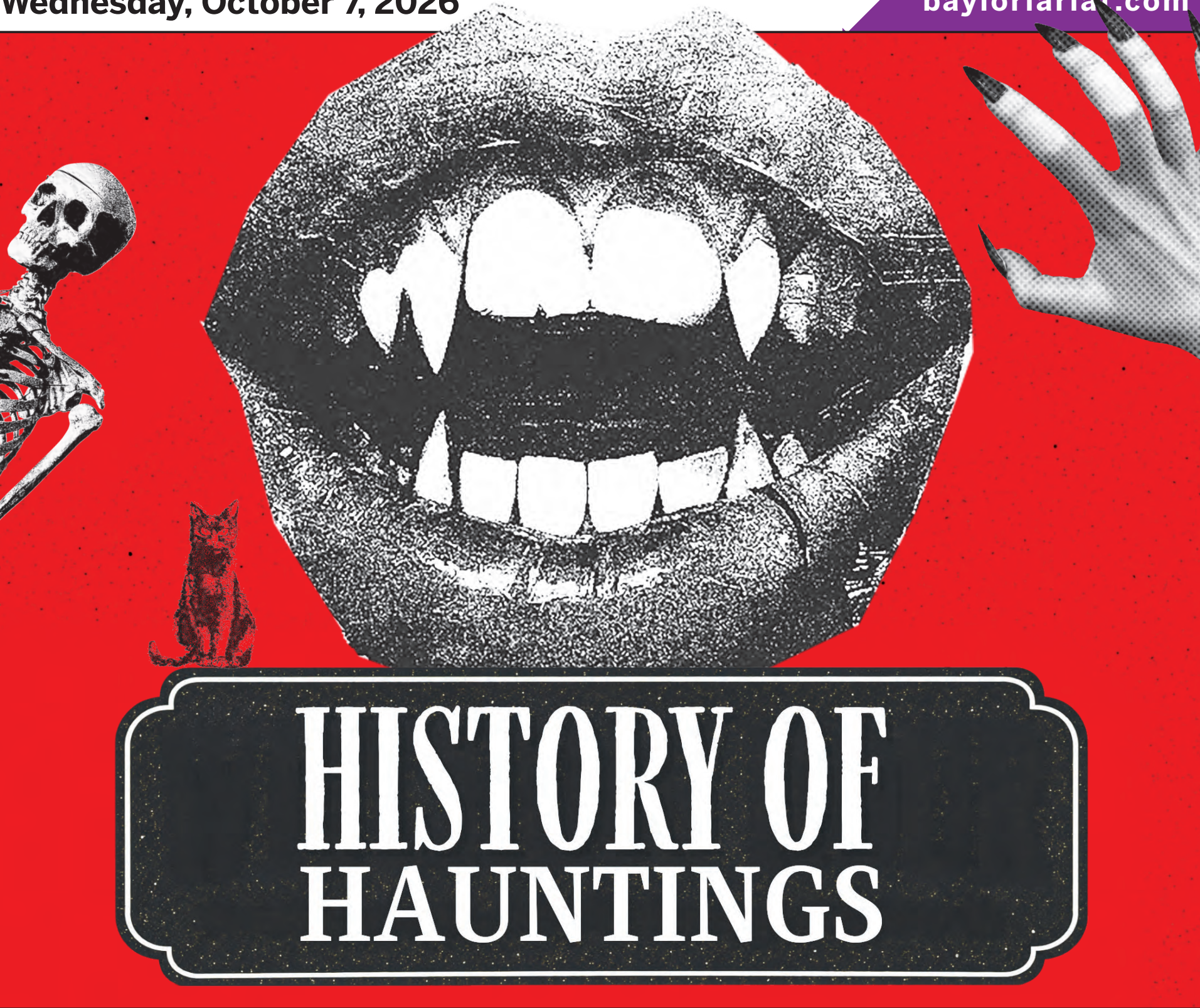




5 paranormal stories from Baylor, Waco

ELLIOTT NACE
Assistant News Editor

We should never forget that there are some strange things in our neighborhood.

Baylor and Waco's rich histories are not without their tales of ghoulish intrigue. Here are five stories whose subjects have not yet been laid to rest.

BROOKS HALL'S PHANTOM FIFTH FLOOR

The story of Brooks Hall is of a building that no longer exists.

Demolished in 2006, the original Brooks Hall stood on the current grounds of Brooks Residential College and Brooks Flats. The

traditionally male dormitory had five residential floors, the first four of which revolved around stairwells central to the building's structure.

Dr. Charles North, the director of Baylor Business Fellows, received his bachelor's and master's degrees at Baylor. During his first stint at the university, he caught word of upcoming changes that would need to be made.

The residence hall needed to be renovated by 1987 because its stairwells violated the university's fire code. The ensuing changes to the building's floor plan, according to North, led to situations such as three students occupying double rooms.

"It quickly became the dorm no one wanted to live in," North said.

Yet the fifth floor crucially differed

in layout. Since it was impossible to renovate, its permanent closure and abandonment followed.

North said he began to hear rumors of the fifth floor's haunting by the time he returned as a faculty member in the late 1990s.

"This is evidence of what little time it takes on a college campus for ghost stories to go from what was likely a made-up practical joke played on some freshmen living in the old dorm to a full-throated legend that everyone knows and at least pretends to believe," North said.

Brooks Hall's fifth floor, known in posterity to have been haunted by candlelight, a sharp-dressed ghost and "violin music," now carries on its phantasmic legacy in the clueless corridors of the new Brooks Village.

SCARBOROUGH'S WRITING ON THE WALL

Dorothy Scarborough, a late academic whose portrait graces the hallway connecting Burleson Hall and Old Main, was one of the first women to graduate from and teach at Baylor.

After receiving her doctorate from Columbia University, Scarborough wrote her own ghost stories such as "The Wind," which was published in 1925.

According to an article from The Anxious Bench, Scarborough uses the titular wind to visualize protagonist Letty Mason's mental torment from all angles. Scarborough's intent for the novel was to "show the woman's side of pioneer life" at a time when scholars were few and far between.

Though Scarborough's likeness may be sheltered from the buffeting wind, her insight into the phantom side of life may linger on in the oldest part of Baylor campus.

THE WITCH OF CAMERON PARK

Waco's best-known haunt may be just minutes from Baylor's campus.

Many flock to an old stone-brick structure in the back of Cameron Park, believing it to be the former stomping grounds of a mysterious witch.

Dr. Stephen Case, a psychologist in the Counseling Center and Waco native for the last eight years, began to take note of the witch at Cameron Park after beginning to hike there. He explained how he has heard of people "feeling a presence" around the overgrown ruin.

"I know that for a long time, that's

been a local spot where teenagers and people have taken adventures at night, especially around Halloween time, to go and see and basically creep themselves out by going to that house and telling the story of why it is haunted," Case said.

The structure's arched entrance, its defining feature that still stands today, beckons onlookers to brave any forces that used to reside within its walls.

THE TALE OF TELEPHUS JOHNSON

The burial of a certain Wacoan may or may not have invoked some archaic ideas about the afterlife.

Telephus Telemachus Louis Augustus Albertus Johnson, a political man whose influence extended from the McLennan County Courthouse to Waco roads and housing, met his bodily end in 1875.

Johnson was first buried in First Street Cemetery before having his grave moved to Oakwood Cemetery. Dr. Kenneth Hafertepe, a professor in museum studies and self-proclaimed ghost skeptic, said Johnson's burial vault can still be seen on the left of Oakwood's main street.

