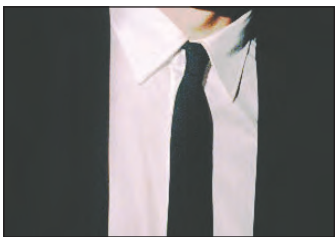




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Gen Z loses keyboard skills to touchscreens

KRISTY VOLMERT
Staff Writer

Several reports show that Generation Z's chronic use of cellphones has led to a decline in familiarity with keyboards. Teenagers and young adults have grown up in a digital world where socials have become a default source of entertainment, causing many to adapt to touchscreens in a large generational shift.

"I never learned to type because I wasn't that generation, and now I regret it," 22-year-old musician Billie Eilish said in an interview with *Rolling Stone Magazine* in April.

Members of Gen Z are commonly referred to as "digital natives" and are thought to be the most tech-savvy of all the generations. But investigations are now finding that keyboard typing skills are their weakness.

With Apple launching newer versions of the iPad, many students are substituting it in place of a laptop. Houston freshman Kathryn Weinstein said she prefers using her iPad to take notes, especially since she is able



James Ellis | Cartoonist, Cameron McCollum | Photographer

TOUCHSCREENS KILLED THE KEYBOARD Many members of Gen Z feel that they lack keyboard skills, and a large number of Baylor students prefer iPads to laptops.

to handwrite them with her Apple Pencil. “I feel that writing things down helps me retain information better and having it online allows me to have it with me a lot more often,” she said.

People born specifically in the early 2000s and later were introduced to mobile devices at a young age. Playing mobile games on cell phones and iPads familiarized them with touchscreens long before they began using computers.

“I have learned different tips and tricks over the years for little tools like split screen and screen sharing and things of that such because of the everyday use of my phone,” Weinstein said.

Social media’s era of dominance has even further exacerbated this matter, as pre-teens and teenagers who are just beginning to use computers are spending majority of their screen time on iPhones.

According to a Wall Street Journal article, abundant use of touchscreen devices has significantly altered how people interact with

WHAT'S YOUR TYPE? >> A4

Author shares solution for ‘social, emotional’ crisis

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

On Tuesday night, ABC hosted a presidential debate that exemplified the tension, frustration and uncertainty facing American politics. Just a few hours before, in Waco Hall, David Brooks tried to do the opposite. New York Times columnist and bestselling author David Brooks came to Baylor once again for a lecture hosted by the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. Brooks focused on empathy, loneliness and connection, all issues in his latest book, "How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen." In the body of his speech, Brooks outlined how to be an "illuminator," a person who brings comfort and confidence to others through their presence.

Brooks began his lecture with some harrowing statistics and attributed these changes to the current political climate, giving listeners a fresh perspective before the debate.

"Politics give you the illusion that you have a team," Brooks said as he listed off the data. Suicide, depression and loneliness have



DEEPLY SEEN Nearly 2,000 Baylor students, faculty, staff and Wacoans turned out to Waco Hall on Tuesday night to hear Brooks speak.

skyrocketed. Friendship, empathy and trust have plummeted. Brooks said the stats reveal that we are becoming "a sadder country."

But Brooks did not come all the way down to list off sobering numbers and blame the system. He came to offer a solution to this “social

and emotional crisis.” Instead of keeping with the trend of angrier and lonelier Americans, Brooks provided a guide to become an illuminator. In Brooks’ terms, illuminators are those people with a visible excitement to get to know and befriending someone.

The most important traits of an illuminator, Brooks said, are found in how they view others, how they support others and how they converse with others.

One of the biggest reasons we are so lonely is because we don’t see others as people. Brooks said this tarnished perspective comes from a lack of God.

Brooks became a Christian in 2013. He grew up Jewish with varying levels of belief in the faith, but said his conversion to Christianity began when he was standing in the subway station and “realized that everyone around [him] had a soul.” Only with this Christian worldview can people see others with the “infinite value and dignity” they deserve.

Brooks spent significant time on the topic of “accompaniment.” The term, which dates back to medieval Christianity, simply means to be physically with someone as they struggle. Brooks used an example that

his former student used in an essay.

The student, who had recently lost her father, was at the wedding of her friend. When the father and daughter dance began, she had to excuse herself to cry. She exited the bathroom to find her whole table standing in the hallway, ready to offer a quiet embrace.

This story, Brooks said, exemplified “the art of presence.” It highlights the value of physical support in situations when words cannot provide solace, which is often the case for those fighting depression.

Brooks spent the majority of his speech exploring how illuminators converse. Firstly, he highlighted the importance of asking questions. But he went further than simply invoking the “listen more than you talk” adage.

Brooks focused deeply on finding the root of disagreements. It’s not enough to discover what people believe, he said.

What really matters is finding why someone thinks the way they do. That can only be done with engaged, open listening — what Brooks called “loud listening.”

ILLUMINATORS >> A4

‘Personally, I like to step on them:’ Crickets invade campus

KRISTY VOLMERT
Staff Writer

Field cricket season is stirring in Waco as an army of insects multiplies. They are heard untimely chirping all day and seen lounging on the sidewalks, dead or alive, but their favorite place appears to be the outskirts of Penland Hall.

According to the Great Plains Nature Center, the drops in temperature and rainy weather are drawing crickets to their mating season, typically at its peak during the months of August and September and often extending into early October. They congregate in dark, damp areas during the daytime and are out and about at night. Favoring tight spaces attracts them into air vents and drains, often causing their occasional appearance indoors.

Their unpleasant invasion can be expected during this time of year, but it's especially extensive this fall as cold fronts bring weather changes earlier than usual.

Because they cannot grow and survive during the colder seasons, crickets lay their eggs during late summer in groups of about 200-400 eggs at a time. Those eggs will remain dormant in the soil until April or May, when

they hatch and release nymphs. These nymphs, which are smaller, premature versions of adult crickets, feed on plants and other materials as they grow. In about 90 days, they will have matured into adults and grown wings, just in time for mating season.

The loud chirping results from a mechanism called stridulation, where males rub their wings together to make this sound and attract females, who are mute and do not have wings.

Some questions spark curiosity for many on the Baylor campus. Where do all of these crickets come from? Where do they lay their eggs, and why haven't we seen any of the nymphs? Dr. Elizabeth Pitts is the Genetics Lab coordinator in Baylor's biology department and said she wonders the same thing.

"It's interesting to see all of these grown, adult crickets lurking around, but I haven't seen a single premature one," Pitts said. "I'm very curious as to where these eggs were hiding during the months in which we didn't see the crickets."

Pitts said that the crickets should begin to fade out in the next month as fall begins, and

HOPPY TO BE HERE >>A4



GOOD NEWS The performers at FM72 led the audience in songs of worship throughout the second night of the 72-hour event in 2023.

Students AIM to spread gospel

EDEN MORRIS
Reporter

Highland Baptist Church's Drew Humphrey and Harris Creek Baptist Church's Dale Wallace, their respective churches' college pastors, said they are witnessing a prayer and evangelism movement on Baylor's campus.

"Baylor students are outpacing previous generations of spiritual movement," Wallace said.

Humphrey said he believes the evangelism movement started through prayer emphasis. "What happened here is that there was prayer momentum surrounding primarily the FM72 movement," Humphrey said. "What happens in those kinds of movements is that they blossom into an outreach movement and evangelism."

Humphrey said he believes that this evangelism movement is one that will last.

HAVE YOU HEARD? >> A4

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? We want to hear it. Send us your thoughts: Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu

Heated recliners won’t save theaters

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Though near-empty theaters are normal these days, this was not the case years ago. Theaters would often be filled with lines out the door waiting to view the latest release. The seats may have been folding chairs and the concessions were limited, but movie-going was a treat nonetheless.

Now, one can show up at the theater just a few minutes before the movie begins. You are able to choose from a seemingly endless array of snacks and drinks. Then, as you head into the theater and slip into your wonderfully comfy recliner, you may notice only a few other heads peeping out of the silhouette of seats in the darkness around you.

