



Blast Off

Artemis II Rounds The Moon

NASA's Artemis II mission safely returned to Earth on April 10, 2026, completing the first crewed journey around the moon in more than 50 years. The 10-day mission carried four astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft and traveled approximately 695,000 miles before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean, where recovery teams retrieved the crew.

Photo by NASA

The mission, led by NASA, marks the first time humans have traveled beyond low Earth orbit since Apollo 17. Artemis II did not land on the moon but instead performed a lunar flyby, allowing astronauts to test systems needed for future deep space missions.

The crew included commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, mission specialist Christina Koch, and mission specialist Jeremy Hansen. The mission marked several milestones, including the first Black astronaut, first woman, and first Canadian to

travel to the moon.

Artemis II launched aboard the Space Launch System rocket from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. After reaching orbit, the spacecraft executed a burn that sent it toward the moon. The crew traveled more than 250,000 miles from Earth.

Testing navigation, communication, and life support systems aboard the Orion spacecraft was a primary focus of the mission. The spacecraft then reentered Earth's atmosphere at high speed, withstanding extreme heat before

deploying parachutes and landing in the ocean. NASA officials said the mission successfully demonstrated that its systems can carry astronauts safely into deep space and back.

Artemis II is part of NASA's Artemis program, which aims to return humans to the lunar surface and eventually send astronauts to Mars. The next mission, Artemis III, is expected to attempt a moon landing this decade.

BY NATE BAKER

Class of 2026 Graduation

May 21 is Deer Park High School's Class of 2026

graduation. There will be no tickets on sale at the entrance or online; free entry will be first come, first served. The ceremony will be held at Clyde Abshire Stadium at 7:30

p.m. This year's senior class size is 1,006. So make sure you get there early.

BY ALAN SANCHEZ

Primary Election Runoff

Trump-endorsed Alex Mealer and State Rep. Briscoe Cain will face off in a runoff May 26 in a Republican primary for Texas' newly redrawn 9th Congressional District—a seat that has been Democratic for decades.

The new TX-09 was redrawn as part of a campaign by the state legislature and Gov. Greg Abbott to gain five additional Republican seats in Congress.

TX-09 encompasses Liberty County and Southeast Harris County. TX-09 voted for Trump by 20 points in 2024.

The Republican primary entered a runoff because none of the nine candidates running for the Republican nomination for TX-09 reached 50% of the vote.

Mealer led the March 3 primary with 36% of the vote compared to Cain's 31%.

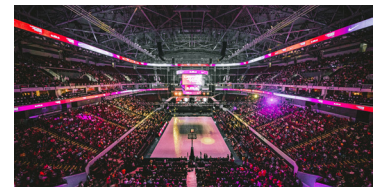
Alex Mealer, who ran for Harris County Judge in 2022, focused her campaign on being a leader. "I know how to tackle extremely complex problems and I have the track record to prove it. Whether defusing bombs in Afghanistan or fighting to take back Harris County as a political outsider, I lead when others run away," according to her campaign website.

Her opponent, State Rep. Briscoe Cain, has been one of the most conservative members of the Texas Legislature. Cain authored the Texas Heartbeat Act, the state's six-week abortion ban. He focused his campaign on border security: "In Congress, I will support President Trump by voting to fund ICE fully, expand border security and deportation operations, and finish building the wall," according to his campaign website.

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Highlight Basketball

The Playoffs are here.



NBA Playoffs

The Houston Rockets are headed to the playoffs, and Deer Park is ready.

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World Cup

With the World Cup coming up on June 11, 2026, we start to think about who will win the whole tournament.

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Pandas No Longer Endangered

Giant pandas are no longer an endangered species because of humanity collectively working together, and are now in the vulnerable stage.

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Exclusive Interview Dr. Tiffany Regan

Twenty-something first graders stare up at the tall woman standing at the front of their classroom. She's not their teacher. They have no idea who she is. "I work for you," she tells them.

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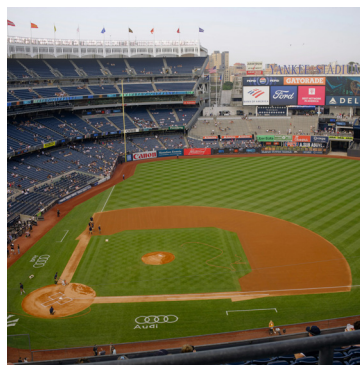
NFL DRAFT

With the NFL Draft taking place in late April, the headlines are starting to brew about who the second overall pick will be.

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Closer to Home America's New Immigration Policy

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The Best in the Game: Ranking Baseball's Elite

Moving into the top five, the first spot belongs to José Ramírez, mainly because he is a healthy heavy hitter that stays consistent. Then it is Cal Raleigh in the four spot; Raleigh is an amazing hitter and catcher, plus with his historic season he was the first catcher to ever win the home run derby this past year.

Breaking into the top three, taking the number three spot is a man who needs no introduction: Aaron Judge, the six-foot-seven-inch slugger, dominates because he pairs unmatched raw power with a disciplined eye, making him a massive target who rarely swings at bad pitches.

Just missing the top spot, second place is Bobby Witt

Jr., a generational talent who pairs elite league-leading speed with Gold Glove defense and home-run power. Coming off another 30-30 season, he has proven himself a premier threat on both sides of the ball.