"There were local legends saying that [Johnson] insisted that he should be buried sitting in a chair with a winning hand at poker in one hand, and either a six-shooter or a glass of whiskey in the other," Hafertepe said.

Yet the true menace of Johnson's resting place, according to Hafertepe, was his supposed burial above ground.

If it's true that Johnson brought his vice and violence with him to the grave, his ghost shouldn't be any less than six feet under.



GHASTLY GHOULS A spooky bridge lies deep within the heart of Cameron Park, a perfect place for a witch to be.

THE VICTIMS OF LOVERS' LEAP

Nestled within Cameron Park is Lovers' Leap, a limestone cliff whose name derives from an old story about the star-crossed love of an Apache gentleman and his never-to-be betrothed, an Indigenous Wacoan woman named Wah-Wah-Tee.

Animosity between the two tribes all but dashed any chances of the two uniting in marriage, leading to an all-too-familiar outcome. After their elopement failed and they were faced with no other options, the pair jumped off the cliff, hand in hand, into the Bosque River below.

The optimist may say that the love the two had for each other brings happy couples to the cliff. On the other hand, a sinister view may see the lovers as the vengeful spirits they truly are, doomed to wallow in their heartbreak year after year.

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When times get tough, remember your ‘why’

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

It is now October, and we are in week seven of a semester that will not end until the middle of December.

With the first round of tests, essays and projects coming and going, it can be daunting to look ahead at the many assignments to come. As a result of the ever-turning wheel of college work, many students experience burnout, or a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion.

In times like these, it's as important as ever to remember your “why.”

According to Mental Health America, common signs of burnout include constant exhaustion regardless of rest, dreading previously enjoyable responsibilities, feelings of detachment, frequent irritability, anxiety and overwhelm, as well as physical symptoms like headaches, digestive issues and muscle tension.

For college students, these symptoms are common. According to a report by Handshake, more than 80% of 2024 college graduates surveyed reported experiencing these symptoms of burnout as undergraduates.

For the struggling student, however, there is a lifeline. Look at two of the symptoms: dreading responsibilities that were once enjoyable and feeling detached. To reattach yourself to your education and the joy it once gave you, the solution is simple: remember why you decided to pursue your degree, job or other commitment in the first place.

According to an article by Regent University, remembering one's purpose “seems to be the x-factor when it comes to student success in college and reaching academic goals.” Therefore, remembering “why” is not merely a remedy for burnout symptoms but also indicative of success.

However, the article also notes that it is important to make this “why” specific. For example, ask yourself: “Why am I pursuing this degree?”

If you are struggling with finding your “why,” there are a few places you can look. For some people, their question may be less about



Randy Clute | Cartoonist

the “why” and more about the “who.” Ask yourself, “Who am I pursuing this degree for?” or, equally important, “Who is supporting me?” The Regent University article also mentions that finding people to support you can help remind you why you started. Look at and talk to the people surrounding you.

Mystudenthub.org lists out several other questions to consider as well in pursuit of your purpose: “Why did I sign up for this? Why do I want this over that? Why am I not happy when X happens? Why am I stressed now?”

Recalling your “why” can be an easy process. Take a moment to sit down, think about these

questions and write out your “why” on a sticky note. The more clearly you can articulate it, the clearer it will be in your mind. Then, place the sticky note somewhere you can easily see it, whether it be a mirror, a door, your laptop, anywhere.

This “why” can serve you even beyond your college years. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies show that people with a purpose live longer, sleep better and have a stronger immune system, lower stress levels and better cognitive function.

But if you cannot find a specific purpose, let your “why” be love. Love yourself and love

others, and let love be the reason you can make it through the day.

We spend so much time buried in our laptops and textbooks that we forget that our education we're privileged to have and the work we get to do should have real-world implications that feed our purpose, and our free time should be spent with those we love. If you are struggling with burnout, even if you feel detached or numb right now, you are not alone.

Spend time with people who remind you why you do what you do, and take a moment today and ask yourself: “why?”

How you can survive the sophomore slump

GISELLE LEE
Staff Writer

On a humid Wednesday evening, I trekked to the common room at my residence hall with my back aching from the weight I was carrying, literally (as in my school bag) and figuratively.

It was my third week of being a sophomore, but I was already experiencing a phenomenon where every day slowly plateaued into utter exhaustion.

Between darting back and forth across campus searching for my next story, fighting the deadlines on my assignments and going on random side quests, I was more overwhelmed in three weeks than my entire freshman year.

As I greeted one of my Community Leaders at the front desk, I let out an exasperated sigh and said, “I need to find a way to beat the sophomore slump.”

His response is etched into my memory.

“The sophomore slump doesn't exist.”

I may love being busy and complaining about being tired, but I knew deep down that there was



scientific evidence to suggest that the sophomore slump exists. It had to, because I was feeling it firsthand.

Whatever it was, I knew every problem required a solution, so out of the care I have for my peers and the teeny ounce of spite I feel to prove my friend wrong, here are a few ways you can join me in conquering the sophomore slump.

1. “Satisficing” your commitments

No, that's not a spelling error. “Satisficing” is a compound word I learnt through a one-on-one meeting with my graduate resident hall director, combining “satisfying” and “sacrificing”. “Satisficing” means to establish the base requirements of every aspect of your university life, whether it's a sport, a club, or even work and school.

Every week, you'll be able to distribute most of your attention to whatever is the top priority, whilst still satisfying the minimum of what is expected of you from all the other commitments you have.

To quote what he said, “If you are trying to commit 100% to everything, you're not committing to anything.” At least this way, you can balance out your priorities on a weekly basis.

2. Schedule pockets of rest

Unless you have no Friday classes like me, having dedicated times of rest every week is extremely beneficial to

reflect and reset. Research shows that you might be more productive and less stressed if rest time is built into your day-to-day schedule.

Of course, don't spend all of it doomscrolling on your phone. Instead, you could go outside to enjoy some sun, touch some grass, try out a new coffee shop or do some people watching.

3. Exercise your mind and body

As a former competitive swimmer, exercising my mind was just as important as doing physical exercise; creativity is essential to our humanity. I could go on and on about how going to the gym or taking up a sport in college is great not only for staying fit and for improving your mental health, but we don't often talk about how great it is to have a creative outlet.

The science doesn't lie: your brain releases dopamine when engaged in creative processes, which can reduce anxiety and encourage mindfulness. My personal favorites include taking pictures and scrapbooking; once I hit flow state, I've already forgotten what I was so uptight about. Try a painting class, dance around your room to your favorite song, do whatever gets your creative juices flowing. Trust me, it's fun!

4. Talk it out

Feeling overwhelmed is inevitable at times. You will struggle to cope with assignments, your extracurriculars

and life in general. Having someone to lean on is extremely crucial, especially during college.

One of my close friends once said, “Shared joy is double the joy, and shared burden is half the burden.”

You are never alone in your hardships. There are people in your dorm, around our campus and back at home who hope to go through thick and thin with you. It can be a bit uncomfortable at first, so start with something small, but I guarantee you will come out of tough conversations feeling relieved.

5. Eat, laugh and pray often

Your brain needs fuel. Your brain needs the occasional rot. Most importantly, your brain needs to find peace. Some of the funniest memories I have in college so far actually came from sitting with my friends in dining halls and spewing absolute nonsense to each other. Food has a strange ability to bring people together.

Whilst on the topic of strange abilities, college is a place that might test your limits. 1 Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

If God, the creator of you and me, is by our side every single day, I don't think you need to be so paranoid about that one overdue Canvas assignment. Still, make sure you submit it, but pray for His guidance as you're completing it.

“Exercising my mind was just as important as doing physical exercise; creativity is essential to our humanity.”

