

the TALON

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John Paul Stevens High School 600 North Ellison Drive San Antonio, Texas 78251

HOLIDAYS 2020

*Celebrating
during COVID-19*

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ISSUE

Cover Photo by Christopher Meeks

Our Promise

Our duty on The Talon is to present the truth on the topics that we print, with all sides equally represented.

We hope that when we make mistakes, our readers will inform us, so that we may make the corrections accordingly.

The editorials that do not have a byline represent the opinion of the staff as a whole. Any editorial or commentary that presents the author's byline is the opinion of the writer.

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“Be positive. Your mind is more powerful than you think. What is down in the well comes up in the bucket. Fill yourself with positive things.”

– Tony Dungy, NFL

Time to hit reset button, focus on the good in life

*By Grace Pfoutz
Staff Writer*

In these unprecedented times and as the holiday approaches, we all have the choice of focusing on what we do have, rather than on what we do not have.

Since we have been at home more than ever, we have had a chance to learn new ways to be involved with our community, spend more time with our families, and have much more time to ourselves.

Most students and teachers have had the opportunity to communicate more often, and find new ways to keep in touch due to COVID-19. Teachers and students have had to rely on each other's support and help during distance learning. Teachers have made many modifications to their own personal lives, such as setting up a tutoring Zoom call on the weekends, to help those that cannot make it to class during the school week.

Many people have been able to spend quarantine with their families. This has allowed people to develop better relationships with their families, and focus on what matters to them in life. Although there may be times when families do not get along, many have realized that there is more to life than arguing or holding a grudge against someone you are supposed to love and cherish. Many have learned the importance of family, and why

family should never be taken for granted.

The community togetherness has never been stronger. Many are reaching out, helping one another. Many are making masks and donating items for people in need. Many are supplying meals, and neighborhood kitchens have been set up. Many are providing support for those vulnerable to the disease. Throughout this pandemic we have been reminded of the value of one another. Reaching out to help lighten the load feeds the spirit.

With all the free time people have at home, they have made more time for themselves. People have redecorated, picked up new projects, and work on having time to themselves like reading a book or just taking a walk. Some have been taking advantage of social isolation to do some long-awaited home projects. People like to take advantage of this time and do something fun while still at home.

Resetting your mentality once in a while to focus on all the good life has to offer is important, and blessings should not be taken for granted. Since we are at home most days now, it is nice to spend time with yourself and your family. Pick up a book, or play a board game. As the holiday approaches, hit the reset button. Enjoy each moment for what it is, and focus on all that is good in your world.

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Mayer retires, Lopez named academic dean

By Christopher Meeks
Editor-In-Chief

English teacher Andres Lopez will officially start his tenure as the new academic dean on Jan. 9, after current academic dean David Mayer recently announced his retirement.

Lopez was chosen from a field of candidates by a hiring committee organized by Principal Ryan Purtell.

“I am both honored and excited to be chosen as the new academic dean,” Lopez said. “I’ve been fortunate to work alongside some incredible administrators in my time at Northside, most recently Mr. Purtell, Ms. Reyes and Mr. Mayer. I’ve seen first hand how impactful

educational leaders can be. The important and impactful work inspires me to strive to continue to grow and learn, so that I can be the dean that our students and teachers need and deserve.”

Lopez said he will work to fulfill his goals as the new academic dean to ensure success for both students and teachers.

“One goal is to provide assistance to teachers as they work tirelessly to reach and teach students during this challenging time,” Lopez said. “Another goal is to determine how to develop systems to help struggling students remain on track to earn credits and graduate on time.”

English teacher Emily Eskridge has been chosen to succeed Lopez as English



Andres Lopez

Language Arts Department coordinator.

Mayer, who has served as academic dean for three and a half years, said he will use his early retirement to enjoy life to the fullest.