Finally, at number one, Shohei Ohtani is a once-in-a-century superstar who dominates as both an elite, power-hitting leadoff batter and a frontline starting pitcher, a combination of skills that has never been seen in the game. Whether he is on the mound or in the batter's box, we are all witnesses to a level of greatness that may never be replicated again.

BY THOMAS MILLIORN

Feature Sports Stories

Lady Deer Find Their Footing in District Opener

The Rough Road Leads Somewhere

The road to the regular season had more than a few bumps for the Lady Deer, but the team finally found its footing in their district opener. After a winless pre-season spent facing elite opponents, the Lady Deer secured a thrilling 2-1 victory over Clear Falls to start the new stretch of the season on a high note.

The preseason record might have discouraged some, but for the Lady Deer, it was a necessary step. Facing off against top-tier teams provided a steep climb that players believe was essential for their development.

"It was good competition we had," said Marianna Vasquez. "We had to go against the top teams, which was a way to show how much we could improve. I think we've gotten

better from the beginning."

That improvement was on full display as the team transitioned to district play. The environment was tense as Lady Deer battled to protect a narrow one-goal lead. They held off their opponents for the final two minutes to seal the win.

The victory sparked immediate celebration, and Mackenzie Garner could not hide her excitement about the result.

"When we won, I wanted to dance," Garner said as she laughed. "I really wanted to griddy across the field when we won."

While the first district win provides a much-needed boost, the team understands the challenges that remain. With a long schedule still ahead, the players are bracing for a physical and mental test.

The outlook for the rest of the year will require determination. Ana Aguilar noted that while the path forward looks difficult, the team's fate is in their own hands.

"I think the season will continue to go rough," Aguilar said, "but it's all up to how we decide to play throughout this season."

BY PAISLEY WILLIAMS



The Panda's Second Chance



Giant pandas are no longer an endangered species because of humanity collectively working together, and are now in the vulnerable stage.

The World Wide Fund for Nature is one of many groups that help pandas, with chapters in the U.S. and Canada. The world's leading independent conservation organization was founded in 1961, and their mission is to stop the environmental damage of the planet.

The population grew from 1,100 to around 1,864 by 2014. As stated before, the help of humanity collectively working together is the reason why giant pandas have regained their population,



Leveling Up: DeShaun Daniel's Journey to Varsity

The young star from Deer Park High School, DeShaun Daniel, has had a journey to varsity basketball that was not always easy. Daniel has always put in hard work that goes unnoticed by many students. This article shows everyone how a sophomore on varsity deals with stress and struggle, not only mentally but physically as well.

Daniel went from being a freshman on JV to a sophomore on varsity. There are times when the speed of varsity ball is noticeable. Daniel says these moments

BY JULIUS SIDNEY

It's About the Journey

Journey Peterson made the Deer Park Lady Deer softball team as a varsity starter her freshman year. She had played softball since she was four years old and is now fifteen, still advancing and improving every day.

Once tryouts and the season came around, the coaches didn't know what team they were going to put her on, so she had to go to media day to take photos for both Junior Varsity and Varsity.

This left Peterson frustrated and annoyed. Tryouts had already finished and she still didn't know what team she was on. She didn't want to play for both teams, and

are "mostly during the big games" and that they remind him, "I just need to put more work in to match their speed." Daniel also says that his upperclassman teammate Andy Warrick helped him realize he must be better going into next year.

Looking ahead, Daniel says that by the time he reaches his senior year, he plans to be a great leader for his team. He leaves a message to the players who come after him: "Just work, because the work is going to pay off. There are days when you don't want to show up, but it will be worth it."

it bothered her that everyone else already knew their placement while she was left waiting.

"The coaches finally asked me if I wanted to be on Maroon and get more playing time or be on Varsity and get less guaranteed playing time. I choose Varsity because I felt like it would be better for my experience," Peterson said.

Looking ahead, Peterson remains optimistic about the season. "This season is going to be great and I hope our team makes the playoffs again," she said.

BY LEX BATTLE



Clutch City Is Back: Houston's Playoff Push

The Rockets are back, the West is loaded, and playoff basketball starts now.

You can literally feel the energy on campus right now. Everyone is hyped, getting ready for the playoffs and for the Rockets to make a deep playoff run.

The NBA regular season is almost over, and honestly, things are getting crazy. If you aren't paying attention yet, you should be. Between the Play-In Tournament (April 14-17) and the start of the Playoffs on April 18th, there is a lot on the line for every team.

If you're confused about how the playoffs work, here's the deal. The top six teams in each conference are safe and get a spot automatically. But if a team is ranked seventh through tenth, they have to survive the Play-In Tournament first.

Over in the West, it is a total gauntlet this year. Teams like

the Thunder, Rockets, and Spurs are looking dangerous. Right now the Rockets are playing amazing, sitting at 3rd in the West, which is honestly kind of wild considering where the team was a couple of years ago.

The Thunder, Spurs, Rockets, and Nuggets are basically guaranteed a playoff spot. They look the most complete and most consistent teams in the league right now.

The Play-In is where it gets sketchy. It is going to be a total mess. Will the Warriors and the Lakers clutch up and sneak into a playoff spot, or will they lose and get sent home?