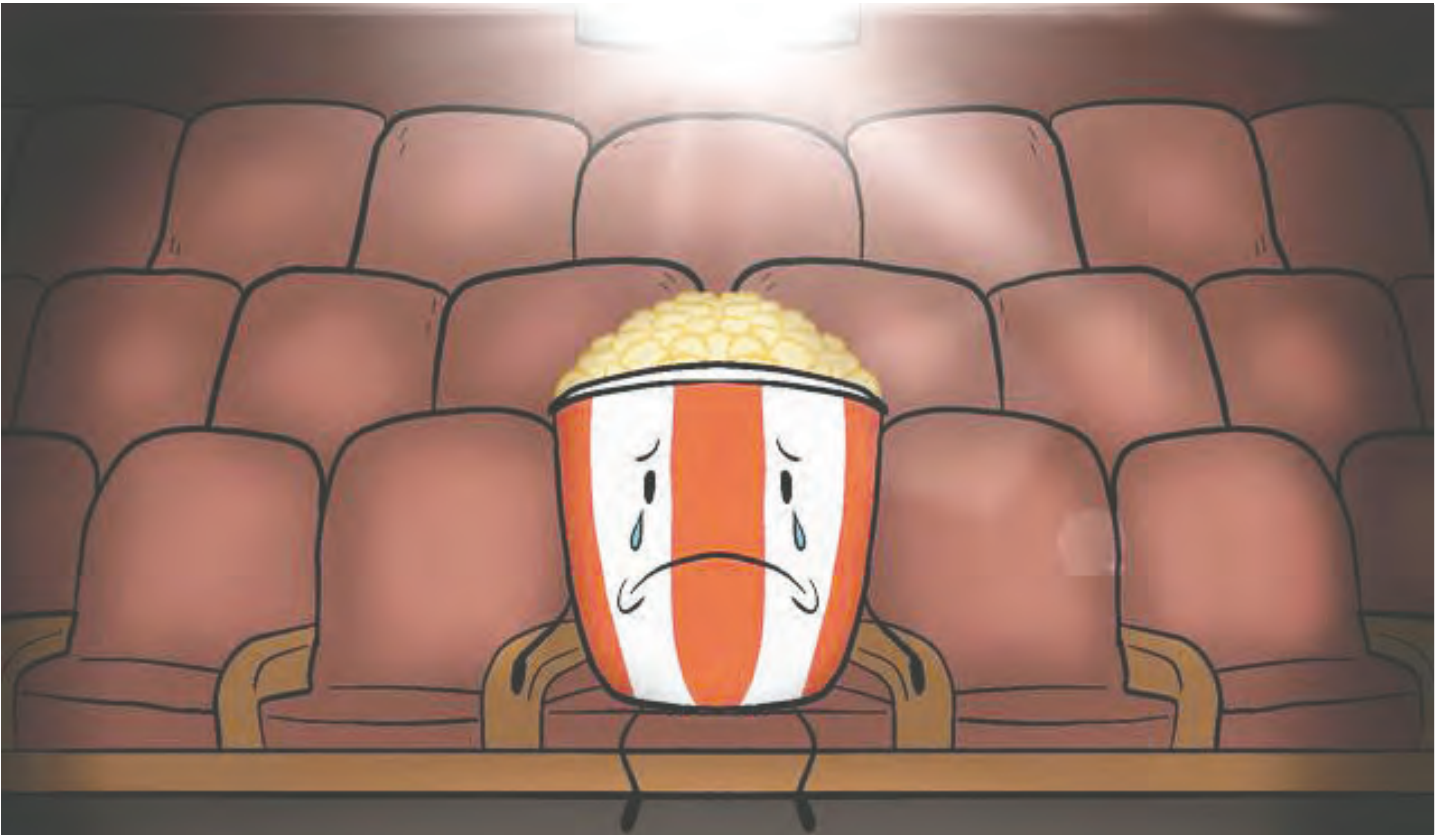
Despite the many comforts and amenities theaters have gained over the years, it just doesn't seem to be enough to keep viewers coming back for more.

Since COVID-19, box office sales have fallen, even during summer and the holidays when theaters have traditionally been busiest. To be exact, since 2023, box office sales have gone down 14.9%.

Going hand in hand with falling sales, movie ticket prices have seen a spike in the past few years, going from what used to be an average price of \$9.16 in 2019 to \$10.53 in 2022. However, when adjusted considering inflation, the overall value remains the same. So why are there increasingly fewer and fewer butts in seats at theaters?

There are many contributing factors to the downfall of movie theaters. One of the most obvious is that streaming services are now the paramount method for people to consume films — pun intended.

According to information gathered in 2023 by The Harris Poll, a research company which gathers information on Americans' entertainment tendencies, 77% of respondents said they would prefer watching movies at home rather



James Ellis | Cartoonist

than in a theater.

Perhaps this could have to do with post-COVID-19 norms and comfortability, as the virus took a major toll on how we consume our movies.

Perhaps it has to do with the time it takes to drive to the theater, park, walk in and sit through several minutes of ads before being able to view the desired content. Theaters have done things to make the experience more appealing through comfier seating, tastier snacks or better surround

sound. However, when going up against streaming, it all comes down to convenience. So how exactly will the movie industry adapt to the needs of its consumers? If they don't, will movie theaters become obsolete?

One way the tradition of movie-going could be kept afloat is if it were made more affordable. When put into perspective, consumers of several streaming platforms can watch whatever movies they want and however many they want within a month for about the price of one movie ticket

today. For instance, Hulu, Netflix and Disney+ all offer subscription deals under ten dollars.

The thing is, people want to go to movies. It makes the viewing process much more thrilling, enjoyable and memorable. But if they can't make time for it in their day or don't have spare cash lying around, they won't.

So when it comes college kids who are trying to save their money — there's a need for a change in prices if movie-going is to become more than a once or twice-a-year occasion.

They could never make me hate you, Carrie Bradshaw

EMMA WEIDMANN
Editor-in-Chief



26 years after she first strutted around the streets of Manhattan, it's cool to hate Carrie Bradshaw, the adorable, glamorous train wreck of "Sex and the City." Next in line is Rory Gilmore, the boat-stealing, pun-making patron saint of female student-journalists.

I get why it's fun to hate on them. They have flaws as obvious as a zit and as irresistible as craning your neck to get a better look at a steaming pile-up on the highway. Committing crimes against girlhood (and sometimes actual crimes) the Bradshaws and Gilmores of television leave something to be desired in the good role model department.

But why do we expect main characters, especially female ones, to always be morally instructive? Why can't we handle a little gray area?

The truth is, it's easy to point fingers. Calling out fictional characters for their shortcomings makes it easier to ignore our own. How many people in TikTok comment sections who accuse Carrie Bradshaw of being a terrible friend or an embarrassing "pick me" can probably say they're much better? How many people who accuse Rory Gilmore of being an idiot for dropping out of Yale have ever felt defiant in the face of flaming, world-altering rejection? How many of us have never made the wrong decision when faced with a

difficult choice?

We have to ask ourselves why these characters are still relevant more than two decades after their pilot episodes. Watching women like Carrie and Rory screw up Big time (pun intended) and come out okay on the other side has been a comfort to young women for decades. In their imperfection, they tell us that it's okay if we aren't perfect, either.

What makes a character step out of the television set and into your living room — into your life, even — isn't that they show you all the things that you should've done better. They feel real, as real as your best friend losing it a little after a breakup, as real as procrastinating all night long and feeling terrible in the morning and as real as learning to go through life as you are shaped by your stupid mistakes and the things that sting you.

Whether or not you always like them, you always want to watch them. You know the old saying, "well-behaved women seldom make history." Well, they seldom make the Golden Globes, either.

The best

characters on television aren't ethically aspirational, they're interesting. They reflect something in ourselves that makes us feel seen — and sometimes they make us feel exposed.

It's time we embraced the parts of ourselves that we don't like — the messy, the dramatic, the frequently petty and sometimes immature. Often, on-screen anti-heroes make the same mistakes we do.

Maybe Carrie's only sin is doing it in fabulous heels.



Your digital footprint is real

ELIZABETH JOHNSON
Focus/Design Editor

Students should keep their digital footprint clean and refined. Our internet and social media presence makes an impact on our future — good or bad. Because whether or not we like it, professionalism begins now.

Your digital footprint is the record of content you've created or engaged with online. As scary as it is to think about, putting content online is a permanent action. It may seem impermanent, but things on the internet never fully go away.

One of the most relevant ways to maintain our digital footprint as college students is to watch what you post and where you post it.

While I'm glad you're having fun now, you may not have as much fun later when you're struggling to get a job.

According to a digital footprint guidebook created by the National Protective Security Authority, "86% of internet users have taken steps online to reduce their digital footprints."

The guidebook goes on to express the permanent nature of the internet. Whether it's a comment, a caption, a review



or a post, once something is shared on the internet, it's there forever.

This goes the same for direct messages. Although the idea is to send an individual a message directly and exclusively, don't take for granted that your privacy is always guaranteed. Some memories are better left between you and your friends — or maybe — even between you and yourself.

While I love a good roommate photo shoot, be aware that posting addresses can put you in a potentially dangerous situation.

The good news is, an alternative exists. Although you should still be cognizant of creating any content that can be considered obscene or harmful, a private story or a 'close friends' story are great platforms that I use for pictures that are fit for friends and not future employers.

Maintaining a clean digital footprint doesn't just mean shielding your public image for the sake of professionalism. It includes maintaining cyber security and yourself from identity theft and stalking.

Remember to be mindful of what you post. Your future self will thank you later.

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Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

PREACHING FROM THE HEART Church Under the Bridge Pastor Jimmy Dorrell gives a sermon to the congregation over the book of Ephesians.



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

HEEDING THE CALL Waco local Jonas relocated from Dallas to Waco 10 years ago. After living there for 30 years, Jonas said he felt called by God to move. He said answering that call has to come with pure intentions. “You have to make sure that God calls you to the ministry because a lot of people get into ministry because of money, wealth, power,”



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

BEATING THE HEAT Beverage stations at Church Under the offer lemonade, tea and water for the congregation.



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

ALL WALKS OF LIFE Church Under the Bridge is a home for church members who come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

A FAITHFUL FAREWELL Church Under the Bridge is a non-denominational church that welcomes people from all aspects of life.



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

UNITED BY CHRIST Following service, Pastor Jimmy Dorrell leads the congregation in a closing prayer, reminding them of the love Christ taught.



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

MAKING DO Multiple volunteers arrive to set up chair aisles to be used each Sunday for Church Under the Bridge.

WHAT’S YOUR TYPE? from A1

technology, particularly students. A look into the online platform Canvas, which is used at Baylor, showed that between March and May, 39% of assignments submitted were sent through mobile devices instead of computers. On the other hand, teachers were doing more than 90% of their work on Canvas with a computer.

“Over the past 25 years, the number of U.S. high schools teaching typing has fallen drastically,” the article states. “While about 44% of students who graduated high school in 2000 took a keyboarding course, by 2019 that figure had plummeted to 2.5%, according to the U.S. Department of Education.”

Keyboard skills, though seldom acknowledged, are still a necessity in many professional settings. A report this week from The Tribune Express elaborated

on the necessity of keyboard skills, describing it as “an essential skill in many professional and academic settings.”

“As more standardized tests move to computer-based formats, students who struggle with typing may lose valuable time focusing on the keyboard rather than the exam content,” the report said.

The Wall Street Journal also reports that the demand for typing classes in Texas education programs has increased due to the implementation of online exams.

However, this digital era comes with plenty of benefits for Gen Z. Social media may be developing stronger writers as students are subconsciously improving their writing skills by writing for pleasure on social media instead of just for assignments.