6. Take all things one day at a time

While this may be a sophomore-targeted list, this applies to all students regardless of their year: you can plan, make backup plans and have backup plans to your backup plans, but at the end of the day, you can only be so prepared for what life has in store for you.

The best days and worst days you have are all temporary, so don't worry much about what went wrong and appreciate the good things while they're happening; a lot can happen over 24 hours.

Hopefully, with enough food in your stomach, friends in your company and a willingness to persevere, you too will survive the sophomore slump. All the best to my fellow sophomores, and always remember you are known and loved.

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Shakespeare club lives on through hidden monument

ARDEN BERRY
Arts & Life Editor

Behind the Waco Parks and Recreation building lies a piece of Waco history over 100 years old.

If a pedestrian stops between the lion and giraffe statue at the Waco Sculpture Zoo in Cameron Park and turns to look at the other side of University Parks through the trees and brush, they will spot a hidden stone monument.

On the front of the short stone statue is inscribed: “Shakspere! [sic] Daign to lend thy face / This romantic nook to grace / Where untaught nature sports alone / Since thou and nature are but one / 1616-1916”

The Waco Women’s Shakespeare Club erected the monument in 1916 in honor of 300 years since William Shakespeare’s death in 1616.

According the first volume of its history available in the Texas Collection, Kate Friend, a Shakespeare scholar, taught a class for the single young elite ladies of Waco. Though she had wanted to end the class, she was encouraged by a couple of her students to continue teaching.

And so, on Nov. 19, 1899, Friend, then an editor for Artesia, Waco’s society newspaper, placed a piece in her column letting the women of Waco know that she would be resuming her class the next day in her home.

“I propose to form a regular class with officer, constitution and by-laws, with a view towards joining the [women’s] federation and taking with the other Shakspere [sic] clubs of Texas,” Friend wrote.

That class would become the Waco Women’s Shakespeare Club, and Friend would become its director.

According to the Texas Collection description for the club’s records in the Baylor Archival Repositories Database, the club existed from then until the records ended “rather abruptly” in the 1980s, though the

records focused more of the overall Waco Federation of Women’s Clubs that the Shakespeare club was a part of after Friend’s death in 1949.

Starting out, the club met 3 p.m. the first and third Thursday from October through May in the Federated Club House Shakespeare. The minutes from each meeting were recorded in a series of notebooks. The club would discuss Shakespeare and host events.

According to “She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America,” a book by Katherine West Scheil, this club was one of more than five hundred Shakespeare clubs formed across America.

“Women were reading Shakespeare in astonishing numbers and in surprising places,” Scheil writes.

Helen Hopkins, a visiting research fellow at Birmingham City University, did a project titled “International Responses to Shakespeare in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust’s Collections.” In her research, she came upon letters from Friend to the trust.

“Obviously I was interested in Kate Friend’s insistence on being recognized by the people of Stratford-Upon-Avon and people related to Shakespeare,” Hopkins said. “Obviously, very clear the passion for Shakespeare.”

Hopkins said she views Friend’s passion through the lens of cultural capital.

“It’s about that sense that this is the epitome of culture,” Hopkins said. “So if I am aligned with Shakespeare, if I can show that I love and appreciate Shakespeare, then I come to have some sort of cultural superior, I am myself prestigious and I carry that intellectual capital, cultural capital with me as well ... She is desperate for that kind of reinforcement from Stratford that she’s part of this exclusive club. She is one of the important, prestigious



Arden Berry | Arts & Life Editor

HIDDEN IN THE BRUSH The Waco Women’s Shakespeare Club Monument sits behind the Waco Parks and Recreation building near the entrance to Cameron Park Zoo off University Parks Drive.

people who know about and talk about Shakespeare.”

She also said that the club element is significant.

“They were really important ... for bringing people together, for creating a space in which women in particular could be intellectual, could engage with intellectual questions where there wasn’t necessarily space for them to do so in mixed companies or in the academy, in universities and things like that quite so much,” Hopkins said.

However, the club was limited to the elite women of Waco.

“There is a real sense that she was a representation of women, but it was women like her,” Hopkins said. “So,

absolutely, it’s limited. It’s limited by wealth. It’s also limited by, obviously, race and I suppose class as well.”

While the Waco Women’s Shakespeare Club no longer exists, those with a love for Shakespeare’s work continue to find its place at Baylor.

Dallas senior Caleb Griffin performed in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” with the Honors Residential College Drama Society in 2025. He played Oberon and helped with costumes and set design for the production.

“It was really enjoyable,” Griffin said. “I met a lot of people and got to know people that I already had met a lot better over the course of that

play. It involved a lot of cooperation and a lot of teamwork and moving parts that all came together into one coherent whole.”

Griffin said he is a big fan of Shakespeare.

“I think the way he’s able to keep his writing both very poetic and very dynamic in how he expresses characters is really well done,” Griffin said. “The characters feel realistic while still having that air of high art.”

The other remaining reminder of the club is the monument to Shakespeare’s passing itself, which, much like one of its side inscriptions suggests, lives on.

“Immortal be his name’ / Waco Shakspere [sic] club,” it reads.

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DR PEPPER MUSEUM
A Waco gem for ghost hunters and enthusiasts alike, the museum is famously known to be a haunted hot spot in the city. The museum also offers a paranormal tour on select Saturdays.

ALICO
After miraculously avoiding the horrific 1953 tornado, visitors have reported seeing a “wailing woman” outside of the building at night.

HIPPODROME
Guests and staff have both reported seeing mysterious figure appearing as a cowboy walking through the theater.

BARNETT’S
Rumored to have poltergeist-like activity, employees have recounted witnessing speakers ripping off the walls and dishes breaking.

ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY
People have allegedly spotted Elizabeth and Robert Barrett Browning near the clasped hands sculpture on the first floor.

CAMERON PARK ZOO
Girl and boy scout camps have seen a shadowy figures while attending overnight camps in the aquarium.

WACO HAUNTINGS

By Kalena Reynolds | Editor-in-Chief

Lariat file photo

Spooky movies that will make your skin crawl

REIGHA WEAVER
Arts & Life Writer

As the weather gets colder, the spooky decorations go up and the costumes are planned, the perfect movie night looks a little different. It's time to put away the rom-coms and to prepare to get spooked.

For me, the best form of horror isn't all about gore and spooky cinematics, it's about the anticipation that makes your skin crawl and heart rate rise. So this list will be perfect if you enjoy thrillers and jump scares. Here are five horror movies to watch this spooky season.

“THE CONJURING” (2013), DIRECTED BY JAMES WAN

“The Conjuring” follows Ed and Lorraine Warren, paranormal investigators, as they try to help a family with malevolent spirits in their house.

The moments leading up to the scares and breakthroughs are what make “The Conjuring” effective. As you watch it, you feel trapped like the Perron family themselves. The horror isn't just about murderers or monsters; it's religious. It's practically inescapable.

Most jump scares were effective, and Ed and Lorraine are people you want to root for, especially as the movie goes on and the spirit of Bathsheba becomes increasingly violent.

“IT” (2017), DIRECTED BY ANDY MUSCHIETTI

When I do spooky movie night, “It” is my default. “It” tell the story of a group of kids in Derry, Maine, as they try to destroy a shape-shifting monster named Pennywise.

“It” is sort of a gateway horror film. When I first watched it, I wanted more. “It” is defined by its humor and cast camaraderie. But do not be fooled by its lighter moments. It's not called comic “relief” for nothing. And relief it is; the way Pennywise uses psychological horror to scare the kids of Derry makes me shudder almost 10 years later.