“Twelve years ago my daughter was diagnosed with a rare bone cancer,” Mayer said. “My family spent that year living on the



David Mayer

oncology floor at Christus Santa Rosa Children's Hospital,” Mayer said. “We were faced with the reality that life is short. While we are still on this earth, we are going to make the most of it and see what we can see and do and what we can do with the days we have left. The decision to retire early was made way back then.”



Emily Eskridge

Mayer plans to enjoy his retirement by traveling with his wife.

“My wife and I sold our house and most of what we own, so that we can live in our motor home and travel throughout North America,” Mayer said. “First stop... Disney World.”

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Area holiday activities: COVID-19 safe

By Zoey Madrid
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

The holiday season offers many new and safe events that can be enjoyed throughout the holiday season.

IllumiNight

IllumiNight: A Magical Drive-Thru Experience is open through Jan. 3 at the AT&T Center.

The experience features a mile-long Christmas lights display with more than 4 million lights.

IllumiNight costs \$35.50 per vehicle. Santa Express Passes, which include a general admission ticket, a unique one-of-a-kind physically distanced photo with Santa and a skip the line pass are available at \$63 per car. All tickets must be pre-purchased at <https://www.illumi-night.com/ticketinginfo>, as this is a non-cash handling event. Gates open at 6 p.m. daily.

Graphic Design and Digital Media teacher Alison Spangler will be enjoying the new holiday experience this

Christmas.

"I am going to go to the drive through lights at the AT&T with my BFF (art teacher Maria Rancangan) and her two boys," Spangler said.

San Antonio local colleges also are hosting free Christmas light drive through experiences.

UIW Light the Way

The University of the Incarnate Word has presented the "Light the Way" drive for 34 years, making it an iconic drive through light display in San Antonio.

The "Light the Way" drive allows visitors to drive through the campus in the evenings to see the lights. The lights will be on display until Jan. 6, and the drive through is free.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Six Flags Fiesta Texas is hosting "Holiday In The Park," with the venue transformed into a winter wonderland through Jan. 3.

A one-day pass is \$29.99 per person when purchased online. Season pass holders pay no additional cost.

Guests may walk through the



LIGHT THE WAY. The University of the Incarnate Word offers a free drive through for the public to enjoy holiday lights. "Light the Way" is in its 34th year at the university. Photo by Christopher Meeks

theme park, but there will also be the holiday in the park drive through experience, which takes place on 10 select weekday evenings through Dec. 17.

Junior Zoe Jakl works at Six Flags.

"My family and I were able to see the lights, and spend time together," Jakl said. "I feel pretty good about going there because everyone had a mask, and we put on sanitizer after each ride."

SeaWorld

SeaWorld is hosting its annual "Christmas Celebration," which features Christmas shows, holiday lights, festive foods, and many more events.

The park offers one of the

largest Christmas light displays in Texas.

A one-day pass for SeaWorld's "Christmas celebration" is \$39.99 when purchased online.

Neighborhood Displays

Viewing Neighborhood displays is free and entertaining for families.

Hallmark is also offering free TV Christmas movies appropriate for family viewing.

Holiday events are changing, but the San Antonio community offers multiple venues for light displays and entertainment that are safe during this time of pandemic.

Take care of YOU!

Happy Holidays, Falcons!

- 1- Acknowledge your pain/feelings. If you have lost someone or you can't spend the holidays with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sad and frustrated. Take time to express your feelings by crying or venting you can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holidays.
- 2- Reach out. If you are feeling alone, seek company, or online support groups, or social media sites for online events.
- 3- Be realistic. Holidays don't have to be perfect. Families change and grow. Traditions also change. Choose what traditions are most important and be open to creating new ones.
- 4- Set aside differences. Accept family and friends how they are. Set aside grievances for more appropriate times.
- 5- Stick to a budget. Decide how much money is affordable to spend during the holidays.
- 6- Plan ahead. Set aside days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and family and all the other holiday activities.
- 7- Learn to say no. Saying "no" can be healthier than saying yes at times because it can lead to resentment.
- 8- Don't lose healthy habits. Holidays can be tempting to be unhealthy physically, and that can lead to some unhealthy habits.
- 9- Take a breather. Take some time to slow down. Enjoy the holidays during the season.
- 10- Seek professional help, if needed. If you are experiencing feelings of sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, sleeplessness while doing daily activities and, chores then don't be afraid to seek professional help.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>