A Wright State University report by Jim

Hannah quotes Jeffrey T. Grabill, director of the Writing in Digital Environments Research Center at Michigan State University. According to Grabill, this generation is “writing a lot more than when all they did was write for school.”

While many argue that the need for keyboard skills is an essential life skill, others point out the decline in its essentiality. Dr. Charles A. Weaver, associate dean for sciences in the Department of Psychology and Neurosciences at Baylor, said that developments in technology are simply changing the ways we use it academically.

“It’s true that fewer schools teach keyboarding skills, but I think that’s because there just isn’t a need anymore,” Weaver said. “When I was in junior high school, we had typing classes on real typewriters, and many of the students had never used one before. That’s just no longer the case.”

“The technologies we use to communicate change over time — cursive writing was a staple of instruction 50 years ago, but isn’t a skill needed much these days,” Weaver said. “T9’

texting on old phones was a highly-valued skill 20 years ago, but it’s a relic of the past these days. No doubt that 50 years from now, some other form of computer input will have been developed, and at that point the days of using keyboard might seem quaint.”

Social media has brought about several changes in the lifestyle of today’s youth, keyboard skills being just a small part of a larger array of problems.

Weaver recommends picking up Jonathan Haidt’s book “The Anxious Generation” for a really good discussion of these and other issues.

“We can and should be concerned about many of the effects of social media, such as the ease with which misinformation gets shared and eventually accepted as true,” Weaver said. “The time spent mindlessly scrolling that could be used more productively, the problems in self-esteem that emerge from false comparisons to what we believe is true of others and so on.”



DID SOMEONE TELL A BAD JOKE? Crickets can be heard chirping everywhere on campus — in the trees, crawling on the walls of buildings and swarming the sidewalks.

HOPPY TO BE HERE from A1

some of their predators such as frogs, crows and spiders will likely take over the rest of the remaining population.

An abundance of crows seen around campus can also be explained by the cricket influx, as they are busy chasing after their prey. The reason why they have decided to nest around Penland is unclear. What is clear, however, is that students are not happy with these unpleasant encounters.

Sugar Land freshman and Penland resident Gracie Peschel thinks the critters are a big nuisance.

“They swarm down the alley right past the dining hall, and if you ever pass by there, you will see at least one person screaming and running away,” Peschel said.

The crickets don’t just lurk outside. They seem to enjoy taunting Penland residents wherever they go. According to Peschel, they are also sighted in the lobby, in the dining hall and everywhere else.

“Two days ago, my roommate came into our room with a cricket on her arm, unbeknownst to her, and now we have a cricket somewhere in our room,” Peschel said.

The problem of crickets within dorms isn’t exclusive to just Penland.

Richmond freshman Abby Bray, a resident of University Parks, said that they make their presence known at her apartment complex as well.

“I’ve opened my door in the morning and a cricket flies at my face,” Bray said.

According to Bray, they can also be found crawling through the halls of the Marrs McLean Sciences Building.

“They don’t understand personal space,” Bray said.

Students will be relieved that this notorious cricket season is soon coming to an end, as the long-awaited fall weather sets in.

“I know a lot of people find the crickets annoying,” Peschel said. “Personally, I like to step on them.”

HAVE YOU HEARD? from A1



SINGING SCRIPTURE The three-night-long evangelical festival FM72 happens annually on Fountain Mall, bringing singing, worship and community to the heart of campus.

“Those are the kind of evangelism movements that can actually survive, because it’s not about like one hype weekend or sermon, although those are helpful and we need those,” he said. “It actually comes from a place of prayer that has budded into or blossomed into a love for the lost or an intercession for the lost.”

Wallace said his biggest regret in college at Baylor was not sharing the gospel, and he believes Baylor students today are not going to have that same regret.

“Most of the evangelism momentum is students stepping into leadership roles or mobilizing and doing it,” Humphrey said.

Nicknamed AIM based on Acts 20:24, formerly known as “Evangers,” a group started by Baylor students walks campus spreading the gospel.

Austin junior Thomas Morelli and San Mateo, Calif., junior Abe Yeager are two members of AIM.

Yeager and Morelli said they were encouraged by Kyle Martin, CEO of Time to Revive, in evangelism trainings he led during their

freshman year at Baylor and decided to start evangelizing on campus weekly.

“I started to bring people along with me, bring guys I was discipling and ask them to come with and share the gospel with me, and doing it with them and leading them in that and raising them up and then sending them out to do it by themselves,” Yeager said.

Yeager said he gives the credit for AIM to Morelli. Morelli was a part of a student evangelism team for FM72 that turned into a year-round evangelism movement.

“This did not need to just be an FM72 evangelism thing,” Morelli said. “That’s when we created the evangelist group, [myself] and others, to do outreach together. There’s now around 200 people in the group.”

Thus, AIM was born.

“The most beautiful part I’ve seen the Lord work in is that this evangelism is not something that our parents’ generation would consider as evangelism or something that older pastors would consider as evangelism, in the sense of going out on the street and street preaching and randomly

just walking up to people,” Yeager said.

Yeager said AIM’s only agenda is to love people, and the primary way of doing that is listening to them.

“Our goal is not to be converts,” Yeager said. “Our goal is to get people the gospel, have them understand the power of Christ’s gospel that is available to their life, allow them to receive that and create a space where we’re facilitating the gospel in a way that leads to discipleship.”

Yeager said he has seen joy in sharing the gospel and life-giving moments being proclaimed to people who are not yet believers.

“The Lord’s hand of favor is definitely upon the people here,” Yeager said. “It’s definitely upon the students and the ministers in the churches. And I’ve been so blessed at the way that the Lord is using the church in Waco to activate students, to activate his people, to then go and love people. Go and reach the nations, go and make disciples and go and spread the love of Christ in the ways that He has prepared us to do.”

ILLUMINATORS from A1

“Find the disagreement under the disagreement under the disagreement,” Brooks said. “Ask questions, [like] ‘How did you come to believe this?’”

Brooks acknowledged the irony of a person like him giving insight to relationships. As a writer, he calls his work “a solitary profession.” He said multiple times that he was often in his life “up in his head.”

But Brooks also said he’s grown. For those who may not have bought it, he appealed to one of the highest authorities in relationships: Oprah Winfrey.

Brooks was interviewed by Oprah twice, once in 2014, and again in 2019. When she saw him the second time in 2019, Brooks said that even Oprah herself noticed his emotional guard lowering. He attributed that openness to the things he mentioned in his speech.

Among the nearly 2,000 students, faculty, staff, parents and Wacoans in attendance for Brooks’ lecture, numerous freshmen honors students came to hear more on their summer reading project.

Norman, Okla. freshman Jay

Abbott said that he found the book “excellent,” and that when combined with the lecture, he got some great insight entering his freshman year.

“You have the richness that the rest of the world is starving for.”

DAVID BROOKS | BESTSELLING AUTHOR, COLUMNIST

“I think coming into Baylor as a freshman, the part about knowing people is important,” Abbott said. “When you’re first having interactions, asking open-ended questions, not just yes or no questions... are really important. And David Brooks added to that in his talk when he talked about asking narrative-oriented questions.”

Brooks’ message was one that exposed the emptiness of our

current secular, polarized country. Everyone is searching for some “richness,” Brooks said, but not in the right place.

In an ending conversation with Linda Livingstone, Brooks said that students at Baylor know better than most where to find it.

“You have the richness that the rest of the world is starving for.”



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BAYLOR LARIAT
News for the students by the students

No more hiding: Restaurant revealed by conclusion of road construction

SHANE MEAD
Reporter

Many Waco locals and Baylor students alike have so far missed the chance to try Huaco Lounge, an authentic upscale Mexican restaurant owned by Sebastian Reyes, 57. Because of construction on University Parks Drive last year, accessibility to the restaurant was limited throughout both semesters.

Reyes was hindered by opening Huaco Lounge, a continuation of Huaco Eatery in Union Hall, in the midst of construction that seemed to never end.

“[The street] was closed for two years. It was super slow,” Reyes said. “Now it’s open; it’s better.”

Work was something instilled in Reyes during his childhood in Acapulco, Mexico.

“I was 7 years old when I started working,” Reyes said.

Though an incredibly young age to begin working, he said it had its benefits, as it taught him the perseverance he needed to keep his restaurant afloat.

“I didn’t come here be a troublemaker ... I came here to work,” he said.

When Reyes first came to Waco, he opened Sebas Cocina on Austin Avenue, which he ended up selling in 2011. His work continued as he moved to Dallas, where he worked as a chef for poker tournaments. Reyes then moved back to Mexico for some



Michael Aguilar | Photographer

GOODBYE ORANGE CONES With the wrapping up of road construction on University Parks Drive, Waco gems like Huaco Lounge have been made more visible and accesible to the public.

time before returning to Waco six years ago. He said thst this time, he returned stronger and ready to make things work.

His return to Waco began with the opening of Huaco Eatery, and later the opening of Huaco Lounge, in early 2023. Both food spots boast 4.5 and 4.7 ratings on Google Reviews respectively.

The importance of ratings and reviews were something Reyes emphasized heavily.

“I always say, ‘Can you give me

a review?’” Reyes said. “That’s how people hear about this restaurant.”

He said he appreciates the negative feedback just as much as the positive. Reyes asks for honesty from customers because it gives him the opportunity to make things right.

“If people don’t like it, I’ll tell my server to change it, give [the customer] the menu,” he said. “You don’t have to pay back. Be honest with me.”

The customer service Reyes provides is noticed by regulars at the restaurant and remains a big reason why they return.

“I noticed that the owner was very attentive and focused on making each customer’s experience enjoyable,” said Irvine, Calif., senior Elizabeth Molina. “He constantly made sure our waters were filled and our chips and salsa were full.”

Reyes is seen working at his restaurant every day, something unique to many restaurant owners.