“SINISTER” (2012), DIRECTED BY SCOTT DERRICKSON

“Sinister” has been considered one of the scariest films of all time, and it's easy to see why. The use of jump scares, tension building and Ethan Hawke's acting make this movie true to its name.

“Sinister,” according to IMDb, tells the story of how “a controversial true-crime writer finds a box of Super 8 home movies in his new home, revealing that the murder case he is currently researching could be the work of an unknown serial killer whose legacy dates back to the 1960s.”

“Sinister” is one of my dad's favorites — he's another fan of creepy movies, and the absolutely terrifying cinematography in the movie makes it a standout. The lawnmower jump scare in particular gets me every time.

“CHILD’S PLAY” (1988), DIRECTED BY TOM HOLLAND

Growing up, Chucky was my biggest fear, due mostly to my dad's proclivity for horror movies. The very notion of the doll would have me crying and screaming, and I'm just glad I waited to watch it.

“Child's Play” is about a serial killer who uses voodoo magic to put his soul into a doll. Eventually, the doll makes it to a mother and son, and gruesome realizations await.

Any movie about a possessed doll already makes my skin crawl, but the nostalgia factor makes this film much creepier.

“Child's Play” is a classic, sure to bring the much-needed Halloween vibes.

“RESIDENT EVIL” (2026), DIRECTED BY ZACH CREGGER

If you're looking for a more recent movie, something you can see in theaters, I highly recommend “Resident Evil.” Seeing this film in theaters is completely electric. Even if you haven't played the games, the movie is still a good time, and if you have played the games, there are plenty of fun Easter eggs to catch.

Medical courier Bryan Hodukavich is tasked with taking a special delivery to Raccoon City, unaware of the horrors that await him along the journey. This movie is another home run from Zach Cregger, who directed “Weapons” and “Barbarian.” He is able to respect the source material while also adding his own flair.

The jump scares did not miss, and neither does the comedy. Austin Abrams excels as Bryan, a relatable and lovable main character. “Resident Evil” does not shy away from the gore, and the visuals made my skin crawl. I would definitely make it a priority to watch “Resident Evil” this Halloween season.



Photos courtesy of IMDb

FRIGHTENING FILMS Five movies stand out for their scary cinematography: “The Conjuring,” “It,” “Sinister,” “Child’s Play” and “Resident Evil.”

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Arts & Life Reviews: Silos Baking Co. makes great cupcakes

ARDEN BERRY
Arts & Life Editor

As much as I love music, movies and, as of a week ago, coffee, I have been most looking forward to this review.
It's fall, but we're still a couple weeks out from it being socially acceptable to buy candy in bulk and eat it straight from a bowl. So, for now, I'm trying a four-count box of cupcakes from Silos Baking Co. at 601 Webster Ave.
Overall, the presentation of the cupcakes was perfect. They appear poised and put

together, but not so stiff that you worry they will not be soft enough to bite into. Overall, the icing was soft and squishy, and the cake was nice and gooey, but each flavor had its own advantages, from classic Shiplap and The Chocolatier to the limited time Pumpkin Spice and Campfire.

SHIPLAP 8/10
As a company, you cannot have a good cupcake in general unless your classic vanilla cake with vanilla icing is good, so I started there.
Named for the construction material, the Shiplap cupcake is sugary sweet and borderline addictive. It's like those grocery store cupcakes you get for a kid's birthday party but doubled in size

and piled high with icing. I would recommend this classic flavor.

THE CHOCOLATIER 10/10
As a chocolate-lover, I have very high standards for chocolate cupcakes. This cupcake met all my standards.
The taste was incredible. It was as rich and sweet as if I were eating a full chocolate cake. The frosting perfectly complemented the cake part, but I would expect nothing less from The Chocolatier itself.

PUMPKIN SPICE 5/10
The menu describes this cupcake as being "pumpkin cake topped

with vanilla bean cream cheese icing."
It mainly tasted like pumpkin bread with cream cheese icing.

but I do like pumpkin bread, so it was not bad. However, I am not a fan of cream cheese icing, so that soured the experience for me. If you're a fan of pumpkin bread and cream cheese mixed, you will like

this cupcake. I would rather have normal pumpkin bread by itself, but this cupcake is worth a try for the fall vibes.

CAMPFIRE 10/10
As aforementioned, this cupcake is only available for a limited time, so get it while you still can. This delicious s'mores-themed cupcake has light, fluffy icing and delicious pieces of chocolate, complete with a toasted marshmallow on top. The crunch of the chocolate chips and graham cracker crust with the soft icing and marshmallow make for a tasty mix of textures.

Sarah Jane Matteck | Cartoonist

Overall, the only main detractors were cost and crowd. A four-count box of cupcakes is somewhat expensive at \$18 before tax, and anything more than a tourist destination and will feel especially cramped in downtown Waco.
However, these cupcakes are worth the splurge for special occasions. While I might stick to H-E-B cupcakes for a weekly fix, Magnolia cupcakes truly are some of the best out there.
Photos by Arden Berry | Arts & Life Editor

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The psychology behind haunted houses

STEPHANIE STARKS
Staff Writer

Over 2,000 students attended Phi Gamma Delta and Zeta Tau Alpha's Fright Night event last year, a haunted house whose proceeds went toward fundraising for victims of natural disasters.

Such a high turnout begs the question: why do people go somewhere to give themselves the creeps?

Dr. Hugh Riley, a senior lecturer in the department of psychology, said that people are fascinated by haunted houses due to arousal theory.

"We have a need to be aroused to activate our fight or flight response, which is part of our autonomic nervous system," Riley said. "Haunted houses provide a safe setting to experience this heightened arousal."

The psychological function of haunted houses, according to Riley, affects the reward system pathway in the human brain.

"All things psychological are the result of the brain," Riley said. "In order to survive in our ancient ancestral background, humanity needed to be hypervigilant about threats in the environment. They needed to be responsive to ensure safety. All humans have this need for arousal that does not function well with boredom."

In a study published by the Association for Psychological Science on the environment of haunted houses, researchers concluded that there is a positive association between phasic effects, the rapid changes someone experiences when they respond to a scary event, and unexpected attacks from actors in haunted houses.



Caleb Garcia | Photo Editor

BOO! A scare actor jumps out from the shadows to scare attendees at FIJI Fright Night Oct. 22, 2025. Haunted houses are a common attraction at Halloween.

Waco senior Justin Barker, a psychology major, said that people like the comfort of knowing that there is no real danger to haunted houses.

"It is like bungee jumping," Barker said. "People can get an adrenaline rush

that gives them a good feeling when they are in a haunted house, since it is a safe circumstance, rather than an actual dangerous situation where people naturally receive this adrenaline."

Barker said haunted houses create their

suspense through exaggerated visuals that "fall into the uncanny valley territory."

"This is why people find clowns so disturbing is because in a haunted house, people are filled with all of this emotion in this adrenaline-filled space, and instead of normal survival adrenaline, people become stressed and activate a natural response to danger," Barker said.

Fight, flight and freeze, according to Barker, are some typical reactions people have when in a haunted house.

"Out of fear, [haunted houses] can inflict this natural reaction to lash out," Barker said. "People can forget that the actors in haunted houses are human."

Kerrville freshman Jack Bowers said that while working a haunted house at a camp near his hometown, he noticed how people instinctively "know it's going to be okay" after getting spooked.

"No one in a haunted house actually wants to hurt the people going through," Bowers said. "Most of the time, haunted houses are fundraisers or just a community service [event]. Sure, some people want to scare others, but they do not want to harm anyone."

Fairfax, Virginia, freshman Lauren Barbour said she could always see the silver lining to a haunted house.