Let's get loud for the playoffs. It is time to bring that Clutch City energy back to Houston.

BY ROBERT CARRILLO



Who Goes Second?

Three prospects, one pick, and a franchise's future on the line.

With the NFL Draft taking place in late April, the headlines are starting to brew about who the second overall pick will be. The main contenders for the pick are Rubeen Bain, an edge rusher from Miami, Arvell Reese, a linebacker from Ohio State, and David Bailey, an edge rusher from Texas Tech.

These are mainly defensive players with a high floor and a high ceiling. These players competed in big games in college, so they have valuable big game experience.

In a mock draft done by NFL draft expert Daniel Jeremiah, the linebacker from Ohio State, Arvell Reese, is projected to go to the New York Jets with the second overall pick in the draft.

The Jets are looking for him to come in and be a game wrecker for them and bring their defense back to glory. With the NFL Draft coming up soon, teams are looking for their defensive anchor to change their team's overall trajectory.

BY ZURIEL MARTIN

Three Texas Teams, One Playoff Push

The Mavericks are fighting for positions in the playoffs.

The Mavericks are embracing a new era centered around their highly talented rookie, Cooper Flagg, who was the first overall pick of the 2025 NBA draft. The team has fully committed to building around Flagg, a decision that gained momentum after the controversial trade of Luka Dončić to the Los Angeles Lakers in February 2025. Flagg has shown significant promise in his rookie season, averaging 20.3 points, 6.6 rebounds, and 4.5 assists per game.

Team management is hopeful

that Flagg can lead the team, as the Mavericks seek players who complement his skills to improve their playoff chances. The team's strategy appears to be focused on long-term development with Flagg as the cornerstone.

Under the guidance of Head Coach Ime Udoka, the Rockets are looking to build on that success. Udoka has emphasized developing young talent while also seeking experienced players to add immedi-

ate impact.

Although there have been rumors about trading for a point guard, Udoka has indicated that the team is not actively pursuing such a move at the trade deadline, focusing instead on internal development and potential buyout market opportunities. The team has also extended Udoka on a new long-term contract, reflecting their confidence in his leadership.

The Spurs are in a clear rebuilding phase with Victor Wembanyama as the centerpiece of their future. The team is focused on developing young talent through the

World Cup Comes to USA

The 2026 World Cup: Everything You Need to Know

The USA is hosting the World Cup this year. But with it coming up on June 11, 2026, we start to think about who will win the whole tournament.

The top five favorite teams to win the World Cup this year are, starting at number five, Argentina, followed by England at four, Brazil at three, France at two, and the number one favored team to win is Spain.

Now that you have seen the teams, let us talk about the players who are most antici-

pated to see in the World Cup.

Europe's Stars

From Spain, we have Lamine Yamal, Pedri, and Rodri. From France comes Kylian Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé. From England there is Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane. From Portugal comes Cristiano Ronaldo and Vitinha. From Belgium we have Kevin De Bruyne and Thibaut Courtois.

South America's Stars

From Brazil comes Vinicius Junior and Raphinha. From Argentina we have Lionel Messi and Julián Álvarez.

The New Format

This World Cup is going to be the biggest ever. Instead of the usual 32 teams, there will be 48 teams playing, which

means a record 104 matches throughout the tournament. By comparison, the 2022 World Cup in Qatar featured 32 teams and 64 matches. With more teams and more games, there is a lot expected from this World Cup.

The World Cup happens every four years. The last tournament ran from November 20 to December 18, 2022, with Argentina crowned as the winners. Now, with more teams, more matches, and some of the biggest stars in the world on the pitch, the 2026 World Cup is shaping up to be one for the history books.

BY ANGEL VILCHIS



Highlight

Remembering The Weather Man

He came to substitute, but left a permanent mark. Deer Park students remember the man they knew as The Weather Man.



For many students, a substitute teacher is a temporary face at the front of the room. But for the students here, Mr. Bridges was never just a sub.

He was a pillar of the community, a polite and welcoming presence, and a man whose daily forecasts became a legendary part of the school day. Following his recent passing, the hallways feel a little quieter, and the student body has been left devastated by the loss of their educator.

A Legacy of Kindness

To those who didn't know him, Mr. Bridges might have seemed like any other staff member, but his impact was profound. He prioritized people over paperwork, creating an environment where students felt seen and happy. Senior Dash Thyssen described him as a "very chill sub whose job was mainly more so to worry about making people happy rather than getting work done."

Sophomore Julius Sidney also said he remembers him simply as a "polite and welcoming person" who made every student feel at home in his classroom.

The Weather Man's Forecast

Perhaps what made Mr. Bridges a true standout was his unique passion for the weather. He earned the nickname "The Weather Man" because he would often spend the first 20 minutes of class giving detailed updates on how the weather was going to change throughout the day.

"He would tell you how the weather would be like he was his own superhero of the weather," one student noted.

Evan Alvarez admitted that while he initially expected a typical teacher, he was quickly won over. "Turns out he was a cool sub that tells you the weather and was pretty accurate, like the news."

Thank You, Mr. Bridges

The bond Mr. Bridges shared with his students was so strong that it even spilled over into social media, with tributes to his passing on TikTok and Instagram.