In the future, Reyes said he hopes to see more students in his restaurant. He plans on doing specials specifically for Baylor students, as well as something similar to the BearBucks system formerly used at his Huaco Eatery location in Union Hall.

He also said he wants to host an event, utilizing the large parking space he has in front of his restaurant. He is currently seeking assistance in promoting the event.

Review: Can The Dare bring back 2010s ‘indie sleaze?’

EMMA WEIDMANN
Editor-in-Chief

Inside a public school somewhere in America, there is a substitute teacher that will be the next word-slurring, suit-wearing skinny man to haunt New York City’s clubs.

At least, that’s where The Dare — aka Harrsion Smith — crawled out of. It was an unlikely place to find the newest poster boy for sexy, electronic alt-pop, but he’s here and he’s made quite the splash with his debut album, “What’s Wrong With New York?”

Maybe it’s the album’s raunchy, unabashedly shallow and fun aesthetic that propelled its lead singles to TikTok “For-You Pages” everywhere. Maybe it’s his involvement in 2024’s all-consuming “Brat Summer”.

Maybe it’s his “extremely British” looks, as The Guardian quips, that make his music so much like Troye Sivan wearing a Blur costume. Or maybe I’m just chronically online.



“Whatever it is that gives this album its allure, “What’s Wrong With New York?” is simultaneously the freshest and most unoriginal thing I’ve heard in a while.

who The Dare is, of his range of emotions or his range of songwriting abilities. If the rest of the album is a days-long bender, the ballads are the hangover.

Ultimately, “What’s Wrong With New York?” is an attempt to resuscitate the indie sleaze aesthetic of the 2010s, with all its Black Eyed Peas-ness and Kesha-ousity. The album just doesn’t really exist without the aesthetic from which it borrows its lifeblood or the cultural tour de force that was Charli XCX’s “BRAT.”

Indie sleaze was a direct byproduct of the post-2008 recession years, where clubbing — its music and aesthetics — provided an escape from harsh financial realities. You can’t just bring an aesthetic back just because you wish you were 21 when it happened. It has to come about organically, and once it’s dead, it’s dead for good.

The Dare was born out of a corner of Gen Z TikTok that steals aesthetics from the past in search of its own identity. A few months ago, some trendy people declared that indie sleaze was back. Enter The Dare, poised to cater to this exact microcosm of the internet and serendipitously linked to the hottest artist of the summer — merely in the right place at the right time.

“Open Up”



“All Night”



“You Can Never Go Home”



“Good Time”



Whatever it is that gives this album its allure, “What’s Wrong With New York?” is simultaneously the freshest and the most unoriginal thing I’ve heard in a while. Songs like “You’re Invited” and “Open Up” are genuinely exciting listens, mixing sleazy guitar with a driving, club-gearred beat à la Charli XCX.

With lyrics like “what’s a blogger to a rocker? What’s a rocker to The Dare?” the song “I Destroyed Disco” is a breakout hit. It boasts a gritty breakdown that can do nothing but immediately conjure up the image of a sweaty Bushwick club filled with pretentious NYU students out looking for some fun.

And between “Perfume” and “All Night,” the album brings something to a tired music scene that revives it like a shock from a defibrillator.

On the other hand, “Good Time” is so slapstick that it sounds like a parody of itself. There’s a fine line between cheeky and fun and just plain obnoxious. “Good Time” drunkenly stumbles across that line.

The two lonely ballads on the record, “Elevation” and “You Can Never Go Home,” add absolutely nothing. Added to offset the risk of a relentlessly and monotonously upbeat album, these two do little to deepen my impression of

What to Do in Waco: Sept. 13 - 19

OLIVIA TURNER
Arts & Life Editor

This week’s schedule includes a whole lot of stage time for our talented Waco and Baylor performers. Join the crowd in supporting them, and take a parent along to show off the Waco scene while you’re at it. It’s Family Weekend, after all!

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM | SEPT. 12-22 | 7:30 P.M. | WACO CIVIC THEATRE 1517 LAKE AIR DR. | \$22-25 TICKETS

Calling all Shakespeare nerds! Allow yourself to be whisked away to ancient Athens for a magical tale of fairies, love and mischief put on by Waco Civic Theatre.

AFTER DARK VARIETY SHOW | SEPT. 13 | 6:30-9:30 P.M. | WACO HALL, 624 SPEIGHT AVE.

Enjoy the very best of Baylor’s creative talents at this traditional Family Weekend talent show. From dance to stand-up comedy, there’s bound to be something for everyone to enjoy. For tickets, visit WHTickets@baylor.edu.

WACO DOWNTOWN FARMER’S MARKET | SEPT. 14 | 9 A.M.-1 P.M. | 500 WASHINGTON AVE.

Take a stroll through this site where local agricultural and artisan vendors have gathered weekly since 2011.

DR PEPPER PARANORMAL TOUR | SEPT. 14 | 8-10 P.M. | DR PEPPER MUSEUM, 300 S 3RD ST. | \$35 TICKETS

Walk the supposedly haunted halls of the historic Dr Pepper Museum and hunt for ghosts on this two-hour guided tour.

MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CONCERT | SEPT. 15 | 6-11:30 P.M. | THE BACKYARD BAR STAGE & GRILL, 511 S 8TH ST. | \$10-20 TICKETS

Enjoy a night of live music for Mexican Independence Day with Tejano band Grupo Ziztema featuring Tex-Mex country fusion band Zamora County Line!

LEVITT AMP WACO MUSIC SERIES | SEPT. 18 | 5-9 P.M. | BRIDGE STREET PLAZA & AMPHITHEATRE, 200 E BRIDGE ST.

This free concert series has returned to Waco for the fall season! This week’s show features artists DJ The Sweetest T, your local artsy DJ, and Marquo, an R&B singer-songwriter. Support local artists and find your new favorite musicians!

Review: ‘Beetlejuice Beetlejuice’ spooks with sequel of Tim Burton’s cult classic



KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

As I sat down in the theater, I didn’t know what I was more excited about — more screen time for the most iconic bangs in cinema history or Jenna Ortega playing yet another famous cult-classic goth character.

Being someone who was first frightened by the eclectic sand worms when I was 6 years old but immediately fell in love with the film, I did not have a second film on my 2024 bingo card.

With that being said, my bingo card is now in the trash, and I am eager to announce that “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” is a masterpiece sequel.

I will preface this by saying the casting of Jenna Ortega slightly worried me. I feared that watching her in a film with such similar themes to “Wednesday” would make it hard to separate her character from Wednesday Addams in my mind.

While it’s indisputable that both characters have similar aesthetics, I thoroughly agreed with the casting choices after watching the film.

One thing to note about this film is the lighting and visuals. While Tim Burton

never disappoints when it comes to on-screen aesthetics, “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” is a great upgrade from the original film’s already cinematic elements.

The lighting resonated in every scene and was one of my favorite parts of the whole movie. The bright green and purple colors were very prominent in the film, and from a branding aspect, they were done well.

Another enjoyable element of the film was the amount of consistency seen between characters in this film and the original. Little details like the “Handbook for the Recently Deceased” once again made an appearance in the film as tributes to the previous film.

One of the more difficult things to wrap my head around was the use of effects in the film. The first film really showed the originality of how each character looked. There were times during the sequel when I felt like I was watching a “Ghostbusters” film.

While it was nice to see the upgrade in effects, part of me wished the producers relied on those computer-generated parts less.

My least favorite part of the film was the opening. Not only did it feel forced, but it also wasn’t what I wanted from an originality standpoint. It felt cheap and lagged during explanation scenes that were intended to give the audience more information about the story.

Ultimately, the film picked up in the second half and revitalized the über-weird, eclectic humor that Michael Keaton, who played Beetlejuice in both films, had.

The film still carried that eerie sense of slapstick humor that we saw last time, the kind that was provocative and a little unsettling but also drew you in and ultimately created the cult classic-like following that the franchise now has.

While there were times it felt forced and overdone, it’s needless to say that this is expected when a sequel comes out so long after the first film.

Needless to say, it’s still a great film, and everyone should go see it. The acting was phenomenal, and Tim Burton once again created a masterpiece of a story.

However, if you go into the film with certain expectations and comparisons, you will likely be disappointed.

While the film still follows the franchise’s theme, it’s different in many ways as far as effects, narrative and character development go. However, for a sequel, it does not disappoint.

The humor throughout the film never fails, and it’s amazing to see so many of the same characters as in the original film.



AN ICONIC BAYLOR SPOT Shorty’s Pizza Shack has been catering to on-campus events, providing a post-class hangout and serving up nostalgia for alumni since 2011.

Where to find good food, good sports viewing in Waco

SHANE MEAD
Reporter

Baylor football just played their first away game on Saturday and the NFL kicked off its first Sunday of the year — a huge weekend for football fans. Many students love watching their favorite teams in the comfort of their own homes, but for those looking for a place to enjoy both collegiate and professional football, this article may be just what you’re looking for.

SHORTY’S PIZZA SHACK

This one starts with a spot that is probably familiar with many, Shorty’s Pizza Shack, located on the corner of 12th St. and Bagby Avenue.

Shorty’s has indoor dining with a small bar, accompanied by a large outdoor seating area. Every corner you turn, you will find a TV, ensuring that there are no bad places to sit during game days.

“It’s like the most typical noon to 5 p.m. game day,” said Nick LeDesky, a senior from Reno, Nev., who has been going to Shorty’s since he was a freshman. “Hang out and just get some pizza.”

Nick is a fan of Shorty’s not only because of its ideal layout for watching sports, but also its affordability for college students as Shorty’s has deals each day on various food items.

“I think it’s really cool they have the deals of the day, and you kind of just go in not

knowing what deals it is that day, and you go with that,” he said. “It’s spontaneous, throws fun in there.”

LUCKY BUCK’S

Now, take a trip across I-35 and you’ll find a newer sports-watching establishment: Lucky Buck’s — a rooftop bar atop the new Hotel Herringbone on the corner of 4th St. and Jackson Avenue.

