to take away what they most need from the story. His trilogy allows the audience to bring their troubles to the story and leave with an answer that inspires humanity.

This is what I gained from “The Lord of the Rings.” I was reminded of the importance of inherent human goodness, not because there was a painted picture for me to follow along, but because that was what I needed to take away from the fellowship’s journey to Mordor and back.

In a time where there is so much darkness and doubt in our society, I believe it is beneficial to dive into the world of Middle-earth and remember the heroics of Tolkien’s characters. The story of an all-encompassing evil that needs to be destroyed by the least-likely of persons is not too different from our world today.

Next time world news makes you feel hopeless, open a copy of “The Lord of the Rings.” Find inspiration in the stories of Frodo and Sam, Aragorn and Boromir and Legolas and Gimli. Perhaps you are the least likely person to have the heart to combat evil in our world today.

Self-driving cars are going toward the wrong direction

BRADY HARRIS
Photographer

Imagine a driver speeding down the highway, with a vlog camera on the dashboard, eating a full meal and driving a Tesla — while this image seems like a Saturday Night Live skit, it has become a scarily common YouTube trend.

Self-driving cars have captivated society for years, featured in everything from movies and TV to news and the internet. Recently, car manufacturers have been in a race to get their version of “self-driving” or “auto-pilot” onto the road for drivers to use. However, with each push to deliver a product year after year, this technology gets more dangerous by the day.

The confusion begins with the claims. These advancements are unregulated and carry risks; as a result, research indicates self-driving cars are often misunderstood in their purpose. While many people see the term “self-driving” as a free-for-all, market leaders like Tesla are not being transparent about their technological weaknesses.

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation,

a trade group representing automakers, said in a statement provided to CBS News that, “There is some confusion and misunderstanding about automated driving technology. At its core, this technology is meant to support a human driver operating behind the wheel. It requires the human driver to be attentive and engaged. Not some of the time — but all of the time.”

First, the term “self-driving” is often overemphasized in many automotive industry applications.

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‘Accio’ pool noodle

Harry Potter-themed ‘Humans vs. Zombies’ turns campus into battleground

HANNAH WEBB
Focus Editor

Cardboard shields gleam under streetlights, pool noodles whip through the air and laughter mixes with shouts. The apocalypse has arrived, and the Honors Residential College couldn't be happier.

Behind the mayhem is one of the HRC's most beloved traditions: a three-day game called "Humans vs. Zombies" that transforms studious scholars into sprinting survivors.

The event is a sprawling, adrenaline-fueled game of infection tag, entirely organized and run by students. It begins with four "alpha zombies" lurking in the shadows, waiting for their chance to tag the unsuspecting. Once a human is caught, the infection spreads — and the chase begins anew.

This year's theme, inspired by "Harry Potter," added a magical twist to the usual chaos. Houses, spells and nightly missions infused the campus with Hogwarts energy as students competed for survival and points.

Seattle junior Miya Shimada, one of three Game Masters overseeing the event, said months of preparation go into crafting the experience.

"It honestly starts before the semester even begins," Shimada said. "We meet over the summer to plan the theme, outline the lore and create the nightly missions. Once the semester starts, we meet regularly to make sure



Hannah Webb | Focus Editor

EXPPELLIARMUS Houston junior Elaine Adams, Southlake junior Tim Varghese, San Jose, Calif., freshman Conner Gordon and Portland senior Rebecca Tietze are caught in an impromptu pool noodle battle outside the HRC Tuesday morning.

everything runs smoothly."

Each night features a mission — a structured challenge that advances the storyline and pushes players to think fast. Students race across campus under glowing streetlights, their footsteps echoing through the quiet quads. Monday night's tasks included the book-savvy Ravenclaws scouring "The Sorcerer's Stone" for specific lines, a teamwork-laden three-legged relay for the Hufflepuffs, an egg-cracking courage test for the Gryffindors, a cunning snake game for the Slytherins and a real-life round of wizard's chess played under the stars.

This edition of chess, while not entirely enchanted, held close to the chaotic nature of the books. Pawns in party hats bounced on one leg,

bishops held bibles in the air and knights hoisted friends on their backs in preparation for jousts.

Shimada said the Game Masters' mission is to balance creativity and safety while nurturing camaraderie within the HRC.