When asked what they would say to him if they had one last chance, the message from the students was clear: gratitude. "I would tell him thank you for teaching how long you did and thank you for being a chill, cool guy," said Dash Thyssen.

For others, like Julius Sidney and Evan Alvarez, the final message would be asking one last time: "What's the weather like today?"

Mr. Bridges may no longer be at the front of the classroom, but his memory remains permanent in the hearts of every student he taught. Even without his daily forecast, the impact he left behind is as clear as a cloudless day.

BY ESTEBAN MARTINEZ

Primary Election Runoff

continued from page 01



The runoff election between Mealer and Cain will be on May 26.

that more than 30,000 ballots were fraudulent. She dropped the contest in late 2023. "Unfortunately, Harris County deployed the full weight of government to prevent me from having access to information and accused me of election denial," Mealer told The Texan.

Cain, a devout Trump Republican who backed Trump's claim of election fraud in 2020, flew to Philadelphia in November 2020 to "link up with a team of attorneys from across the country to fight for a fair and honest election," in one of several since-deleted tweets about election fraud, according to the Texas Tribune.

The winner of the May 26 runoff will face Democrat Leticia Gutierrez in the November general election.

BY NATE BAKER

In 2022, Mealer, along with other Republicans, filed election contests. Mealer cited

EXAMS

Exam Schedule for May 2026

UPCOMING DATES

First Period	Thurs	May 21	8:55-10:35
Second Period	Wed	May 20	8:55-10:35
Third Period	Tues	May 19	8:55-10:35
Fourth Period	Tues	May 19	10:40-12:20
Fifth Period	Wed	May 20	10:40-12:20
Sixth Period	Mon	May 18	2:15-3:55
Seventh Period	Thurs	May 21	10:40-12:20

Exclusive Interview



The Regan Way

From substitute teacher to superintendent, Tiffany Regan leads Deer Park ISD with deep roots and personal stakes.

Twenty-something first graders stare up at the tall woman standing at the front of their classroom. She's not their teacher. They have no idea who she is. "I work for you," she tells them. They look at each other. "What?"

Tiffany Regan spends one day a month substituting in elementary classrooms across the district. To the students, she's just a stranger with a strange job title. To the district, she's the superintendent — and has been since 2025.

She's also a Deer Park kid who never really left. Regan grew up here, went to school here, and has spent 30 years as a district employee. Her son is a third-generation Deer Park graduate. Her daughter is a current freshman.

"I'm highly invested," Regan

said. "I feel not only a sense of responsibility, but also such a huge sense of pride."

Regan's career rarely took her far from home. After a year bouncing between four subjects at Fairmont Junior High, she landed at Deer Park Junior High and stayed 21 years: four teaching, four as assistant principal, fourteen as principal.

When she was named superintendent, she inherited a district she already knew by heart.

That familiarity carries weight. This year, Regan cut \$4 million from the budget. With 87% of district spending tied to salaries, cuts meant positions. And in a place where she knows almost everyone, those conversations don't get easier with experience.

"I hope that the relationships I have built have revealed to these people my true character," Regan said. "But it also hurts my heart if I feel like I'm letting someone down."

Looking ahead, Regan's focus is on the high school. The two campuses account for 42% of the district's state accountability score, and she plans to overhaul core curriculum. She's also working to expand the district's teacher apprenticeship program, a pipeline she helped build to recruit and retain qualified staff.

For Regan, none of it is hypothetical. She's planning to stay at least 10 more years. Long enough for today's first graders, the ones who had no idea who she was, to graduate knowing she meant it when she said it. "I work for you."

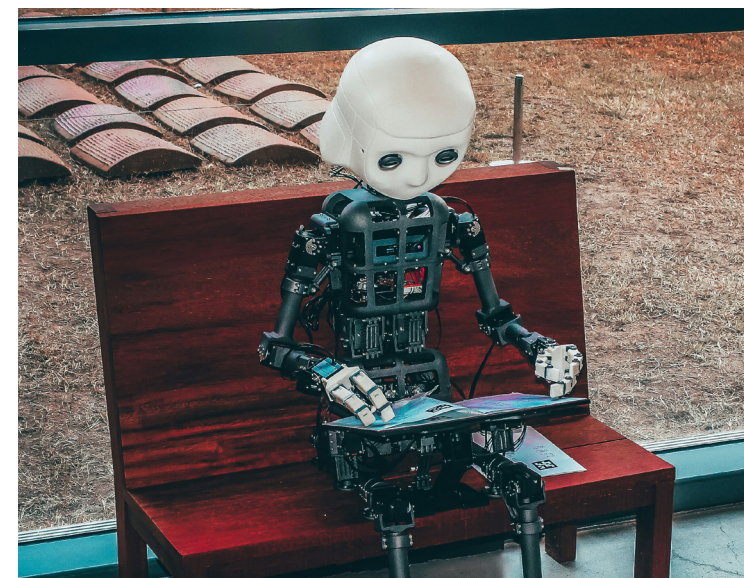
Cognitive Debt Is AI Making us Dumber?

AI can sharpen our thinking — or quietly replace it. The difference lies in how we use it.

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, and generating content. Tools like large language models (LLMs) can produce results in seconds that would have originally taken hours of research to find yourself.