"My middle school held a few haunted houses, and I would see if I could get the actors to break character," Barbour said. "I would pretend to be scared. I was scared, but I held it in, and when they would come up to me, I would laugh. One time, I think three people broke character that way, and that was really fun for me."



Caleb Garcia | Photo Editor

JUMP SCARE A scare actor prepares to spook two attendees at FIJI Fright Night Oct. 22, 2025 on Fountain Mall.



Caleb Garcia | Photo Editor

HAUNTED HOUSE A scare actor lies in wait for another group to terrorize at FIJI Fright Night on Fountain Mall.



Lariat file photo

The star-crossed legend of Waco's Lovers' Leap

KAMRYN ANTHIS
Staff Writer

For centuries, tales have been murmured of the star-crossed indigenous lovers whose tragic and forbidden love affair led to their joint suicides off the cliffs in Cameron Park so they could be together for eternity.

As it turns out, the tale is nothing more than folklore, conjured up and passed through generations. Waco Attorney and Author Mark Firmin called the story "romanticized," explaining that the tale originated from a "Romeo and Juliet star-crossed lovers" view.

"You had a Native American woman who was here, and she had a lover who was from a rival tribe," Firmin said. "They ultimately got pushed up towards Lovers' Leap, and because they couldn't be together,

they decided to jump off the cliff, and they died."

The idea of a "Lovers' Leap" is not unique to Waco.

In his explorations, Mark Twain, who many deem the father of American Literature, noted upwards of 50 Lovers' Leaps along the Mississippi River. So, although the story is fictional and not unique to Cameron Park, Lovers' Leap remains a "very romantic spot," according to Firmin.

"This is where people developed relationships," Firmin said. "So even though the story's not true, people have actually developed love at Lovers' Leap in one way or another because this is where people take people to date ... so it's imbued with a lot of memories. And when you go there, it's very peaceful, it's very beautiful, and you can see why it gets

the name that it has, even if the story behind it isn't true."

Lifelong Waco local Gahlen Carpenter said he grew up hearing stories of Lovers' Leap, but also enjoyed the park firsthand.

"My childhood was spent here in Waco, and Cameron Park has been an attraction for everybody that grew up in Waco," Carpenter said. "I don't know anyone who didn't come and enjoy the park and Lovers' Leap."

Cameron Park has always served Central Texas residents through recreation and community. The cliffs of Lovers' Leap are no exception, with the vast scenery and trails open to all. Firmin said the words on the park gates — "For the pleasure of the people" — reflect this idea.

"This was always intended to be a place where Wacoans or anyone could come to enjoy nature," Firmin

said. "Waco is so fortunate to have 400-plus acres and have a place like Lovers' Leap ... I mean, it is an unbelievable place to go. And you're not going to get a better park in Texas than this, in my mind."

Carpenter said Baylor students should take advantage of what Cameron Park has to offer.

"Baylor students — y'all are in an isolated environment, and you need to get out," Carpenter said. "You do need to have fun. This is the most fun time of your life. Life just doesn't get better than this. Enjoy it while you can."

In 2010, Firmin published a centennial history of Cameron Park in honor of all that went into making it the place it is today. For those who have yet to see Lovers' Leap firsthand, Firmin says the scenery is worth checking out.

"The geography is really neat ... you get these limestone chalk bluffs that go about 100 feet up in the air," Firmin said. "A lot of people that pass by Waco don't understand the beauty that's out of Cameron Park ... You actually have to get off I-35 and not just be going to the restroom to find out what Waco has to offer."

The Cameron family donated Cameron Park to the City of Waco in 1910 in honor of William Cameron. The land area, including Lovers' Leap, was added to the park in 1917. The land has grown and evolved with the city over the years.

"Lovers' Leap has been a vital part of Waco's history for a long time, not the name, but the place," Firmin said. "This is where people have gone to do things, to be together in all different eras. And it meant different things to different people at different times."

RELIGION & THE SUPERNATURAL

Baylor professors tackle Christian belief in ghosts

JOANA KAROSHI
Staff Writer

Ghosts are often synonymous with death and decay. When things happen that we can't explain, appealing to the supernatural provides an explanation for some.

Also synonymous with death are the soul and the Christian belief in heaven. If heaven is a place of contentment with God, how can Christians believe in vengeful ghosts?

Dr. Cindy Little, a curriculum developer in the Moody School of Education, has spent more than two decades investigating paranormal activity.

Little described herself as a “very devout Christian,” and she currently attends St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Waco. In her time spent researching and investigating reported paranormal activity, Little said her work does not conflict with her faith.

The morality of belief in ghosts may depend on what someone means by “ghost” in the first place.

According to the 2025 Baylor Religion Survey, 49% of participants said they believe in ghosts. Additionally, 53% said they believe some people can communicate with the dead.

The survey also found that 67% believe in angels, 61% believe in demons and 60% believe in Satan.

“We have had ghosts with us for probably as long as people have been around,” Little said. “Even the Bible mentions them. In the storm, Jesus is walking across the water and the disciples think he’s a ghost.”

Little explained that Christians may have a difficult time with ghosts because many people define them as the spirits of dead people, with Christianity teaching that the dead are no longer physically present on Earth.

“[Christians] interpret that to mean that there is really no wiggle room there,” Little said. “If you are not here on earth as a person, you are in heaven with Jesus.”

Because of that belief, Little said some Christians interpret reported encounters with the dead as demonic spirits.

“What a lot of people interpret ghosts to be ... are deceptive spirits masquerading as people,” Little said.

Little approaches her work as a paranormal researcher and investigator with care. She said she leads with curiosity and a desire to understand what people are experiencing, approaching reported encounters “skeptically and more scientifically.”

That approach means Little does not assume that every strange experience has a supernatural explanation. She said investigators have to consider whether something that appears paranormal could have a natural explanation that people do not yet understand.

Even still, Little said she prays before investigating allegedly haunted



Hannah Webb | News Editor

HOLY GHOST The discussion surrounding Christianity and the paranormal has prompted insight from Baylor professors.

locations, “just in case something might be a little bit nasty that is coming your way.”

Even still, Little said she prays before investigating allegedly haunted locations, “just in case something might be a little bit nasty that is coming your way.”

Little said she has never experienced what she would consider a demonic encounter herself, despite investigating the paranormal for more than 20 years. She said she knows other paranormal investigators and parapsychologists who believe they have experienced something that could have been demonic.

Dr. Candi Cann, an associate professor of religion, approaches the question of ghosts from a different perspective. Cann, who studies death, dying, grief and remembrance, said

the answer to whether Christians believe in ghosts depends largely on what people mean when they use the word.

Cann said “ghost” comes from the German word “geist,” meaning “spirit.” The Christian phrase “Holy Ghost,” for example, refers to the Holy Spirit.

The ghosts that appear in horror movies and television shows, however, are a different matter. Cann said those stories often reflect the fears and concerns of the societies that tell them.

Ghost stories often center on tragic or unresolved deaths. A person who died in an accident, whose body was never found or whose death left unanswered questions, according to Cann, may become the subject of a ghost story.

“There might be an accident on the side of a road, and no one found the body,” Cann said. “So [people] say, ‘Oh, that ghost wanders by that site.’ So what you’re really saying is, ‘I don’t know where the body is, and somehow that question remains unresolved for me.’”

Ghost stories also tend to emerge around people whose deaths might otherwise receive little attention.

“You tend to get a lot of ghost stories around the margins of society [or] around underrepresented populations, around questionable deaths,” Cann said.