"We end with a final battle between the few remaining humans and the zombie horde," Shimada said. "But at the end of the day, our main goal is for everyone to have fun and to build community."

Although the event pulses with energy, Shimada said safety remains the top priority.

"We don't play within 10 feet of doors or stairs because they're tripping hazards," she said. "We just want everyone to stay safe — the residents are more important than

the game."

To ensure that, the organizers work closely with Baylor administrators and safety officers. The result, Shimada said, is an event that's both exhilarating and well-regulated, resulting in crafted chaos.

For players, the game is more than a tradition — it's a test of wit, endurance and nerve.

Andover, Kan., freshman Faith Butler joined the game for the thrill and the chance to make new connections.

"I knew people got really competitive, but it's such a great way to meet people in the HRC," Butler said. "I did senior assassin in high school and got out really early, so I wanted to make it as far as I can in this one."

So far, Butler has remained uninfected — a feat she credits to quick thinking and careful planning.

"Yesterday I camped out at Moody until we got immunity for an event," she said. "It's kind of an adrenaline rush. I had to sprint this morning, but honestly, it's fun — and it forces me to get places early."

During Monday's wizard's chess mission, Butler served as the "queen" but was eliminated mid-game.

"I didn't end up doing much because I got killed," she said with a laugh. "But it was still fun. Everyone's been really into it."

Beyond the competition, Butler said the event builds a sense of belonging.

"In the group chat,

everyone sends zombie sightings and works together to stay safe," she said. "It's a great community builder. I'm already excited for next year."

While HRC students dart across campus like characters in a live-action movie, other Baylor students often pause mid-walk, unsure of what exactly they're witnessing.

Austin freshman Matthew Sykes said the sudden appearance of noodle-armed runners caught him completely off guard.

"I saw people walking into class with pool noodles and thought they were going swimming somewhere," Sykes said. "Then I realized it wasn't that, and ... got more confused as I kept seeing more people with noodles."

Although Sykes said the game initially seemed strange, he admitted it adds a burst of life to Baylor's campus.

"It kind of freaked me out at first, but it brings people together," he said. "It's a great tradition that gets people talking to each other."

For Shimada, that reaction — curiosity turning into connection — is the whole point.

"It allows people who wouldn't meet otherwise to meet each other," she said. "It helps freshmen feel like they belong to something bigger than themselves."

For three nights every fall, the Honors Residential College proves that honors students can do more than just study — they can survive the apocalypse, too.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and Title IX has a host of activities planned.



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

LIGHT THE NIGHT Rosenbalm Fountain glows purple in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a part of Baylor's aim to foster education, awareness and action Tuesday night on Fountain Mall.

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Head coach Scott Drew
Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor



Head coach Bryce Drew
Photo courtesy of GCU Athletics

O brother, where art thou?

Scott Drew to coach against GCU, brother Bryce Drew in exhibition

DYLAN FINK
Sports Writer

For the first time since 2015, Baylor basketball head coach Scott Drew will coach against his younger brother, Bryce, in a public matchup.

The Bears will host Grand Canyon in an open scrimmage at Foster Pavilion at 4 p.m. Friday. The game represents an early opportunity to play a team with three consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances — and for one Drew brother to win some bragging rights in a friendly rivalry.

“Whenever I see him coach, I always just notice he’s so calm out there coaching,” Bryce Drew said of his brother to Arizona Sports in January. “I don’t think I’m that calm like he is.”

Even before becoming Division I coaches, the Drew brothers were surrounded by college basketball nearly their entire lives. Their father, Homer Drew, is a college basketball legend who spent the majority of his career coaching at Valparaiso, leading the school to the 1998 Sweet Sixteen. That moment, remembered as one of the greatest Cinderella runs in NCAA tournament history, was a family affair.

Scott Drew had the opportunity to be an assistant coach under his father for the historic ‘98 Valparaiso team. Bryce Drew, the team’s star player, is remembered for “The Shot”: an emphatic buzzer-beater in the final second of the round-of-64 against Ole Miss that immortalized 13th-seeded Valparaiso in NCAA tournament history.

“That’s one of the most memorable shots ever in the tournament,” Scott Drew said in a 2021 interview with the Rich Eisen show. “Every time I see it, I still smile. It was a great thing in our family’s lives.”