Despite its advantages, AI becomes a problem when it replaces learning instead of supporting it. LLMs such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Claude are raising concerns about declining cognitive skills.

This ties into a concept called cognitive atrophy, the idea



that skills weaken when they are no longer regularly practiced. This is a growing concern. Attention spans are being shortened from hours, to minutes, even seconds. In a recent study from National Geographic, the average attention span has dropped from 2.5 minutes down to just 47 seconds.

There is also evidence that easy access to information affects memory. In the study "Google Effects on Memory: Cognitive Consequences of Having Information at Our Fingertips," researchers found that people are less likely to remember information when they know it can be quickly looked up.

BY KEYLA RODRIGUEZ

Not everyone agrees that AI is harmful to intelligence, however. Scholars like Clive Thompson, author of Smarter Than You Think, argue that technology doesn't make us less intelligent — it shifts what intelligence looks like. Where being smart once meant memorizing facts, performing mental math, and recalling information quickly, it now increasingly means knowing how to ask the right questions, evaluate sources critically, and apply what AI provides rather than simply accepting it.

AI music is bad for the music industry because it rips the creativity from the person who makes the music, and just makes songs for mass distribution, profit, and attention.

While the majority of AI music is bad, there is only one good thing that can come from it: it helps with mixing and production, while not completely making a whole song using AI.

The Next Superstar is AI

Ever since generated AI has improved over the years and become more advanced, the topic of AI taking over jobs and entertainment has become widespread. This has become most prominent in the music industry, with many AI artists becoming popular, and songs becoming popular on social media apps like TikTok and Instagram.

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While the majority of AI music is bad, there is only one good thing that can come from it: it helps with mixing and production, while not completely making a whole song using AI.

Rap Is Changing But It's Not Dead Yet

Rap isn't dying, but it is going through a lot of changes right now. After being on top in the late 2010s, the genre is starting to slow down a bit. It still makes up a big part of the U.S. music market, but its dominance isn't as strong as it used to be.

Oversaturation is a major cause. There are too many artists trying to make it in the industry, which makes it harder for new talent to stand out. At the same time, there aren't as many major artists leading the genre like before. Some of the artists who helped shape rap have passed away or are no longer active, and that has left a gap in the industry.

Another issue is that rap has started to lose some of its originality. A lot of songs sound similar, and it can feel like artists are following trends instead of creating

new ones. Because of this, listeners sometimes get bored and move on to other styles of music.

This lack of originality also connects to how quickly artists rise and fall. Now, new artists can blow up quickly, but they don't always stay popular for long. They might have one or two hit songs, then people move on just as fast. Back then, artists would stay relevant for years and build strong fan bases. Today, it feels more temporary.

Overall, rap isn't ending, but it does need a shift. The genre needs more originality and artists who can truly stand out and bring something new. If that happens, rap can stay strong and continue to grow in the future.

BY ELIJAH LOPEZ

Down, But Not Out

With the chokehold genres like pop and rap have on the industry nowadays through social media and younger audiences, some find it hard to believe rock and metal used to be at the top of the charts for decades with almost no competition. But with artists like Taylor Swift and Bad Bunny rising and no new bands reaching near the popularity of their predecessors like Metallica or Korn, are the rock and metal genres doomed to crash and burn? And can you still find these influences running around in our school?

From as early as the 70s, rock and metal have been an everlasting influence to millions all over the world.

From bands like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath in the 70s, KISS and Metallica in the 80s, Nirvana and Korn in the 90s, and Linkin Park and Avenged Sevenfold in the early 2000s, which is the last decade we saw a band reach household name status. As of 2026, a majority of music listeners prefer pop, appealing to its lighter sound. This is why rock continues to stick around in the charts, for its more mainstream, lighter sides, compared to metal, which has more of a love it or hate it consensus.

The question of whether metal is dying or already dead has been debated among fans for many years. Surprisingly, the popular app TikTok has

UPCOMING ALBUMS

 CODY JOHNSON BANKS OF THE TRINITY	 STEVE LACY OH YEAH?
 DRAKE ICEMAN	 OLIVIA RODRIGO YOU SEEM PRETTY SAD FOR A GIRL SO IN LOVE
 LANA DEL REY STOVE	 THE STROKES REALITY AWAITS
 SUBLIME TILL THE SUN EXPLODES	 FOO FIGHTERS YOUR FAVORITE TOY

brought this genre to a whole new fan base, as its popularity has been rising over the past few years. This growth comes not from newer up and coming bands, but from the heavy hitters who have been around for decades, like Slipknot and System of a Down, and even some more unique sounding bands that are becoming more mainstream now than ever, like Crowbar. Rock and metal definitely are not as popular as they used to be, but they are still putting up a strong fight and even on a slow rise. The eventual wait now is for that one band to appear and carry the genres back to the top spot again.

As mentioned, rock and metal are at their lowest populari-

BY GAVIN RUSSELL

BY CRISTIANO VILLARREAL

NEWSPAPER STAFF

- EVAN ALVAREZ
- NATE BAKER
- LEX BATTLE
- AUBREY BEARD
- ROBERT CARRILLO
- JACOB CASTILLO
- YULI DE LA CRUZ
- DELAILA GOMEZ
- GAVIN GUEVARA
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- CRISTIANO VILLARREAL
- PAISLEY WILLIAMS

The Great Outdoors: Your Health Depends On It



Forget the gym — the best fitness center for some people is just outside the back door. Nature can offer boundless opportunities for building strong bodies and minds.