Lucky Buck’s opens in the late afternoon on weekends, perfect for those 6 p.m. start time Baylor games or Prime Time NFL games. The bar’s elevation provides beautiful sunset views.

Lucky Buck’s has a small menu, consisting of just hot dogs (which they like to call glizzies), nachos and drinks. Eli Seitzinger, a senior from Rochester, Mich., who said Lucky Buck’s quickly shot up his list of favorite bars, actually prefers the simple menu.

“I don’t really

think you need to eat anything else,” he said.

Eli believes Lucky Buck’s can become a popular watch destination for away games because of his relationship with one of the employees there.

“I was talking to my friend who works there, and he was saying that they want that to be the big new away game spot,” Eli said. “[They want] it to feel like you’re at the game watching it.”

One last reason of why Lucky Buck’s is so strongly recommended is because of its cleanliness.

“I would argue that it would be the cleanest,” said Eli when asked about its cleanliness in comparison to other bars in Waco. “The bathrooms are insanely nice.”

Between one old and one new, both locations are excellent selections for those looking for their new favorite spot to cheer on the Bears and the rest of their favorite sports teams.



KEEP IT A BUCK Lucky Buck’s is one of Waco’s newest spots, opening alongside Hotel Herringbone last spring.

KAPPA KARNIVAL



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer
FOUNTAIN MALL FUN Kappa Kappa Gamma’s annual event on Wednesday night boasted a dunk tank, obstacle course, face painting and more.

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Baylor football set for bowl game rematch, donning first black uniform since rebrand

FOSTER NICHOLAS
Sports Editor

With a blackout on the horizon, Baylor football will look to snap the second-longest home losing streak to FBS opponents in the nation when it clashes with Air Force in a rematch of the 2022 Armed Forces Bowl, one of the coldest bowl games in college football history, at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at McLane Stadium.

Baylor (1-1) will debut its brand new dark ‘Anthracite’ alternate uniforms in front of a crowd that is encouraged to wear black for a promotion called ‘Mission Black Ops.’ The annual Salute to Service game will be the first time the Bears wear black uniforms since Nov. 17, 2018, when they played TCU. Since the university’s rebrand in 2019, Baylor has been without a dark jersey in its arsenal.

Coming off a losing effort against No. 11 Utah, the green and gold will be forced to pivot quickly to defend an Air Force (1-1) team built on the triple option. Even while digging into film of the Falcons, head coach Dave Aranda dissected every moment from last week’s game against the Utes to clarify what needs adjusting.

‘There’s a lot we have to prove. That first quarter is not acceptable. I think the start of it — the big plays that we gave up, getting the kick blocked and the strip sack and all of those things were just completely avoidable. I take responsibility for all of those,’ Aranda said. ‘We cannot win playing that brand of football.

‘Now, the ability to kind of regroup and to fight through and to make adjustments, I’m proud of that, and I think we’ve shown the ability to do that through these last two games. That will extremely be tested in this game. There’ll be a million adjustments in this one.’

Not only are the Bears looking for revenge, but trying to prevent their home losing streak against FBS opponents from extending into double digits. The green and gold are just one of four teams in the nation that have lost their last seven or more home games against FBS opponents. The other schools are Massachusetts (10), Stanford (9) and Cincinnati (8), a team Baylor beat on the road in 2023.

While redshirt junior safety Devin Lemear believes the loss against the Utes revealed ‘things to work on,’ he has seen significant progress from the 2023 squad, which has given the team hope that they will complete the turnaround.

‘We’re resilient. We didn’t quit. In the past, I’ve been a part of teams where you could definitely feel the shift. It would be like more so, ‘Oh, here we go again. We’re going to fold.’ But this game showed that we have a lot of fight in this team, and I’m really proud of



Roundup File Photo
GUNS OUT Former Baylor linebacker Dillon Doyle (5) celebrates a big defensive play during the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl on Dec. 22, 2022 at Amon G. Carter Stadium in Fort Worth.

that,’ Lemear said.

One of the Bears’ primary focuses in the lead-up to the game was shoring up the offensive line. Aranda continued to back the steady competition, and junior offensive guard Omar Aigbedion also claimed that having more guys push each other would better the position group. After allowing eight pressures in Week 2, Aigbedion wasn’t shy about stating that the group needed to improve.

‘We learned that we still have a lot of work to do. We had an unsuccessful game. And I think our team is very hungry, and we’re determined not to let that happen again,’ Aigbedion said. ‘Losing in the fashion we did — not having a very successful first half, not really a successful game at all. The offense starts with the O-line, so we definitely have to do some self reflecting and go back to work this week.’

In the fourth quarter against Utah, sixth-year senior quarterback Dequan Finn left the field with an injury. He returned one series later, and Aranda felt his leadership in those moments helped turn the tide and gave the team momentum leading up to their clash with Air Force.

‘Dequan took a hit to the ribs and was feeling sore and was wanting to come right back. I was walking with him off the field, he was just saying, ‘There’s no way I’m coming out of this game.’ And so his determination, everything to come back — I think the whole team saw that, and was able to kind of get a bump and everything off of that,’ Aranda said.

Defensively, Lemear and the Bears have shouldered a bigger load this week as they anticipate run after run. As Air Force shows off their physicality in one-on-one match ups, Baylor will stay competitive by matching intensity and decisiveness.

‘I’ve experienced it before in 2022 — well actually, we practiced for it for an entire month. So you just go into it knowing it’s going to be a physical game, knowing that you need to read your keys; they’re going to do a lot of moving. So, if you don’t have your eyes in the right place, the ball can get out fast,’ Lemear said.

When the Bears battled the military academy in the 2022 Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl, Baylor allowed 67 rushes for 276 yards. Over the course of the

game, Air Force only attempted seven passes and had possession for 40:03, more than two-thirds of the game.

The Falcons have changed since then, losing a great deal of seniors who were a part of the third consecutive nine plus win team in 2022. They are coming off a 17-7 loss to San Jose State University and currently sit 130th out of 135 in offensive success rate with a 30% passing play percentage. Air Force bottoms the FBS in offensive yards per play, but their unique playing style keeps the Bears from taking it lightly.

At the end of the day, Baylor wants desperately to make up for a crushing bowl game loss in 2022.

‘It’s just to prove a point that we’re a physical team. Because, I mean, that’s the reputation that Air Force and all the teams that run the triple option have. So there’s a lot of doubts the past couple years just about our physicality,’ Lemear said. ‘So this is a time to prove that we can match up with them, not even match up, but just exceed anything that they bring.’

Kickoff is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Saturday at McLane Stadium, with the game broadcast on FOX.

A girl named Love: Ukrainian tennis star leads Baylor with heart

JACKSON POSEY
Sports Writer

Liubov Kostenko was born to be a star.

The daughter of a tennis coach, five-year-old Kostenko quickly became a fixture at tennis courts around her home country of Ukraine, often tagging along to watch her mother train local players. Inevitably, she picked up a racket of her own — and never set it back down.

‘Once, she took me with her [to work], and it was tennis courts [with] so many people,’ said Kostenko, now a senior at Baylor. ‘I was very extrovert[ed], I’d say, so it was very fun. And then I started playing. I loved it. ... I wanted to do it, and then it just happened because it was so easy. My mom goes there in the morning. I go with her, and then I stay in the club for the whole day.’

Whole days eventually turned into whole weeks, as what began as pure curiosity grew into an insatiable appetite for winning. Kostenko was born into a generational wave of Ukrainian tennis talent; on the heels of international sensation Elina Svitolina’s rise to prominence, Ukraine became one of the major hotspots of youth women’s tennis in the 2010s, boasting what the Women’s Tennis Association’s Alex Macpherson once called ‘youth and depth unrivaled by any other country.’ Today, eight of the nation’s top 15 players were born from 2000-2004, twice as many as the United States’ four.

‘We have a huge amateur tennis movement in Ukraine — let’s say the best amateur players,’ Evgeniy Zukin, head of the Ukrainian Tennis Federation, said in 2019. ‘Better than Russians, better than anywhere. We have a few national amateur leagues and people travel as professionals

from town to town for tournaments. They get mad about tennis and they have fans. This is really important because they want their kids to be tennis players.’

Among the players on Zukin’s mind was Kostenko, who had earned top-50 junior status, reached the ITF Tour finals in her pro debut in Chornomorsk and competed in the U16 and U14 World Cups.

‘They all want to be better than each other, so that’s how they get better and better,’ retired Ukrainian tennis star Olga Savchuk said at the time. ‘They also feel they’re not the youngest now — it creates a virtuous cycle. If you’re the only good junior you might relax but they also feel that [Daria] Lopatetska, Kostenko are coming. All of them push each other to the limits.’

Many of the stars from that period have continued on the professional path. Marta Kotsyuk, 22, climbed to No. 18 in the WTA doubles rankings. Dayana Yastremska, 24, is up to No. 34. But Kostenko chose the non-traditional route: moving to America to play collegiate tennis at Syracuse University.

‘No one really supported me going here, because also in Ukraine, we have this stereotype that if you come here, it’s done for your tennis,’ Kostenko said. ‘I wanted to go even a year earlier, everyone was like, ‘No, you gotta stay here, you will be professional, blah blah blah.’ But I was like, ‘It’s not working, but let’s see how it goes. One more year.’

At the end of that year, Kostenko enrolled at Syracuse, which she said had been recruiting her for ‘three or four years.’ But while sitting out her freshman season due to NCAA rules about previous career earnings, Russia invaded Ukraine. And everything changed.

‘My first year, I think it wasn’t as hard, but then the war started,’ Kostenko said. ‘I couldn’t go home for my first summer break. It was hard. And then last year I went home for summer, and it was very hard leaving home.