Scott Drew took the reins at Valparaiso for the 2003 season following his father’s move to a one-year interim role in university administration. After leading the Mid-Continent Conference team to the NCAA tournament in his first season as head coach, a troubled team on the Brazos came calling.

The rest is history, as Scott Drew has amassed a national championship, two conference championships and sent dozens of players to the NBA.

Bryce Drew’s path to Division I coaching is a slightly different story.

Following his college career, Bryce Drew was drafted by the Houston Rockets as the 16th pick of the 1998 NBA draft. Following a mediocre six-year professional career, the younger Drew brother looked to join his family tree in the college coaching world.

following Homer Drew’s retirement from coaching, Bryce was given the opportunity to succeed his father’s legacy.

“Coaching [at Valparaiso] at the time was amazing,” Bryce Drew told the Field of 68 in 2021. “Being with my dad there and then also my brother was so cool, and then I got to be in that same role. It was like being a part of the family business.”

Following his tenure with the Beacons, Bryce Drew was brought in to coach at Vanderbilt in 2016, where he had a yin-and-yang experience.

from beyond the arc. Two years after making the NCAA Tournament, the Commodores went 0-18 in SEC play.

Following his lack of success in the SEC, Bryce Drew was hired as head coach at Grand Canyon in 2020, where he now leads the four-time Western Athletic Conference champions into the 2025-26 season.

“What he’s doing here is just unprecedented success,” Scott Drew said in a surprise appearance for a 2021 Grand Canyon post-game interview. “I’m proud of what he’s done, who he is and who he’s turning these young men into.”

The loving rivalry between the two brothers has led to them assisting the other brother’s programs.

At the 2023 NCAA tournament, Grand Canyon’s jerseys, shoes and other equipment failed to reach their regional location on time with the team, limiting their ability to practice. When it looked like the Antelopes would have to play unprepared, the Bears — who happened to be at the same regional site — saved the day. Scott Drew loaned Baylor’s excess practice equipment to his brother’s team so that they could prepare for their round-of-64 matchup.

“We had to hook them up,” Scott Drew told CBS Sports. “I mean, what are big brothers for?”

According to college basketball insider Trilly Donovan, Grand Canyon and Baylor have competed in secret scrimmages against each other for the past four seasons. The first of these scrimmages to receive a reported score came in 2024, which wrapped up in a tight 83-80 win for the Bears.

This year’s exhibition will provide not only the opportunity for the public to get a first look at the Bears this year, but also to watch two college basketball legends, who happen to be brothers, go head-to-head, hoping to lead their teams to victory on 94 feet of hardwood.

“They are both better sons than they are coaches,” Homer Drew told Nicole Shearin in 2024. “That makes me, as their dad, very proud.”

The exhibition match will tip off at 4 p.m. Friday at the Foster Pavilion.



Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor

DREW-PER SMASH BROS Fans wave a cutout of head coach Scott Drew during Baylor’s win over Kansas State Jan. 22.

“[The NBA] was a great experience, where I got to live a dream of playing against the best players in the world,” Bryce Drew said on the Sports Spectrum podcast in 2020. “It also was a grind being an undersized player. The experience was jarring, too. It demanded a lot from my faith and family.”

Bryce Drew followed in his family’s footsteps, returning to Valparaiso for the 2006 season as an assistant coach. In 2011,

After making the NCAA tournament in his first season, Bryce Drew signed future NBA lottery picks Darius Garland and Aaron Nesmith.

“Aaron is an elite shooter with outstanding character,” Bryce Drew said in 2020. “From the moment I saw him play, I knew he would make it to the NBA.”

The recruiting success did not translate to the court, as Garland tore his meniscus five games into the season and the team shot 31.1%

Shelby Livingstone Anema pursues ministerial mission through coaching

JEFFREY COHEN
Sports Writer

Shelby Livingstone Anema envisioned a life dedicated to ministry and chaplaincy among athletes.

When her playing days at Rice came to a close, Anema — now an assistant coach for Baylor volleyball — believed her calling was to provide for the spiritual needs of student-athletes. With a prime opportunity and persistence from those around her, she found path to uniting faith and the game of volleyball.

“After I graduated from Rice, I thought that my life in volleyball was over,” Anema said. “I kind of felt like I had paid my dues — and then the volunteer assistant position here at Baylor came calling.”