Ghost stories, Cann said, are similar to roadside memorials. A memorial can honor someone who died in a crash, but it can also draw attention to a dangerous road and the possibility that something needs to change.

“These memorial markers and

ghost stories function on different levels,” Cann said. “They also function as calls for attention.”

You tend to get a lot of ghost stories around the margins of society [or] around underrepresented populations, around questionable deaths.

DR. CANDI CANN
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR
OF RELIGION

Grief can also shape how people understand encounters with the dead. Someone who reports seeing, hearing or feeling the presence of a deceased loved one may not need to decide whether the experience was supernatural or imaginary.

“Pay attention to the fact that this person is saying, ‘I miss this person,’” Cann said.

Cann said she does not immediately decide whether a reported encounter was real or not.

“I don’t want to diminish what someone else might experience,” she said.

Religious traditions also do not have one universal approach to communicating with or remembering the dead. Catholics, for example, pray to saints for intercession and pray for the dead.

Little’s approach to ghost hunting relies on the idea that there is still much that researchers do not understand. She uses cameras, audio recorders, trail cameras, temperature readers and electromagnetic field meters during investigations.

“We don’t really know what [ghosts] are yet,” Little said. “But we can measure changes in the environment while people are having ghostly experiences.”

Little said ghost hunting is also much less dramatic than the television shows that portray it. Investigators can spend hours waiting for something to happen, and sometimes nothing does.

Her recent trip to Marlin was one of the times when something did happen.

Little said her friend woke up in the haunted Airbnb and saw what appeared to be a full-bodied man looking out the window. The woman described the figure as wearing a 1930s-style pork-pie hat and overalls, clothing that Little said “could have been that of one of the bottling company workers.”

Little described this experience as a possible “residual haunt” — a theory that an environment can somehow replay an event from the past. The figure did not acknowledge her friend before disappearing, Little said.

The next morning, Little reported seeing the shadow figure enter her friend’s room.

Whether those experiences were ghosts, natural phenomena or something else is something Little said she cannot prove.

That uncertainty has not made Little less religious. She said paranormal investigation has actually caused her to reconsider her understanding of Christianity.

“I’ve re-examined the Bible, and I have re-examined my faith,” Little said. “I believe that now I’m closer to God than ever, which is a good thing.”

Little said paranormal investigation has also changed the way she thinks about what humans understand about the world.

“There’s a lot we do not understand about the natural world, and we definitely don’t understand a lot about the supernatural world,” she said.

Cann explained how the meaning of a ghost story does not necessarily depend on proving that a ghost exists.

A story about someone who died can reflect grief, unanswered questions, social anxieties or a desire to remember someone whose death might otherwise be forgotten — and it doesn’t always need to invoke the supernatural.

How ghost stories shape Waco’s identity, history

TRIPP HENDERSON
Staff Writer

From goatmen and ghosts to witches in Cameron Park, the Waco History podcast shares some of the spookiest lore of the city’s past. But according to the podcast founder, these stories aren’t just for a thrill; rather, they are deeply intertwined with Waco’s identity and uniqueness.

Dr. Stephen Sloan, the podcast’s founder and main host, said he thinks ghost lore “is part of what makes Waco unique.”

The podcast complements the Waco History app, which the website says is a joint venture between the Institute for Oral History and the Texas Collection. Professor Steven Sielaff, an original guest on the podcast and Senior Editor & Collections Manager at the institute, said the show was originally made to expand the audience base and the form of oral history.

“It’s another way to kind of capture it and give people a chance to learn about Waco’s history,” Sielaff said.

While the podcast covers Waco’s history broadly, several episodes specifically highlight ghost stories. Sielaff said one benefit of haunted episodes is that they allow entertainment and education to intersect, which helps keep listeners engaged.

“How can we get people interested in things that typically are only of interest of historians,” Sielaff said. “Well, you tie history in with the paranormal.”

Sloan said that he thinks people like to let their imaginations run wild, and ghost stories

let them do that. While humans are comfortable being civilized and in control, something about the mysterious and unknown is intriguing.

“I think there’s something in us that enjoys being frightened or the elevated emotion that comes with being scared,” Sloan said. “... I think there’s something fundamentally human about that.”

While listeners may find entertainment in supernatural tales, they are often built on real places, events or people. Sloan said lore often comes from actual historical events and adds “a layer of meaning or intrigue” to a place.

“A lot of it’s folklore more than historical, but it’s an important way that [the] identities of places are remembered and shaped,” Sloan said.

While many of the spooky stories covered in the podcast date back to the 20th century and even the late 19th century, they remain prominent even now. Cameron Park has its fair share of tales, including Lovers Leap and the witch of Cameron Park, both of which people still talk about today and are often associated with the park’s identity.

Sloan noted that supernatural stories factor into how people experience or view destinations and shape how they identify or relate to that place, regardless of their legitimacy.

In his classroom, Sloan said he asks his students whether reality itself is more important or how reality is perceived. The class concluded that reality itself was more important, but Sloan said that the “perceived way in which we imagine the history of a place or the meaning of a place is really a powerful thing.”

“Folklore and imagination and all those sorts



Photo courtesy of Stephen Sloan

WACO HISTORY Dr. Stephen Sloan is a Baylor history professor and director of the Institute for Oral History. Sloan founded and currently hosts the Waco History Podcast.

of things shape and play into that understanding of how we perceive a place,” Sloan said.

Sielaff added that sometimes the story’s content matters less than what people can learn from how communities interact with it.

“Sometimes it doesn’t matter exactly what is actually in the story,” Sielaff said. “It matters more why that story persists and what the

community is getting out of continuing to tell that story or continuing to believe in elements of that story.”

In a digital age, when society is becoming more trend-oriented, haunted tales can actually prevent that, Sloan said. He added that these types of stories “make a place in an age where everybody, maybe every place, is becoming the same place.”

Trick or Treat: What makes Baylor fans excited, nervous

CARSON VERCOE
Sports Writer

Halloween is a time for treats and the occasional trick. While kids go door-to-door hoping for king-sized candy bars, some are like Charlie Brown and get a rock. Baylor athletics has seen its share of both this fall.

From teams climbing the national rankings to heartbreaking losses and setbacks, Baylor athletics has shown a little bit of everything. As Halloween creeps closer, it's time to see what tricks and treats Baylor Athletics has so far.

TREAT: SOCCER'S HOT START

No. 7 Baylor soccer has started the season with a 10-1-1 record, picking up big wins all season long and climbing to No. 7 in the rankings.

The Bears have cemented themselves as a top team in the Big 12 through the halfway mark and show no signs of slowing down. They are currently riding a nine-match unbeaten streak going back to late August.

Senior midfielder Aryanna

Jimison and senior forward Lauren Omholt have created many chances for the Bears, scoring a combined 11 goals so far.

Combine that with the experience of fifth-year goalkeeper Azul Alvarez, and the Bears have found themselves in a great spot as they head deeper into conference play.

TREAT: FOOTBALL DEFENSE

Last season, Baylor's defense was a huge weakness. It allowed 32.6 points per game, which ranked second-to-last in the Big 12.

The Bears brought in defensive coordinator Joe Klanderman as a result, and the defense has undergone major strides under him.

Baylor has already broken its sack total of 12 from a year ago, producing 18 sacks through the first five games. It has also forced 10 turnovers, tying for ninth in all of college football.

The defense is giving up 14.2 points per game, and if the unit can maintain this level of play, Baylor will be in a great spot at season's end.

TREAT: VOLLEYBALL'S SOPHOMORE DUO

Baylor volleyball has been inconsistent throughout the fall, but the constant has been the sophomore duo of outside hitter Ksenia Rakhmachik and setter Isabela Haggard.