The health benefits of spending time outdoors and breathing fresh air help clean the lungs and strengthen the immune system. In contrast, indoor air quality is often poorer, which is why hosting outdoor social gatherings, even in cooler weather by using outdoor heaters or covers, can be beneficial.

“Spending time outside reduces the likelihood of catching and spreading illnesses compared to enclosed areas

ademic learning, and enhances social skills, leading to greater happiness. Physically, children who are active outdoors are less likely to be overweight, a positive effect that tends to persist throughout their lives,” according to Miracle Recreation.

A solution for these problems is to take 30 minutes out of your day and take a walk in the park or walk your pet. Any physical activity can affect you positively.

like houses. Second, being outdoors allows for the absorption of vitamin D from the sun, which offers many health advantages, like building muscles, boosting the immune system, and lowering the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease,” according to Miracle Recreation.

Scientists from Psychology Today have proven that nature lifts your mood by reducing levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. It also promotes graceful aging with better sleep, fewer aches, and improved mobility.

“Mentally, imaginative outdoor play accelerates brain development, improves ac-

Video games do not promote connection to nature, freedom for creative play, or free social interaction. These qualities are crucial for your well-being and character. Refusing to do so could have dire effects, such as obesity, immobility, and laziness.

Some students who were interviewed share similar views, like Gavin Russell, who believes that “spending time indoors is better for your character and health.” Jacob Castillo and Cristiano Villarreal expressed similar opinions.

By GAVIN GUEVARA



Phones Down:

Texas Schools Take a Stand

The Texas phone ban law has surprised many people. There are those who agree with it and those who disagree. The law has spread across Texas, stating that students cannot use phones during school hours.

The first opinion comes from a student with mixed feelings. Her reasoning touches on school emergencies, forgetting something at home, and being able to concentrate better with music in class.

“I think it’s dumb, but at the same time, I think that it’s reasonable. What if you’re in the restroom and something happens, how are you supposed to tell anybody? But I get during class, but in the hallway or at lunch, like come on. I concentrate more with music,” said Giselle Castanuela, a sophomore.

Another student with mixed feelings finds herself torn, because her phone is a distraction at school and not having it helps her focus, although she disagrees with the ban in case of a school emergency.

“I don’t like the phone ban too much. I think it just makes people want to use their phone more. I should be able to use my phone during lunch. But I understand why it has to exist,” said Jhoney

Pacheco, a sophomore.

An English teacher also shared her perspective, saying she agrees with the ban because there are fewer distractions in class and students focus better without their phones.

“So I actually like it. I feel like it has taken a huge distraction away from students, and honestly, I haven’t had too many issues with kids refusing to put their phones away. I do think that most students do see the benefit of not having that distraction in front of their face,” said Molly Hamilton, an English teacher.

An assistant principal also agrees, noting that there have been more connections made between students and that communication has improved.

“Our relationships were better when we knew how to talk to one another. Nowadays, I think that the phones don’t allow for that very well. In fact, I think it stops communication because when you’re out of school, you’re not going to be able to talk to others,” said Kim Edwards, assistant principal.

In conclusion, the phone ban law in Texas has sparked a variety of opinions, with students and staff alike offering mixed perspectives.

By YULI DE LA CRUZ

Closer to Home

Make America Great Again is the campaign slogan used by President Donald Trump to describe his plan to restore economic recovery and hope in the United States. In other words, his plan is to focus on protecting American manufacturing, prioritizing U.S. interests, and emphasizing traditional values. However, his most important plan is border security and immigration.

When someone supports MAGA, it simply means they support the plans Trump has in store for the U.S., sometimes including immigration.

Most reviews of this administration’s immigration policy are negative, however some people do support MAGA and believe there is good in it.

Students at South Campus were asked about their own opinions, and three out of four had negative reviews. Many of them believe the president isn’t leading the country in the right direction.

“I don’t understand why people would be for it,” an anonymous student said.

Events like immigration enforcement are circumstances you wouldn’t think would happen to you or anyone around you. However, immigration has affected many

students, with close friends or family members being detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Many students have family experiences with deportation or have seen U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in action. For example, some students remarked about seeing people post videos of ICE going through their neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

The entire idea of MAGA is to Make America Great Again. However, immigration has been occurring for years, and although this country has benefited from it, some argue that enforcement actions are doing more harm than good.

Immigration enforcement, if anything, has made non-citizens fear for their safety.

Immigrants come to America looking for a new life but can end up being forced to return to their original country. This is a very traumatic process, not just for the immigrants themselves, but also for their families and the people around them.

America is supposed to be a country of freedom and natural rights, yet there is something very unnatural about the way our country is headed.