Anema solidified her desire to do sports ministry while studying for her Master of Divinity at Truett Theological Seminary. She wanted to focus on the spiritual side of sports

rather than coaching or the actual sport itself.

“I did not want to coach when I was in seminary,” Anema said. “Even as the volunteer here at Baylor, I was pretty adamant, telling my parents and telling [head coach Ryan McGuyre] that I love chaplaincy, that’s what I want to do with my life.”

McGuyre persisted in encouraging Anema to explore the world of coaching while she was a volunteer coach. He expressed his belief that Anema could combine her mission of sports ministry with her experience as a collegiate volleyball player and coach.

“I’m really grateful to coach McGuyre for speaking the volleyball skills and ability to coach into my life and then allowing myself to lean into the ‘Yes, I know volleyball and I know how to coach,’” Anema said. “I get to be a chaplain of sorts at places like Liberty and Baylor and really get to see those two things come together.”

After her time as a volunteer assistant, Anema left to coach at Liberty under former Baylor assistant coach Trevor Johnson in 2022 and 2023. She learned to coach full-time while also being part of a program that embraced its school’s Christian identity.

“I got to step out of my comfort zone,” Anema said. “Baylor, definitely after three years, felt very comfortable. And I loved it here, but going to Liberty was a moment to step out in faith and go to a new place.”

Anema had already experienced the faith aspect of Baylor volleyball, so she homed in on improving as a full-time coach while with the Flames.

“I felt like I was able to grow a lot in just my coaching abilities and my voice on the court to help prepare me to come back here to Baylor,” Anema said.

Anema already had ties to Baylor; her parents are President Linda Livingstone and First Gent Brad



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

COACH LIVINGSTONE Shelby Livingstone Anema, daughter of President Linda Livingstone, has made ministry a priority in her coaching.

Livingstone; however, when she came to Baylor for seminary, her experience in collegiate volleyball opened the door to an unexpected coaching role.

“I was already coming to Baylor for grad school at Truett Seminary, and it all fit really perfectly,” Anema said. “Being the volunteer here for

three years spurred on my love of coaching.”

The presence of her parents contributed to her love of coaching at Baylor. Anema has spent more time with them as she has grown and has embraced their support.

‘Full of wonder, childhood whimsy’

Student designer debuts eco-fashion collection in Paris

O’CONNOR DANIEL
Reporter

A discarded quilt. A sewing machine from her mom. A lifelong dream of walking the streets of Paris.

San Carlos, Calif., junior Caitlynn Reynolds watched “Little Women” on repeat while designing her final project in a Paris fashion studio. For her, the film’s nostalgia, softness and celebration of growing up without letting go of wonder captured exactly what she wanted her collection to feel like.

“I want my collection to feel the way this movie makes me feel because it’s so full of wonder and childhood whimsy,” Reynolds, an apparel merchandising major, said.

This summer, Reynolds spent four weeks studying at the Paris College of Art, taking two intensive fashion courses. Her final project, a collection titled “Whimsy Kind of Woman,” reflected her personal journey of independence, creativity and sustainable design.

She documented the experience on a separate Instagram account dedicated to her time abroad, filled with fashion sketches, fabric studies and photos of her everyday inspiration in the city.

“Her passion for creativity really came through, not only in her posts, but also in her fashion sketches and apparel designs,” said Rochelle Brunson, an associate merchandising and design professor who taught Reynolds. “She loves to create, and that was evident throughout her time in Paris.”

Brunson said Reynolds stood out from the start.

“It was clear that she was focused, determined and had a strong sense of direction regarding her goals,” Brunson said.

Reynolds said she first learned to sew during the COVID-19 lockdown when she pulled out her mom’s machine and decided to make her own prom dress. That experience sparked an interest in fashion and later, in repurposing old materials through thrifting and sustainable design.

“It puts into perspective when you are able to see a full garment fully being made from zero to 10,” she said.

In Paris, Reynolds took courses titled “Fashion Illustration Through the Eyes of Paris” and “Sustainable Couture Craftsmanship.” She said her favorite exhibits included a historical look at sportswear and a couture retrospective on Charles Frederick Worth, the founder of haute couture. His hand-sewn gowns were made for the wealthiest women of the 19th century, tailored through multiple fittings and constructed directly on the body with precise draping and intricate detailing.