‘I think it’s easier when you’re with your family and your friends. And even though I went home this summer and electricity was going off, and sometimes we didn’t have water or anything ... it’s so much easier when you are with them, you go through this together, rather than, ‘I have everything here, my life’s great,’ and then people that I care about, they’re suffering.’

Kostenko’s story resonated with students across Syracuse’s campus, who rallied to start a supply drive for those affected by the war in Ukraine. Since transferring to Baylor for her sophomore year, Kostenko, too, has poured herself into volunteering for the cause.

‘She just has a great heart; she just wants to give back,’ said Baylor head coach Joey Scrivano. ‘She spent countless hours with Unbound, which is a nonprofit in Waco that helps with human trafficking in Europe, but in particular in Ukraine. She put in, I don’t know, about 200 hours of community service with them? I mean, that’s amazing.’

Scrivano had known of Kostenko since taking a 2019 recruiting trip through Kyiv and Moscow — ‘It’s a wild thing that that wasn’t that long ago’ — but wasn’t able to recruit her due to the language barrier and power of the Ukrainian Tennis Federation. Once Kostenko hopped in the transfer portal in June 2022, though, the Bears pounced.

‘I had a livestream on my Instagram, and my friend, [then-Baylor tennis player and Ukraine

native] Anita Sahdiieva ... was like, ‘Are you in America?’” Kostenko said. ‘And I’m like, ‘Yeah, I’ve been here for a year now.’ She’s like, ‘Come to Baylor!’ And I was like, ‘Waaaaa?’ She’s like, ‘Yeah, you can come here, we have a good team.’ And I [had] heard of Baylor — well, I heard they have nice clothes. But also, like, it’s a good team.’

After a little more digging into the culture and the program, and after Sahdiieva gave Scrivano her full endorsement, Kostenko made the move. She’s been rocking green and gold ever since.

‘She just got a really good heart, good person,’ Scrivano said. ‘I think she just leads by example, especially on a match day. If a match is coming down to the wire and it’s coming down to her, we all feel really good about that because we know she’s just gonna do everything, she’s gonna

leave it all on the court. And that’s all you can ask for.

‘I think that’s her biggest leadership quality is just her competitiveness, and just showing that. No matter what ailment she has and whatever — she’s gonna just fight to the bitter end.’

Kostenko’s first name, Liubov, comes from her grandmother — and a Ukrainian word meaning ‘love.’ The big-hearted girl from Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, still loves eating her mother’s honey-and-ginger lemons, a family recipe made with grandpa’s homemade honey. And as much as she loves Waco, a piece of her still longs for home.

‘I think it was easier when I was just not going home for a while, and then you get more used to it,’ Kostenko said. ‘But once you went home, and then you have to go back — it hurts.’



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics
LIGHT IT UP Senior Liubov Kostenko was a top-50 junior growing up in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine.

Born for this: Kendal Murphy brings more fire to loaded volleyball lineup

GRANT MORRISON
Sports Writer

Lined up across from No. 18 Minnesota, Baylor volleyball sophomore outside hitter Kendal Murphy wasn't thinking about being the underdog in the match. She didn't care that Minnesota had just beaten then-No. 1 Texas or that the Bears had dropped their last three matchups with the Golden Gophers.

"I was more focused on the fact that my cousin was on the other side of the court," Murphy said.

A self-proclaimed "volleyball freak," Murphy has the sport in her DNA. Her parents met as club volleyball coaches, her aunt and uncle are coaches and three of her cousins play at the collegiate level.

"I grew up in the ball cart, going to practice with my parents," Murphy said. "I feel like I could serve a ball before I could read."

After her career at Horizon High School, where she recorded over 1,000 kills, Murphy was the No. 18 recruit in the country and had narrowed her choice down to four schools: Utah, Pepperdine, Baylor and USC. Baylor was the fourth of these options.

"My three things I wanted from college were to start my freshman year, stay in the Pac-12 and play sand and indoor volleyball," Murphy said.

But Baylor doesn't offer sand volleyball, and it plays in the Big 12. Plus, when Murphy visited, the roster was too stacked for her to start. But when she took her official visit to Baylor, she knew this



HIGH FLYING Sophomore outside hitter Kendal Murphy leaps for the spike during No. 23 Baylor volleyball's 3-2 loss against No. 6 Wisconsin Saturday night at the Ferrell Center .

was the place for her. "I feel like God called me to be here... when I stepped on campus, I was like 'this is home for me.'"

By the end of her freshman year, Murphy had carved out a starting role and saw significant playtime. She coaches the men's club volleyball team, giving her the opportunity to play in sand regularly. And she wanted to play in the Pac-12 to compete against childhood friends now playing at Arizona and Arizona State—two teams that have since joined the Big 12.

Now in the second year of her Baylor career, Murphy has established herself as a dominant presence on the court. Her game is about

consistency, regularly pairing double-digit kills with a high hitting percentage. Whether she's in practice or in a real match, every rep is about improvement.

"I want to make my team better every day. I want to put up the best block I can [in practice] so that my teammates are hitting against the best block," Murphy said.

Senior libero Lauren Briseño cited Murphy's consistency as a measure that sets her apart.

"I really trust that she knows how to execute," Briseño said. "She's intentional about doing all the reps that she needs to, outside of practice... I really respect who she is as a player."

Pushing herself and her teammates to enhance their game at every opportunity builds confidence in a sport that demands it. Starting the season with four straight sweeps before beating Minnesota lights a fire in the heart of this squad. Confidence "goes so far in volleyball," Murphy said, and "can change the momentum of a whole game."

The bond these players have with each other is stronger than its ever been. Over the summer, they traveled to Europe and faced the national teams of Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and Italy.

Competing against the premiere talents of these

nations gave the Bears an opportunity to face teams of a higher caliber, sharpening their own skills while building relationships as a team. With seven seniors on this year's squad, the trip served to connect younger teammates with those on their way out, and head coach Ryan McGuyre felt it "gives the underclassmen more to fight for."

Back home, the team has developed individual chants and claps for each player as they serve. In most high-pressure sports situations—free throws, field goal attempts, penalty kicks—the team would want quiet. But Murphy and the Bears

know that home or away, the court will be loud. It brings a rhythm to each serve that drowns out the outside noise.

"[Serving] is my time," Murphy said. "It's gonna be loud in the gym anyways. Let's have them cheer for me."

Despite being a sophomore, Murphy's feel for the game has earned her a regular spot in the starting rotation.

"She's a special athlete," McGuyre said. "She just understands the game, for as young as she is, at an incredible level."

With the Bears off to a 5-2 start with a ranked win, Murphy sees this team as strong enough to take it all the way.

"National championship, for sure," Murphy said. "Second best would be Big 12 champions. I want a ring on my finger."

From the looks of this team, it's not a far-fetched idea. The conference is wide open, and the Bears are strong enough to take it the distance. This team is talented and disciplined. Their foundation, and theme for the season, is trust.

"It's about trusting our training, trusting our teammates and my teammates trusting me," Murphy said. "I would not want to have this season with anyone else by my side."

Next up, the green and gold will take on LSU (5-1) on Thursday and host Samford (5-0) on Sunday as part of the annual Baylor Invitational. First serve against the Tigers is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Ferrell Center.

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News for the students by the students

James Ellis | Cartoonist

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HOUSING EDITION



Students face rising rent prices in Waco

EMILY SCHOCH

Staff Writer

As Baylor students start to get settled into off-campus housing, the rent in Waco slowly climbs.

As of this year, the rent at University Parks apartment ranges between \$1,074 and \$1,253 for a year lease. At U Pointe on Speight, rent ranges from \$779 to \$1,699. Similarly, The Outpost ranges from \$754 to \$2,415 for a year-long lease.

Not only college do students have to afford rent, they also have to afford groceries. Groceries can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$150 per week for one person. A student living off campus could spend an average of \$1,600 a month on rent and groceries alone.

Colleyville sophomore Audrey Jarrett said she found it very alarming to see inflation causing rent in Waco to rise. Jarrett expressed that since this is her first year living off campus, she is having to buy groceries and pay rent for the first time. Due to rising prices, Jarrett said she is going to be forced to get creative with how she spends her money.

"Now we not only have to pay an extremely high rent, but we have groceries and gas to think about as well," Jarrett said. "It has forced me to be more mindful about how I spend money and where I spend money since the majority of my budget is having to be spent on rent."

In 2014, the average rent in Waco was \$600-\$750 and the cost of groceries was \$40-\$70 per person

every week, which means students living off campus would spend around \$1,050 on groceries and rent in a month.

"Having to choose between focusing on my studies or managing to work enough should not be the reality of having to afford all the expenses in college," Jarrett said.

On average, the difference in rent and grocery costs between the year 2014 and the year 2024 is about \$550. For college students, this can be an extremely stressful situation. Some students have to pay for their own tuition, living and groceries. The increase in rent alongside inflation causing grocery prices to rise has created a difficult situation for students, who sometimes have to choose between

focusing on their studies or managing to work enough to be able to afford all the expenses that go into college.

Houston sophomore Mia Crawford said rent is dependent on proximity to Baylor. The closer you are to campus, the higher your rent is. For students, this can be a tough battle. The trade-off is often that proximity to campus negates the need for a costly parking pass.

"Rent in college towns is definitely crazy, especially the closer you get to campus because you're paying for proximity," Crawford said. "When I was deciding where to live, I definitely thought about the possibility of not being able to get a parking spot on campus and how far of a walk my commute



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photographer

THE UPTICK Rent prices have been on the rise in Waco for a decade.

would be. I ended up paying more to be closer to campus so that I could walk to my classes."

As Waco grows, so does its homelessness crisis

MACKENZIE GRIZZARD

Staff Writer

The hit television show "Fixer Upper" created a brand for the City of Waco as the hosts revitalized old, rundown houses. Fixer Uppers are now a hot commodity, but that housing is out of reach for Waco's impoverished.