By ALBA PEÑA

Class Schedule

Next Year we will be on a New Schedule

BEGINNING FALL 2026	
1ST PERIOD	7:25 - 8:15
2ND PERIOD	8:20 - 9:10
3RD PERIOD	9:15 - 10:05
DEER TIME	10:10 - 10:35
4TH PERIOD	10:40 - 11:30
5TH PERIOD	
A LUNCH	11:30 - 12:00
B LUNCH	12:00 - 12:30
C LUNCH	12:30 - 1:00
6TH PERIOD	1:05 - 1:55
7TH PERIOD	2:00 - 2:50



Famous Smiley Killer

What if the famous Houston bayou killer is actually known as “Smiley?” Unless you have been living under a rock, you have likely heard about the alleged Houston bayou serial killer.

Every couple of weeks, two or even three bodies keep turning up. Authorities have yet to find a single lead, blaming the deaths on the homeless population in the area without any real proof that the

victims were tampered with.

As of March 2026, the city of Houston has estimated that 33 to 35 bodies are found in the bayou every year. Houston police have stated that more than 200 bodies have

been found in the Houston bayou since 2017, with 33 found in 2025 alone, none of which have been officially connected to a serial killer.

Authorities have ruled out the possibility of a serial killer,

but people cannot help being afraid, not knowing what is truly going on.

Deaths happen, but having that many in such a short period of time is very concerning. Police continue to blame the deaths on homeless individuals and people struggling with addiction.

Finding 11 bodies in the span of 11 days is not normal.

Is this all a coincidence, or is there something deeper going on that the public is not being told?

By DELAILA GOMEZ

Overconsumption in Beauty on Social Media

As a 16-year-old girl, I love shopping. As I’m getting older, I’ve begun to realize that not only I, but many people in today’s world, struggle with overconsumption.

Overconsumption is the excessive use of resources and goods beyond what is necessary. The main root of this has to do with the influence of social media. The ideology of overconsumption is also tied to “fast fashion,” financial strain, high levels of waste, and societal pressures.

This brings up a big question. How do you deal with overconsumption? The answer seems easy, but there are many aspects that need to be considered.

The answer is simple: start budgeting or stop buying so much. But what do you do with the stuff you already have?

With clothes it’s easy, just donate them. But what about cosmetics? Yes, you can technically get rid of them or throw them away, but you’re also throwing money away. The average woman spends around \$1,000 to \$3,000 on makeup and cosmetics a year.

I thought to myself, there’s no way that number is real. I then added up my whole makeup collection, which came out to be \$1,231, and that total was without brushes and all the extras needed to do a full face of makeup.

So throwing out cosmetics that still have product in them feels like throwing money away. Because of this, people found a way to deal with their overconsumption without throwing their products away. They do something called “Project Pan.”

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Scrolling Past the Point of No Return

What began as a simple device for communication over long distances and entertainment has grown into a mechanism shaping our everyday lives, whether you want to avoid it or not. In its earliest form, the goal for social media was simple: making the whole world more accessible.

“Let’s say I have friends that I don’t see for years at a time, you know, and yet I connect with them every day by social media, see what their family is doing, how they’re doing,” Assistant Principal Kim Edwards said.

The world moves fast. Are we outgrowing social media? What used to be a quick and effortless way to check in on a friend has turned into something much bigger and time

consuming. Social media has begun to take over our free time and become a big distraction to us.

“Social media? It has been around for... what, 16 or so years now, even more? It has grown. I think it has outgrown what it was meant to be for. It can be a big distraction and can lead to a lot of different things,” history teacher Joshua Dumatrait said.

As social media grows, so do the ugly parts. We are not just wasting time, we are also taking in fake ideals, comparing other people’s lives to our own. This constant comparison starts to change how people see themselves and their own reality.

“You spend so much time looking at what people are posting, and it’s not even accurate information. It is fabricated. And then we try to align our lives with what we think we should be looking like, and sounding like, and dressing like, and it creates a lot of internal conflict,” English teacher Molly Hamilton said.

In the end, whether the blessings or the curses of social media take over depends on your own boundaries and remembering that life happens outside of the screen.

By JHONEY PACHECO



Record Smashed: 303 plates at CiCi’s

On Apr. 7, more than 30 Deer Park students marched into CiCi’s Pizza and broke their own unofficial previous record of 103 plates within two hours.

“We had heard that another group of students had attempted to break our record, and failed miserably,” assistant organizer Nate Baker said. “So naturally, we had to triple our existing record.”

The record was quickly surpassed within the first hour,

with the group breaking it in under 40 minutes.

“When I walked into that CiCi’s and I saw the amounts of people that had gathered for our cause, I knew then not only would we double our previous record but that we’d triple it,” organizer Gavin Russell said.

And ceremoniously they did just that, within under two hours the group had cemented a new record of 303 plates in one sitting.

“I felt so fat afterwards, but so proud,” Cristiano Villarreal said.

It is important to note that the group only had to stop because the CiCi’s had run out of plates. With that said the group looks to return in May with extra plates so that they can push to break their record once more.

By JACOB CASTILLO

Desensitization of Brutality

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Although “empathy” is a trait that should be shared amongst everyone, nowadays, it seems as if this is something people lack. Has it always been this way or is this only as of late?

Children imitate what they see and are products of their environment. More than 60 percent of TV shows contain violence. When young, impressionable adolescents are given unrestricted access to technology, such as television, they will eventually become susceptible to imitating cruelty.

The Internet is a world where you can see whatever you can think of. If you want to see cute, cuddly cats, with one search, there it is. If you want to see makeup GRWM’S, here are thousands of videos matching that description.