“These dresses would cost as much as castles,” Reynolds said.

After seeing Worth’s sketches and designs, she began incorporating similar artistic elements into her final illustrations, but Reynolds’s work goes beyond aesthetics.

Her personal research project, titled “Every Stitch Tells a Story,” explores her passion for sustainability and her belief that fabric carries memory.

“There’s a story behind every stitch that has made this piece of textile or garment,” she said.

One of her most meaningful projects was a quilted jacket made from a thrifted quilt with a tag that read “Quilted by Aunt Hope.” Reynolds kept the tag and stitched it into her new design.

“A part of Aunt Hope’s story lives on with me,” she said.

Though she traveled to Paris alone, Reynolds said the collection was also inspired by joyful, simple moments with friends back at Baylor — baking cakes, running through fields and dressing up for no reason.

“Not everything has to be so serious,” she said. “There’s so much whimsy and magic behind exploring something unfamiliar.”

Even as she looks to the future, she said her purpose remains clear: to create things of beauty and steward the gifts God has given her.

“I’m one person out of eight billion on this planet, but I think change can be made, and it starts with one person,” Reynolds said.



Photo courtesy of Caitlynn Reynolds

SCRAPPY TO SNUGLLY Caitlynn Reynolds wears a quilted jacket she made from a thrifted blanket, part of her commitment to sustainable fashion and honoring handmade materials. She often draws inspiration from vintage textiles and found fabrics with hidden histories.



Photo courtesy of Caitlynn Reynolds

GETTING INSPIRED The mood board for Reynolds’s final collection includes scraps and cutouts.

Oso Esports super smashes competition in inaugural season

STACIE BOYLS
Arts & Life Writer

Tucked away in a room outside the bowling alley of the Bill and Eva Student Life Center sit 12 glowing, high-powered PCs designed for top-level gaming. What started as a student organization in 2017 through the Oso Esports Club has evolved into a new chapter of Baylor athletic history.

This fall marks the official launch of the Baylor varsity esports team, a fully sanctioned collegiate-level competitive esports program designed to blend community, technology and performer excellence, all under a green and gold banner.

The idea to create a varsity program came about after the student-run Oso Esports Club showed promise in their casual competitions against other university programs.

“It’s really exciting — we’ve only existed as a varsity program for about three or four weeks now,” Adam Stanley, esports director and head coach, said. “We’re treating it one-to-one, similarly with athletics. There are practices, film review, study halls and workouts. It’s a true varsity experience.”

Stanley, an alumnus, came to Baylor to launch this exciting new program after building a championship-winning program at Brewton-Parker College in Georgia. Under his leadership, the program has been divided into three tiers — varsity, academy and club — all offering a competitive gaming experience for students of varying skill. While varsity and academy provide a fast-paced, athletically structured program, club offers a more casual setting, making gaming accessible for every student.

“The cool thing about esports is

that if you’re a gamer, there’s a spot for you,” Stanley said. “You don’t have to be six-foot-five with a jump shot to be a competitor.”

The varsity teams currently compete in Rocket League, Overwatch, Valorant and Super Smash Bros Ultimate as part of the Power Esports Conference (PEC), facing off against other Division I schools such as Minnesota, Utah and Ohio State in weekly matchups. In fact, Baylor’s upcoming football game against Utah on Nov. 15 coincides with its esports matchup.

All games are played virtually and streamed by one or both schools, according to the Baylor esports website. Matches take place in the Game Room in the Sub and start at 7 p.m. The PEC split for matches is Monday: Rocket League, Tuesday: Overwatch 2, Wednesday: Valorant, Thursday: Super Smash Bros. Ultimate.

According to Stanley, matches will soon be available to livestream on Twitch and YouTube.

For Carmel, Calif., senior Ryan McCrae, captain of Baylor’s Overwatch team and program manager, watching the esports scene at Baylor grow has been a gratifying experience.

“I joined Oso Esports my freshman year, and I’ve watched it double in size,” McCrae said. “Now we actually have a varsity program.”

The progression is there, it’s just going to keep expanding.”

McCrae said the esports team has

been both bonding and transformative for him.

“Most people play ranked matches or just with friends” he said. “Being able to grow together in a true team environment — that’s something everyone should experience. You learn how to communicate, how to be vulnerable, how to progress as a person.”