Rakhmachik is currently fifth in college volleyball with 4.78 kills per set and 196 total kills for the season. Haggard has proven a solid setter for the Bears, leading the team with 469 assists this season.

This duo will need to keep producing if Baylor can find its consistency down the road.

But as good as the treats have been for Baylor athletics, it also has some tricks they would rather not have.

Every team has room for improvement, a tough schedule or the inevitable letdown, and as the Bears head into the thick of conference play, fans still have some reservations.

TRICK: SOCCER PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE

Baylor soccer's hot start has them soaring up the rankings and up the Big 12 standings.

But being ranked inside the nation's top ten and leading the Big 12 standings comes with its own set of expectations.

The Bears will now have a higher standard in every game, no matter the opponent. They will have a target on their back for the rest of the season. Each opponent will bring their best as Baylor continues to go deeper into conference play.

The Bears have looked almost flawless so far, but the pressure of being one of the nation's best could be too much for them, or will they thrive as the rest of the season remains to be seen.



Layla Bazan | Photographer

FREAK Fifth-year wide receiver Gavin Freeman battles with Prairie View's Kamrin Canterbury in the Bear's 44-3 win.

TRICK: FOOTBALL'S FINAL THREE GAMES

Baylor football just came off its biggest win of the season in a 55-19 victory over Arizona State, putting together an all-around great performance, but the Bears still need to prove if they can carry that momentum into ranked matchups.

Baylor has shocked everyone's expectations at the start of the season. The offense is finding its rhythm, and the defense continues to dominate, but the biggest tests come at the end of the season: games against No. 8 BYU, No. 11 Texas Tech and No. 22 Houston.

The good thing for Baylor is that it has plenty of time to get right before this gauntlet, but these games will either make or break Baylor's season.

TRICK: VOLLEYBALL AGAINST TOP 25

After their loss on Sunday to No. 24 Colorado, the Bears are 0-4 against top 25 opponents this season.

Despite looking good against lower competition, Baylor hasn't done the same in ranked matchups. It has won three of its 15 sets across four ranked opponents, including being swept by then-No. 17 Florida and No. 1 Nebraska.

The Bears have played well in their matches but just haven't been able to put opponents away and aren't keeping their foot on the gas.

If the Bears want to compete at the end of the season, they need to start finding consistency against tougher opponents.

With every treat comes a trick for Baylor, but the fall season is far from ending.



Mim Robbins | Photographer

SHOOTS AND SCORES No. 7 Baylor soccer celebrates after freshman Grace White scores just five minutes into the match against Pepperdine.

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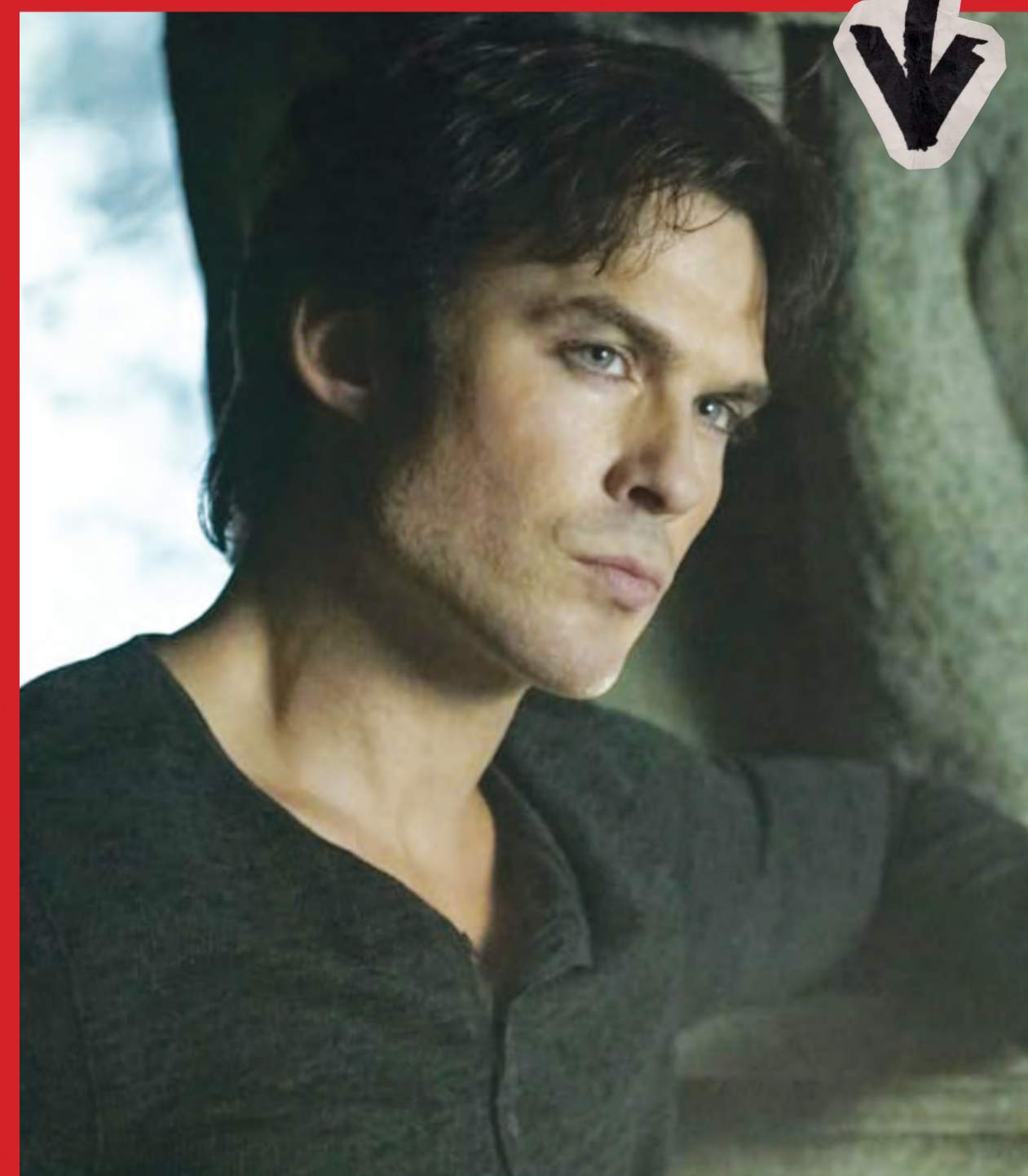
TOP 5 VAMPIRES

Photos courtesy of IMDB

Eli from "Let the Right One In."

Edward and Bella Cullen from "Twilight."

Damon Salvatore from "The Vampire Diaries."



Lestat de Lioncourt from "Interview with the Vampire."



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

ACL SCARE Former Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III wore a brace on his right knee throughout the 2010 season after tearing his ACL early in 2009.



Lariat file photo

FINAL COUNTDOWN Baylor men's basketball huddles up for a timeout against Texas Tech in 2020. The season would go on to be canceled in March for the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lariat file photo

CHAMPIONS OSU's Desmond Jackson reaches for the pylon while being tackled by senior safety Jairon McVea in the 2021 Big 12 Championship at AT&T Stadium in Arlington.

3 scary moments in Baylor sports

BENNETT PARKER
Sports Writer

Baylor athletics has had a long history of highs and lows. In between are the intense, scary moments where things swing dramatically. Here are three of the most nerve-racking times to be a Baylor fan in recent history.

RGIII TEARS ACL IN 2009

Quarterback Robert Griffin III was Baylor football's poster child heading into his sophomore season after breaking out the year prior. However, on Griffin's first drive of the third game of the season, he tore the ACL in his right knee.