But these topics come up because it is asked for, however, with social media such as TikTok, you cannot control the content you see. If parental controls are not set up, children will see videos that are not appropriate for them.

The 21st century is the era of the Smartphone and majority of Americans (98%), own a phone. The smartphone is an efficient way to capture photos and videos of anything people want to make a memory of. This is what makes this century so vastly different from previous generations because everything can be documented.

Even the acts of ICE agents harming innocent civilians. Online, there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of videos of brutality against people of color, and yet it seems as if people are turning a blind eye and go on about their days.

By B.S. SANCHEZ

Project Pan

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“Project Pan” was started by Lura Farrant. She was a new college grad with no source of income when she realized her issue: she had three to five thousand dollars of makeup sitting in front of her, but she had no money to eat or pay the bills.

The idea is simple. Let’s say you have 10 lipsticks, you can’t buy a new lipstick until all 10 are done. The solution is that you’re still getting your money’s worth out of the product, and during the time you’re using those products, you’re not consuming more.

A woman named Tara Easley participated in the project, which would take her two years and a lot of self-discipline before she would finish. But when she did, she walked away a better person. She realized that yes, makeup brought her joy, but in all honesty she was only buying it because of the influence social media had on her.

She also said, “Instead of shopping for new things, I wanted to reign in my curiosity about the better and new, and learn to love what I had.” My mom, Karinthia Mittal, also said, “We live in a world where all we do is buy, buy, buy, and we’re not even enjoying what we’re buying.”

What Mittal said was a very



valid point, because I bet if you were to ask any girl what exactly she has in her makeup collection, she couldn’t tell you.

But how does this all start?

It all begins with the influence of media. I know for a fact that without social media I wouldn’t purchase half of the things I have, whether it’s cosmetics, clothing, or even a water bottle.

So how do we control the media? We don’t. Although waste is such a big deal in today’s world, some people won’t acknowledge it because for some, that’s how they make a living.

So to a certain point, we have to make the decision that if you can’t control how easily influenced you are, it could help to delete social media.

I know that for myself, I didn’t realize I had an issue with overconsumption until I began writing this article. So I decided I would take part in Project Pan.

I began using makeup products that had just been sitting in my vanity, used maybe a handful of times before I would buy something new and never look at the old product again. It taught me that I was buying because I saw something once or twice on TikTok and just had to have it.

I learned that to stop getting influenced to buy everything that influencers were posting, I started critical shopping. What I mean by this is that before buying something, I would ask myself: do I need it, how often would I use it, and do I already have something similar? Shopping like this helped me stop multiple impulse purchases.

So next time you want to go shopping, ask yourself: do you want to live in a world full of waste, or do you simply want to stop buying?

By SAHARA SAENZ

Rise and Shine

Deer Park to Start New Schedule

The district is moving forward with an effort to push high school start times an hour earlier.

The district believes that by setting times earlier, attendance and instruction time will increase. They also believe this will benefit students with extracurriculars who usually must stay late already, giving them more time during the day to do homework and get the desired amount of sleep.

But while the district may have good intentions with this initiative, do the students feel that this is actually benefiting them?

“I like the prospect of getting out earlier so I can go to work and also be able to pick up my little brother and sister when I come home,” Junior Jaiden Pappas said.

The consensus from what students have shared is that the earlier start times will be more helpful and encouraging for students seeking employment or those who are already employed.

“A lot more money for people with jobs, a lot more time for people to get a job,” Junior Gavin Russell said.

Students involved in extracurriculars are also thrilled about the benefits of the changing schedule.

“I think that the new schedule will definitely help me in being able to pursue a bunch of clubs and activities while still having ample time afterward to do homework and get sleep,” Junior Aidan Flores said.

Overall, most students are very content with the changing schedule. From more time for homework and extracurriculars to more opportunities for employment, it looks like students will have a lot more free time during the day and more room for clubs and opportunities in their future.

By JACOB CASTILLO

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Mix It Up Maxi: An Early Start For Great Habits

Hey! Got a little sibling, cousin, in your life you want to do something thoughtful for? Looking for a gift that goes beyond a toy they’ll forget about in a week and serves a good purpose? Then look no further.

Mix It Up Maxi is a one of a kind illustrated storybook-cookbook created right here by Deer Park students, designed specifically for children ages 6–9. It follows the journey of Chef Maxi the Monkey as he sets out to make his beloved town of Peelington a healthier, happier place, and the recipes he cooks along the way are wo-

ven right into the story and can be found at the end of the book, making healthy eating feel like part of the adventure rather than a chore.

But it doesn’t stop there. Towards the back of the book you’ll find the cookbook section, giving kids and families the chance to bond and actually get in the kitchen and bring those same recipes to life. Every single recipe is designed using SNAP-eligible ingredients, meaning healthy eating stays within reach for every family regardless of budget.

Whether you’re buying for a

younger sibling, a niece or nephew, or even an educator looking for something fresh for their classroom, Mix It Up Maxi delivers something with real heart behind it.

And the best part? It was made right here, by students just like you.

But! copies are limited so DM @overpass.ja on Instagram today and get your copy for a very affordable \$17.99!

By DPHS JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