Beyond competition, McCrae said Baylor Esports aims to model the same holistic development mirroring the self-care regimen and high standards of traditional athletics — teamwork, discipline and leadership.

“We’re not after wins and losses of video games,” Stanley said. “We’re after the actual student development that comes within them.”

Along with holistic student development and scholarship opportunities for varsity and academy-level teams, Stanley said he hopes to increase female representation and visibility in the gaming world.

“We know women are gaming at nearly the same rate as men,” Stanley said. “We just don’t see that same participation at the top levels, and we want to change that.”

Baylor Esports has already gained national recognition, ranking eighth out of 252 teams in the Collegiate Rocket League Open Qualifiers. This achievement earned them a spot on the official Rocket League Twitch broadcast.

Looking ahead, Stanley said he hopes to keep the momentum with the program, striving for national leadership in the world of collegiate esports.

“All eyes are on Baylor right now,” he said. “In five years, I want us to set the standard for what collegiate esports can be — not just in competition, but in how we develop students.”



Photo courtesy of Caitlynn Reynolds

Baylor esports recruit Andrew “Andy” Nolan.

Baylor esports recruit Colby “Hockster” James

Photos courtesy of Adam Stanley

Arts & Life

Curated by Audrey brings Pinterest boards to life

LEXIE RODENBAUGH
Arts & Life Writer

In the online fashion community, possessing a closet full of “Pinterest-worthy” outfits has become a coveted status symbol, but not everybody has the skill to bring that style off Pinterest and into the real world.

Chandler, Ariz., sophomore Audrey Savage has created a business to do just that by creating personalized style bundles for the students of Baylor and beyond.

For Savage, thrifting started purely as a money-saving tactic in a world of expensive clothes, but she quickly realized she had a knack for it.

“I’ve been thrifting since I was in middle school,” Savage said. “I just really liked it because you can find trendy things on a budget. I didn’t have a ton of money, but I wanted to dress super cute. ... I would just go to the thrift store and find such great things.”

The people around her noticed her talent, too. New City, N.Y., sophomore Annelise Hur has seen Savage’s journey to success firsthand.

“Watching Audrey in action is always so captivating,” Hur said. “She has an eye for things that not everyone can catch and can always envision the final product. She doesn’t see things by a single piece, but by the whole image.”

The hobby started to mean much more to Savage when she was told she would have to pay for her first car. Not wanting to sit in a cubicle or work at a fast food restaurant, she decided to turn to what she knows and loves as a means to make money.

“I just wanted to do something that I genuinely enjoyed,” Savage said. “I didn’t want to spend all this time working at a job that I didn’t even like doing. I basically just started posting my old clothes and selling them on Depop. ... It kind of took off, I was able to buy my first car

because of it.”

The natural pipeline for Savage was to start posting her style on Pinterest, and that blew up, too.

“My impressions — or views — were actually incredible,” Savage said. “Over the past four years, I’ve literally gotten eight million impressions. ... Then, I got invited to this really big event in New York put on by Pinterest for creators. It was incredible.”

Pinterest fame isn’t something that is widely known or talked about, but for Savage, it was the beginning of something huge for her career.

“That was what inspired me to create Curated by Audrey,” Savage said. “I went to New York, and I saw all of these creators doing jobs that they loved, and helping people, and I was like, ‘I want to do that.’”

Even after attending the Pinterest event, selling the curated style guides wasn’t in Savage’s line of vision until people started direct messaging her asking for them on Instagram.

“That’s when I really started doing the bundles,” Savage said. “How that works is I basically take my client’s inspiration pictures — they send me their inspiration, their sizes, everything. Because I have such a knowledge of Pinterest and the trends, I’m able to go to thrift stores and source exactly what they want.”

Thrifting is a skill, and Audrey’s honed that skill through seven years of experience that most students don’t have.

“When somebody sends me a Pinterest board of a bunch of different outfits, I’m able to identify certain pieces in that board, and then I go to the thrift store,” Savage said. “It’s honestly just second nature to me. ... I give the example of when someone’s obsessed with something — like if someone’s obsessed with pink — they’ll find that thing everywhere they go. My brain is trained to see the vision and things that other people might pass by.”