He begged to stay in the game and played the rest of the half but was sidelined for the remainder of the season.

The rising star's career was suddenly in jeopardy, and Baylor only won two games after the injury. It had been 14 years since the Bears'

last bowl game, and it felt like the curse would never be broken.

People speculated after the injury whether he would be the same player again. Griffin recovered and doused those questions immediately after returning. He helped Baylor notch a bowl game in the next two seasons, winning a Heisman Trophy along the way to being the second overall pick in the 2012 NFL Draft.

It seemed like one moment could have derailed his collegiate career, but Griffin fought back to become a Baylor legend.

MARCH MADNESS CANCELED IN 2020

It was the golden era of Baylor basketball. Head coach Scott Drew had assembled the best men's squad the school has seen, while the women's team was in the middle of defending its 2019 title. Both teams were ranked top-5 in the AP poll, getting ready to make a deep tournament run.

The COVID-19 pandemic had other plans. The cancellation was a gut punch to both teams who had put together fantastic seasons. In his first statement on the matter, Drew said he was "overwhelmingly disappointed" and that losing the opportunity to make Baylor's first Final Four in over 70 years was "devastating" for everyone involved.

Fans didn't know if Baylor basketball would ever look the same or continue its dominance from the 2019-20 season. Many of the leaders on both teams had used their final years of eligibility, and there were a lot of tough choices ahead. That season looked to be a banner year for both programs, but it was stolen.

Fans remember what came next. Another year of eligibility was granted. The women's team went 28-3 and on to another Elite 8, while Scott Drew went the distance.

FIRST-AND-GOAL IN AT&T STADIUM

The 2021 Big 12 championship between Baylor and Oklahoma State came down to the

final drive, where the Cowboys marched deep into Baylor territory with less than two minutes on the clock.

Down five points, the Cowboys had four attempts to gain two yards to punch in the go-ahead touchdown and likely secure a conference title. The Bears were collapsing. A missed field goal, a muffed punt and a weary defense had primed OSU to deliver the final blow and steal the win in AT&T Stadium.

Baylor fans could only sense that their team's hope of being Big 12 champions was fading with every yard. Redshirt senior running back Dezmon Jackson took the handoff and saw green grass in front of him. The 65,771 attendees and 8 million TV viewers held their breath as the play developed. Jackson turned to his right and dove for the pylon, but sixth-year safety Jairon McVea stopped him just in time to seal the deal.

In terrifying, dramatic fashion, the Baylor defense performed the greatest goal-line stand in program history and won the program's second Big 12 championship.



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Baylor football faces fright in last Halloween night game

JEFFREY COHEN
Sports Writer

A cold wind broke into McLane Stadium from the Brazos River. A 46-degree kickoff marked the coldest game in McLane Stadium history and the coldest game in Waco since 2013.

The chilly, brisk weather did not deter Baylor fans from growing in anticipation for a Week 9 matchup against West Virginia. Coming off a bye week, the energy surrounding a rare Thursday night game swirled throughout campus.

The only thing fans had on their mind was the bright lights blocking out the cold darkness on Halloween night 2019.

“They all came in their Halloween costumes, and they were loud,” former Baylor kicker John Mayers said. “It was on a Thursday; some teachers canceled class that day or even the next day to make sure they go to the game and cheer us on.”

The Bears hadn’t fared well on All Hallow’s Eve, losing eight of their previous 12 games on the holiday. They were looking for their first win on Oct. 31 in 66 years.

Unlike the typical sight of gold Line jerseys in the front and other Baylor gear in the back,

the student section was filled with color from the costumes and excitement for a night game.

The fans weren’t the only ones feeling the anticipation. The players spend all day just itching to get on the field and perform.

“You know you’re the prime time,” Mayers said. “The suspense builds all day because you have walk-throughs in the morning, and you’re just sleeping in the hotel for three hours. As a player, you’re like, ‘Ooh, I want to get out there and play.’”

McLane Stadium played a major role in how the game against the Mountaineers turned out.

“The students can kind of create that X factor and home field advantage for us because the Line sits right behind the opposing team,” Mayers said. “It had certainly helped us that night and on many nights that season.”

It proved to be a difficult night for the Baylor offense. The unit turned the ball over three times en route to scoring only 14 points through the first three quarters.

“We played pretty bad offensively, and that starts with me,” former Baylor quarterback Charlie Brewer said. “I got to make sure we’re ready to go and put us in good situations.”

The struggling offense kept the door open for West Virginia in a close game — a sight that

the Bears had faced multiple times that season. Baylor finished the 2019 season with eight one-score games, holding a 5-3 record.

Mayers knew special teams could be the group to step up in the tight contest and keep his team from a disappointing holiday.

“We were used to it,” Mayers said. “We knew how to handle it and be accessible under pressure ... Special teams-wise, we knew if it came down to it, we were confident.”

Mayers’ feeling ended up being correct. He nailed a 36-yard field goal with 10:19 left in the fourth quarter. Defensive tackle Bravvion Roy secured the 17-14 win, blocking a 48-yard field goal with under four minutes to play.

“We got a field goal early in the fourth quarter to take the lead,” Mayers said. “We blocked one at the end to seal it, so special teams play a huge part in that game.”

Baylor warded off the scare of an upset by a 3-4 opponent.

It was not an ideal performance from the Bears, who entered the Halloween night game against the Mountaineers with an 8-0 record and a No. 12 ranking.

“I think especially the 2017 season, but also the 2018 season, gave us a little bit of perspective,” former Baylor linebacker Terrel

Bernard said after the game. “Some people lose focus of that too, but we also look at how we play football, and some first part of the game, we didn’t play how we wanted to play. [...] And I think the film will show some of the game we didn’t play as well as we could have.”

Despite the difficult victory, that 2019 Bears team continued to gain more traction as the season progressed. They came off a 1-11 season in 2017 and a 7-6 campaign in 2018. Things started to click in head coach Matt Rhule’s third season.

“Once we started winning three or four or five or six, we got really hot early,” Mayers said. “[I] don’t think we only lost a game until November that season, so we were playing good ball.” The Baylor faithful took note of the team’s first look at success under Rhule.

“The crowd came in and wanted to see that we kept winning,” Mayers said. “We had OU and Texas at home that year and some great games and some great teams and some close wins.”

The win may not have been the most flashy or dominant, but it did provide another boost for the Bears. They went on to win three of their next four games to reach the Big 12 championship and the Sugar Bowl.



Lariat file photo
COSTUMES ON A member of the Baylor Line cheers on Baylor in a dinosaur costume during Baylor’s win over West Virginia Halloween night 2019.



Lariat file photo
GAME WINNER Former Baylor kicker John Mayers nails the eventual game-winning field goal against West Virginia in 2019.

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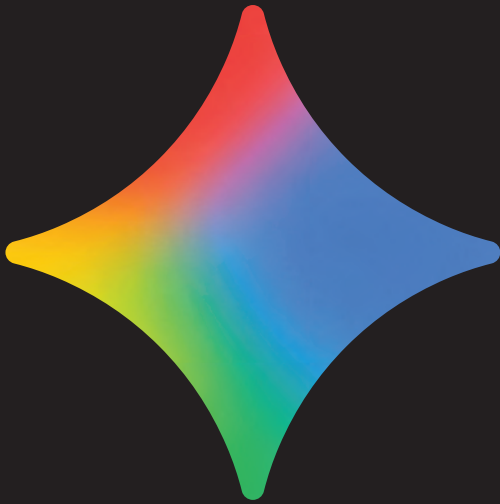
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