Jimmy Dorrell is the co-founder and president of Mission Waco, a local organization dedicated to ending homelessness. He works with organizations such as The Salvation Army and the Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition.

Despite revenue brought in by the Magnolia empire, Waco is a poor city, Dorrell said. The Texas Demographic Center reports that statewide, the average poverty rate is 14%. In Waco, that rate is nearly 25%, according to World Population Review.

"Our poverty rate is almost double the average city," said Dorrell. "There always has been homelessness, but there was only the small Salvation Army shelter."

The local Salvation Army homeless shelter



Michael Aguilar | Photo Editor

WORSHIP ANYWHERE, ANYTIME Church Under the Bridge Pastor Jimmy Dorrell welcomes the attendees on Sept. 8.

is located just two streets down from the iconic Magnolia Silos, which are worth \$750 million, according to Yahoo Finance. When "Fixer Upper" bought old properties to revitalize them, gentrification began, Dorrell said.

Dorrell said a gentrified Waco contributes to the housing crisis facing the poor community.

"As the forces of economics take on, they can buy three houses here for nothing, then fix them up and make them rent houses," Dorrell said. "But those three houses are where some of my folks stayed, and now they can't afford a house."

Affordable housing is the biggest issue facing the homeless population right now, according to Dorrell. The average price for a single-unit residential home in Waco is \$295,998, according to a 2024 Norada Investments report. The report charts a steady increase over the last several years.

"Gentrification is a force," Dorrell said. "Things are going to be economically better than we've ever seen, but for the poor, there's still a gap in services."

One of these services is Mission Waco's Church Under the Bridge, held every Sunday underneath the I-35 and Jack Kultgen Expressway intersection. Beginning as a small Bible study for the homeless, Church Under the Bridge provides a number of faith-based services for its community.

"We just want to fix something," Dorrell said. "I can't fix all the problems, but I can be their friend."

Church Under the Bridge is celebrating its 32nd anniversary this month and will continue to be a place of belonging, Dorrell said.

"That's the part I don't think people

understand," Dorrell said. "It's not a church for the poor, it's a church with the poor."

With donations and grants from the City of Waco, Mission Waco will construct "Tiny Village." These small homes will house up to 35 homeless people during the first funding cycle and up to 240 when construction is finished.

Director of Baylor Student Ministries Will Bowden said Baylor has its own role in combatting homelessness in conjunction with Church Under the Bridge.

"A number of years back, BSM students felt an unquenchable desire to do something to bridge the gap between wealth and poverty in Waco," Bowden said. "Instead of starting something new, they simply joined what Mission Waco was already doing."

BSM and Mission Waco have worked closely with each other for a number of years.

"There is a larger gap between poverty and wealth in Waco than most people realize," Bowden said. "It's a hard gulp of reality when you stop and examine the bold lines between [the] lifestyle of Baylor students compared to the other side of I-35."

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Off-campus crime spawns safety concerns

AUDREY VALENZUELA
Staff Writer

According to the Waco Crime Map, some neighborhoods have seen a pattern of incidents such as burglaries, car thefts and violent crimes. These statistics have sparked conversations among students about what can be done to improve safety within these areas.

Clayton, Calif. junior Ben Williamson said he is concerned about the lack of public safety in neighborhoods surrounding Baylor. Williamson said even a small boost in security could potentially lessen crime in the areas that students inhabit.

"I think security cameras would be a lot more helpful," Williamson said. "I've noticed many of the streets near Baylor don't have working security cameras or any video footage available for those who fall victim to crimes."

Baylor PD, working alongside Waco PD, provides a weekly-updated crime log for both on and off-campus areas that is made available to the public through the Clery Act. The log records crimes ranging from petty theft to assault, stalking or burglary to ensure students, faculty, staff and families are aware of criminal activity in the area.

Some students have become increasingly worried about the safety of their vehicles and personal belongings. Manchaca senior Dylan McClintock said that 11th Street has been experiencing some car break-ins.

"Some guys have been breaking into cars along 11th Street without breaking the windows. They didn't steal anything of mine, but left everything open and thrown everywhere," McClintock said.

McClintock's experience isn't isolated. Vehicle break-ins and other suspicious activities have become a growing concern for students and residents.

Real estate investor James Miller, who owns properties around campus, said he has also noticed an unsettling increase in unauthorized individuals roaming the area. He has caught many individuals trespassing and soliciting, some even carrying firearms.

"I've caught several of them in the act while working on some of the properties. One jumped the fence and hit the pedestrian button to open the gate. The rest of them came in a stolen car. I called Baylor PD, and they caught them at another nearby complex," Miller said.

Gated housing options draw interest

from students who may be concerned about crime. Some apartment complexes along South University Parks Drive and Daughtrey Avenue offer gated communities alongside key access for residents. Students residing in gated communities reported feeling safer than being gate-free.

"Having a gate around the complex does make the environment feel safer, but I know not many housing options offer gated communities," Williamson said. "For those residing in such areas, I think adding a fence around the units could be beneficial to provide privacy."

Some of the complexes offer video surveillance for those in contact with crime. Baylor alumnus Angel Shock had damage done to her vehicle, but there was no trace of fingerprints.

"I lived in Ursa, and I wasn't sure if the security cameras caught anything or even worked," Shock said. "I went to the front office asking if they noticed anyone messing with my car, and they were able to pull up the footage right there and contact Waco PD."

Access to security footage can make a significant impact on resolving incidents quickly, according to Shock. In her case, the presence of working cameras helped facilitate



Photo Courtesy of Hannah Hammett

PANIC There are concerns about the lack of public safety around Baylor's campus. Vehicle break-ins are one of the main concerns.

communication with local law enforcement in catching the suspect.

If you or someone you know is a victim of a crime, however big or small, always report it. If you witness a crime that has not been recorded, use the CSA Incident Report through Baylor.

Apartment astrology: Your zodiac sign based on your housing

BELLA WHITMORE
Intern

If you've ever wondered how the stars might influence your ideal living space, you're not alone.

Whether you believe in it or not, astrology offers a fun way to explore what kind of housing might suit your cosmic personality. So, grab your astrological chart and a cup of tea—your next move could be written in the stars. Literally.

Community-based, practical and efficient people, dorm-dwellers are Gemini, Capricorn or Virgo. People who live on campus prioritize the proximity to campus and the practicality of being able to access campus resources quickly

and efficiently. They also tend to be more social and active in communities along with other people in the dorms because of their proximity.

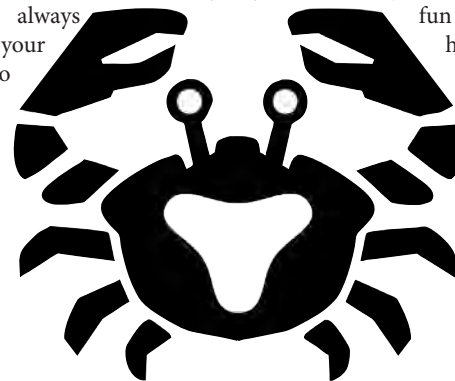
Off-campus apartment dwellers are Scorpio, Sagittarius and Leo. Those living off-campus tend to be more independent and like being separated from the crowd. They tend to find the people they like and stick with them for the long haul. Living off-campus also means you prefer having more personal space and privacy.

If you live in a house, you're a Taurus, Cancer or Aries. Those who choose to live in houses enjoy spending time with others and being social in the shared spaces. Houses are a great place to host gatherings, parties, etc. and people who live in them often gain energy from being around their closely-knit group of people. These people are prepared, friendly and sociable.

Loft living is for Aquarius, Libra and Pisces. Lofts are unique and prioritize having a lot of space with an open-concept layout. People in lofts may not tend to compartmentalize as much and have a pretty laid-back and go-with-the-flow outlook to match their distinctive housing layout.

With their emphasis on individuality and self-expression, lofts are a great match for these signs.

At the end of the day, your perfect housing choice is all about finding the space that reflects who you are—whether your zodiac aligns with this guide or not. So, while your birth chart won't be signing the lease to your next place, it's always fun to see what your horoscope has to say.



Dawson, Allen Halls enter demolition phase

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

The demolition phase has begun for the \$36.5 million of renovations for Dawson and Allen Residence Halls, the current home of Baylor's LEAD LLC.

Dawson and Allen Halls, which opened in 1954, will be closed all year, with an expected completion date of July 2026. Similar to the renovation of the Honors Residential College, the project will update the dorm rooms and common areas, as well as create a new connecting space between the two buildings for shared use.

Residents have been relocated to North Village. Since Baylor's renovation plan for 10 residence halls began in 2013, North Village has frequently served in this transitory capacity, said Tiffany Lowe, director of Campus Living and Learning.

The apartment-style rooms of University House and Texana House have been used as a "swing space," Lowe said via email. The Honors Residential College was temporarily housed in North Village last year.

Katy senior Isabella Zarate said that the relocation has been an adjustment for the LEAD community. As co-director of LEAD LLC's executive council, Zarate is responsible for helping to coordinate events put on by the various committees.

"We've had to adjust a little bit about how we do our events," Zarate said. "It's really interesting to be going to the literal opposite side of campus. We're not



Abby Roper | Photographer

OLD TO GOLD Construction vehicles make way outside Dawson Residence Hall.

near Memorial [Dining Hall] anymore, and that was a really big part of where we had our events before."

Zarate also said the apartment-style living in North Village, combined with the size of the area, has made planning and spreading awareness of events a little harder.

There have also been advantages to the new location. For example, with more space than ever, LEAD committees have been able to put on outdoor tailgates for Baylor football games.

"We have a really big yard now. We have a tailgate that we're doing this weekend, and so that's really cool. We've never gotten to utilize space like that," Zarate said.

While they've adjusted to life in North Village, Zarate said she and other residents are excited to get back to the other side of campus. Zarate said she was especially excited to see how the new common space will build community.