Photo courtesy of Audrey Savage

MIX & MATCH Savage boasts one of her favorite trends, pinstripes, in a fully thrifted outfit, much like the ones she puts together for her clients on Depop.

Her knowledge and skill don’t go unnoticed by those around her, either. Gilbert, Ariz., sophomore James Murphy, Savage’s boyfriend, has known her since the beginning, and has gotten to witness this skill several times.

“Her ability to know exactly what she’s looking for and have the resourcefulness to go out and find it is truly impressive,” Murphy said.

In fact, she has such a knowledge of the latest fashion and trends that she forecasted the polka dot trend last February, and it’s blown up tremendously since.

“I kid you not, I literally posted a graphic on

Pinterest in February of like, how polka dots will be the newest trend,” Savage said. “Now, they’re everywhere. It’s actually insane.”

It’s not just about fashion and funds for Savage; there’s an environmental aspect to thrifting that resonates with her.

“It is crazy how many clothes we waste,” Savage said. “I think I saw a statistic recently that said we could clothe the next seven generations ... with the amount of clothes we’ve already produced. ... We are just such a consuming world, and I think that it’s just like, we have the resources already, why wouldn’t we use them.”



James Ellis | Cartoonist

What to Do in Waco: Oct. 9-16

OLIVIA TURNER
Arts & Life Editor

While many may be heading out of town for fall break, there is still plenty to do in Waco for those who choose to hang around. Whether you’re down for a haunted kayaking escapade or a chill day with the sloths at Cameron Park Zoo, there’s something for everyone this weekend.

WACO HEART O’ TEXAS FAIR

Oct. 9-12 | 4 - 11 p.m. on Thursday, 4 p.m. - 12 a.m. on Friday, 12 p.m. - 12 a.m. on Saturday, 12-11 p.m. Sunday | Extraco Events Center, 4601 Bosque Blvd. | \$24 gate admission The fair is still going through the end of the weekend, with plenty of food, music and entertainment to spare. Grab a friend and for College Night on Thursday, when gate admission is \$10 when you present your student ID and carnival armbands are \$30 when purchased with the printed coupon from the Heart O’ Texas Fair website.

Rodeo tickets and carnival ride wristbands are sold separately. Get your admission tickets here.

RETRO FAMILY SKATE NIGHT

Oct. 9 | 6-9 p.m. | Skate Waco Bellmead, 500 N Loop 340 | \$5-15 tickets Glide around the rink with your crew to the tune of hits from the ‘70s, ‘80s and ‘90s! Feel free to bring your own wheels, and get in for \$5! Otherwise, skates are available for rent for \$8.

HAUNTED PADDLE TOUR

Oct. 9 | 8 - 9:30 p.m. | Waco Paddle Company, 200 S University Parks Drive | \$65 tickets Take a tour of the Brazos — in the dark! Get in the spooky season spirit by taking to the river waters in a tour lit only by moonlight and the multi-colored glowing kayaks. The best part? There’s room for two in these watercraft, so bring a friend. Purchase your tickets here.

Don’t know what to do for fall break? Check out more Baylor and Waco events by scanning the QR code.



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BU TPUSA from A1

he ended up at the right place at the right time, with the right people hoping to guide him into an executive role when the last leaders graduated.

“They were both seniors, and they didn’t really have a line of succession coming out behind them,” Fernandez said. “And was, I guess, the most enthusiastic person that had come to them about

[being involved].”

In fact, prior to Kirk’s assassination, membership in Turning Point was still pretty spotty on campus, Fernandez said. Turning Point hosted an interest meeting a few days before Kirk’s death, and another one just last Thursday. The meeting had a turnout of approximately 22 people before Kirk’s death, and the

first meeting of the year had around eight. But after a prayer vigil, the last meeting drew about 100.

Ogden said the death of Kirk and rise of member interest has inspired the chapter’s leadership team.

“They’re more determined than ever ... to have the chapter expand and have it be a presence on

campus,” Ogden said.

Turning Point USA’s overall message is to continue having tough conversations about controversial topics, and Fernandez said this message has not changed.

“We are definitely emphasizing a little more about civil discourse conversations ... because the less you have those conversations, the more

ignorant and evil things you think about other people,” Fernandez said.

One way Turning Point USA at Baylor continues to support this mission is through their tabling events where they put a controversial question on a white board and have students vote and argue in favor of their vote.

“I think that hearing the other side is really important ... knowing that they’re not really the evil that you might think they are, but also either strengthening or questioning your beliefs,” Fernandez said. “If you don’t question what you believe, then maybe you don’t really know why you believe this to begin with.”

SANDTOWN’S HISTORY from A1



Photo courtesy of The Texas Collection

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER A Sandtown boy rolls a tire down the streets that now overlap Baylor’s campus and Waco’s riverfront development.

highways and Baylor’s campus. In addition to the expansion of Baylor, minority groups were still refused entry into the university.

“In the event that this plan should pass and all the people are moved out, I believe you will cause a number of crimes, and I’m a minister,” Waco Rev. J.L. Carter said at the time.

Waco’s urban renewal committee members — including real estate agent Hank L. Corwin, former Mayor Truett Smith, Baylor Trustee Hilton E. Howell and Baylor Executive Vice President Abner McCall — cheered the approval, declaring the decision a victory for Waco.

Though Sandtown is long gone, Serrano said memory is powerful.

“Sandtown did exist,” Serrano said. “Sandtown is still here and it will always be here in our hearts.”

I-35 DIAMOND from A1

number of potential crash points, reducing wait times at intersections, reducing maintenance costs and providing capacity for future travel demand,” Smith said.

For avid users of I-35, like Boise, Idaho, junior Joe Simeri, the introduction of a diverging diamond intersection is a victory. Simeri often drives on I-35 and Valley Mills for local commuting, on road trips and in his job as an ambulance driver. In each of these capacities, he looks forward to reaping the benefits of the new interchange.

“Diverging diamonds have always been my favorite style of interchange when linking major arterial routes to freeways,” Simeri said. “Diverging diamonds shift traffic to the left side of the road temporarily, eliminating the need for a left-turn signal. They also increase safety by reducing the number of potential conflict points between different traffic as well as between vehicles and pedestrians.”

His only issue is the time it takes to get to this

holy grail of highway engineering. For the time being, traffic is worse, not better.

“As a Waco driver, the traffic surrounding the Valley Mills intersection when accessing H-E-B is my biggest complaint,” Simeri said. “Due to the absence of the old northbound on-ramp and the closure of lanes forcing more traffic on frontage roads, this significantly slows my travel times when going to any businesses on Loop 340 or Valley Mills. But it makes sense given the amount of work being done.”

Unfortunately for Simeri, other students and frequent visitors of the Valley Mills H-E-B, Smith said that Valley Mills will be impacted on and off until the completion of the larger project in 2029.

“The intersections of Valley Mills Drive and I-35 will have varying degrees of impacts to traffic throughout the entire project,” Smith said. “Demolition of the current direct connection and the reconstruction of the Valley Mills bridges will be performed during this time.”

HISTORY IMPRESSIONS from A1

Gaspar grew up in theater and film, which he said propelled him into his unconventional teaching style. He naturally developed a knack for acting, and it grew deeper in high school with his theatrical streak. This experience set the stage for his teaching.

“I like the entertainment aspect of a lecture,” Gaspar said. “This started from my childhood when my dad and my brother and I watched tons of movies from the 1930s all the way up to the present day.”

One of Gaspar’s students, Pittsburgh, Pa., sophomore Sophia Iliff, said Gaspar’s energy is what brings the lectures to life.

“He can tell that history is not everyone’s forte,” Iliff said. “But his burning passion and energy for history is contagious. It keeps the class awake and tuned in, which he does a good job at.”

While history classes have a reputation for being boring, Iliff said Gaspar’s impressions bring even the

most mundane topics to life. Gaspar’s teaching helps her understand the relevance of the material.

“He will have his own spin on the material, and I think that when it is funny, I can grip the content a little better,” Iliff said.

Gaspar’s impressions and energy don’t just keep people awake, but they also set the tone in the classroom. Not only does he receive laughs, but he also helps students stay attentive and learn. By and large, that is the goal of Gaspar’s lectures.

He knows classroom morale plays a huge role in the curriculum, and said he wants to shift that paradigm with more energetic impressions.

“If we’re going to be miserable all the time researching, we are going to be miserable,” Gaspar said. “Morale will sink. You are going to have to find some way to have a little fun while respecting the material.”

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