"When I heard about it, I was really excited. I think it will help a lot with creating a community between residents

and between both dorms," Zarate said.

For those who have lived in Dawson and Allen, the renovation is very welcome. Houston senior Natalie French gave an example of just how old the dorms really are.

"A girl and I lived down the hall from each other [in Dawson], and her Grandma went to Baylor, and she lived in Dawson. When she walked in, she goes, 'Oh my gosh, it looks the exact same!'"

Though French said she had a good experience living in Dawson her freshman year, she said that renovations are long overdue.

"I thought it was fine," French said. "But it's time for a renovation."

Following their completion, Kokernot Hall will undergo a \$7.5 million renovation with expected completion in 2026.

According to Lowe, Kokernot residents will not be relocated to North Village, but will be placed in first-year housing where available. Once the renovations of Dawson and Allen have been completed, North Village will return to standard first-year and upper-division housing.

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Pepper spray should be allowed in dorms

MAYA DULOCK
LTVN Reporter



A common worry for parents when sending their children to college is safety. Precautions like tracking apps, daily check-ins and useful protection devices are commonly sent by parents to their kids. Pepper spray is one of the most common elements of safety especially for girls, because of its versatility and cheap price; however, according to the Baylor Guide to Community Living, pepper spray is prohibited in all residence halls.

Imagine you and your friends are out line dancing on the weekend, and you are walking back to your dorm from the parking garage and notice someone following you. As you are approaching the residence hall you notice the person start to approach and you have no way to protect yourself.

This common situation can escalate quickly if a person has no way of protecting themselves, which will become a rising issue at Baylor if left unresolved.

According to the International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics, “a number of civilians use pepper sprays as a self-defense mechanism. Pepper spray can be found in many shapes and sizes. While the traditional design offers a canister with an aim and discharge trigger mechanism, some innovations include



As a freshman girl living on campus, I can strongly express how scary it is to live in an unfamiliar city and not be able to keep a self-defense item with me at all times.

features with picture taking, alarm sounding and call for police all while spraying.” So not only does pepper spray cause harm to the perpetrator, but can also aid in receiving professional help quickly, which in this case is a top priority.

This rule needs amending because of the rising statistics of

sexual violence occurring on college campuses. The National Library of Medicine states that “18 to 24-year-old females have the highest rate of sexual violence victimization compared to females of other ages and most incidents of female sexual violence victimization among college students occur at or near their home;” in this case residence halls.

If students can only protect themselves when walking to class during the day, but not when they arrive at their dorms after a night out, this poses a serious concern for the safety of Baylor students. The majority of domestic violence cases occur at night and close to the person’s home where they are most vulnerable.

In today’s world, it is easier than ever to be followed home, not to mention the increase in human trafficking reports within the last year. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime states “The most common form of human trafficking is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls.” These terrifying statistics demonstrate the need for self-defense objects like pepper spray on all parts of campus, especially residence halls.

As a freshman girl living on campus, I can strongly express how scary it is to live in an unfamiliar city and not be able to keep a self-defense item with me at all times. At times when I need it most, like walking to my dorm at night, it is strictly prohibited.

The Guide to Community Living was last updated in December of 2023, therefore it is time to make an amendment and allow pepper sprays in residential halls to ensure the safety of all students.

Make your room decor more personal, less basic

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer



Between longhorn photos and “live, laugh, love” welcome mats, room decor has become more generic over the years. While it’s convenient to take a trip to Target and grab the first five things you see in the Magnolia section, do your dream

Pinterest board justice and aim for something just a bit more original.

Here are some ideas for ways to set yourself apart in the world of decor and ensure that nobody confuses your space of residence for a “The Pioneer Woman” film set. Not only are these ideas better for the planet

than shopping for new items, but they also showcase your personal style and are college student budget-friendly.

DIY CRAFTS

While it might take more work, DIY decor never fails, no matter how “homemade” it looks. Spend your next Sunday finding a good YouTube craft guide and going all out with crafting to add some flair and accents to your dorm or apartment.

CONVERSATION PIECES

Please, for the love of all things holy, add a conversation piece to your living room. I thrifted a ceramic phrenology head that sits on my coffee table. It serves as a great conversation

starter and ultimately sparks people’s curiosity.

Your decor should not only reflect your personal style and taste but should also strive to be unique and interesting to look at. Ultimately, this is probably not going to be the stuff you find at Target, and that’s OK. Take a trip to the local Goodwill and see if you can scope out anything that might pique your curiosity.

VINTAGE/THRIFTED PIECES

Now I know the last thing you want to read is an article telling you to thrift more. We can all be honest here, thrifting is no original thought these days. However, we can acknowledge that it’s good for the environment and helps eliminate mass consumerism.

Thrifting vintage decor is a great way to be

environmentally friendly and add a unique flair to your place of residence. While it might take some effort, intentional browsing can lead you to find something that has a cool backstory and can double as a conversation piece. Waco thrift stores like ArTieR Resale, The Junky Monkey and The Salvation Army provide the perfect opportunity to shop locally.

Most importantly, let your style and identity shine through. Whether it’s a dorm, house or apartment, there’s always a wealth of eclectic and unique pieces waiting to be discovered. These pieces can spice up your space and make it feel truly special and unique to you.

Instead of settling for generic decor like motivational signs and sepia wall art, take a more intentional approach to your space. By choosing decor that inspires and brings peace, you can create a living space that reflects your distinctive style and identity.

Find your way with Feng Shui

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

We all need a little good fortune and flow in our lives. Learn how to Feng Shui your dorm and intentionally bring in good energy with organization and room placement.

Feng Shui is “an ancient Chinese art of arranging buildings, objects and space in an environment to achieve harmony and balance in a way that will bring peace and prosperity,” according to National Geographic.

This phrase translates to “the way of wind and water” and is derived from early Taoism which is “Chinese philosophy and religion emphasizing noninterference with the course of natural events.”

So, how exactly does one implement this philosophy of organization in a tiny dorm room? The basis is the intentionality of space and eliminating clutter.

Feng Shui states that it’s important for “chi” to flow freely in a dorm room, which begins with minimizing clutter. This includes little things like laundry, stacks of textbooks, trash and overflowing closets.

“Chi” is essentially the energy in a room and translates to “breath” in Chinese. It creates the energy within us and in our spaces.


This is especially important when living in a small space like a dorm, where it’s easy for things to become crowded. Quarterly cleaning can help create a clutter-free space.

An essential part of Feng

Shui is the direction of objects in your room and the ability for energy to flow freely through them. Never have your bed placed so that your feet are facing the door.

In Feng Shui, the direction a desk faces is very important and dictates the energy that flows around it. If you want to invite growth and new beginnings, place your desk at an angle. This position creates unique and inviting energy that can push you out of your comfort zone.

Your desk should also be as far away from the door as possible, as this promotes power. Keeping black onyx stones and live plants on your desk also promotes good luck and energy and ultimately helps the desk’s flow. So, follow feng shui to let your creativity flow this semester.

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LLC creates space to develop friendships for new students

PIPER RUTHERFORD
Staff Writer

Living & Learning Communities offer new students a chance to form immediate connections and friendships with like-minded peers.

The Baylor and Beyond LLC at North Russell houses students from all over the world. The program's director, Leia Duncan, is an international resident herself. Duncan grew up in London and Cyprus and said she now has the privilege of helping her residents both engage in Baylor and navigate the world.

"We lean into our name heavily, so the first thing we tell people is that we make sure our students are connected to resources and academic units on campus," Duncan said. "We want them to find a special and diverse home here, while also prioritizing the beyond piece of our program by connecting to the greater Waco community and diverse parts of the world that our students come from."

This year, Duncan reported that they have students from almost every single continent, including Asia, Africa and Europe, and international students make up 15% of the residence hall's population.

"One of the things my students talk about is how fortunate they are to meet each other and



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

DIVERSE The LLC program is one of Baylor's first-year communities. It sparks cultural conversations and relationships, as some students are from all over the world.

hear one another's stories," Duncan said. "You see students from all different backgrounds and walks of life becoming friends and learning from one another."

As for how this sharing of knowledge in the dorms translates to the classroom, Duncan said it is important to learn about the world from a global perspective, regardless of one's major.

"Every major cannot be done well in a vacuum, since every aspect of business is touched globally now," Duncan said. "Nothing is ever going to be just American-based, and as students get ready to enter the professional world, they need to know how to work well with people who are different than them, which they have done by learning how to live well together."

Other academic resources that Baylor and Beyond provides its students outside of course curriculum is the chance to travel to New York City over spring break, as well as participating in cultural immersion activities throughout the school year.

"We do 'Fun Fridays,' which can include providing snacks from different cultures, like an Asian snack day, celebrating Lunar New Year in January or observing Black History Month in February," Duncan said. "We also have cultural cooking nights each month, where someone in the community teaches us how to make their favorite dish from home, and we get to learn about how to cook it before eating it together."

Another way LLC fosters this sense of community for students is Earl Hall's Science and Health Program.

The program's director, Michelle Diaz,

said the goal of their LLC is to help students pursuing pre-health careers find others who are going through the difficult curriculum during undergraduate.

"I know that pre-health can be a competitive environment," Diaz said. "This is why I hope that by students building a community from the start, they see one another as peers and friends who share the same studies as them and can be a good support system."

Diaz, a former first-generation student, she said she knows what it is like for students to come into college not knowing who the right person is to ask their questions.

"I may not have a biology or chemistry background," Duncan said. "But I do have insight in student development from my own studies as well as real-life experience of being new to Baylor."

Duncan said that in the last week of September, their community celebrates the birthday of Dr. Hallie Earle, who was the first female graduate of Baylor's College of Medicine and first female practitioner in the Waco area.

"She really was a trailblazer who we hope can inspire our residents as they work to pursue a career in health," Duncan said. "Through her and each other, they can see how they can have a big impact on medicine, because of what started in our learning community."



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