Created by Cory Gibson

How to stay Safe Traveling

- Maintain a distance of 6 feet (2 meters) between you and others as much as possible.
- Limit contact with frequently touched surfaces, such as handrails, elevator buttons and kiosks.
- Be sure to pack cloth face masks, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes in an easily accessible spot so that you can use them during the trip as necessary.
- Prepare food and water to take on the trip. Consider including nonperishable items to tide you over in case access to restaurants and grocery stores is limited.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Created by Zoey Madrid

Christmas Word Search

P H V T L J K Y D O K O L Y L S J T C H
A O S O L Q E X N W O D U R V N Q U S H
T B G C I T D N B B I T S E Z O L Y V W
B Y Q F H H R M S A R B L B Z W H M T I
T U S D H E G C A V J I R L A F O R J N
C L N E P G C Y N S I W K O L R U I T
X E Z C H R I S T M A S E V E A N D N E
N L A E O I W Q A I D N I K E K A O G R
U O O M T N K U S S W N J D G E M L L T
T G I B C C Z J W Y E O A S G T E P E I
C S Y E H H S C O C T R C N N Q N H B M
R T Q R O U A J R U C T K O O S T M E E
A O P Z C C N B K H H F W G C S A L G
C C T S O C T F S G I P R M Z R L J L O
K K K C L N A D H Q S M O O A H O A T S D
E I U C A O C G O S N L S N A O E Q G E
R N N C T E L O P H E E T T E G T I F L
D G T Y E L A P N C Y Q A X A E C U Z F
X B L W R U U F D G I N G E R B R E A D
Q K W C T K S U M I S T L E T O E G V K

Santa's Workshop	Christmas Eve	Jingle Bells	Santa Claus
Gingerbread	Wintertime	Jack Frost	Hot Chocolate
Snowflake	The Grinch	Ornaments	Mistletoe
Stocking	December 25	Nutcracker	Snowman
Chimney	Rudolph	Scrooge	Eggnog
North Pole	Yule Log	Noel	Elf



Holiday traditions change with COVID-19

By Zoey Madrid
Assistant Editor-In-Chief

Christmas traditions are meant to be special, and spent making memories with family and friends. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have had to cancel traditional events or find safe ways to celebrate their annual traditions.

Choir and guitar teacher Michael Murphy said he will miss his family and friends coming over for the holidays and has reflected on life while not being able to see them.

"Friends and family not being able to come over is really hard," Murphy said. "It has made us appreciate our friends and family so much more. When you don't get to see them, you realize how much

you miss them."

Many people have turned to digital communication to make their traditions work. In order to be socially distanced, people have started to use Zoom, call or text message, in order to stay in contact with their family and friends for the holidays.

Sophomore Lianna Hernandez is going to be face timing her sister and two-year-old nephew this Christmas, because they live in Jackson, Virginia, and want to prevent getting COVID-19.

"I feel terrible that I can't see them this Christmas, because I haven't seen them in such a long time, and can't travel very often," Hernandez said. "As long as they are safe and healthy is what is most important to me."

Although many traditions have been changed and look different,

there are still many traditions that many are still able to do at home. Putting up the Christmas tree, singing carols, baking cookies for Santa Claus, and many more at-home traditions are still safe to do.

English teacher Cynthia Gongora said she will still be celebrating some annual traditions. She will also be spending Christmas with her mother and two grandchildren.

"Holiday traditions that I am celebrating are decorating the house inside and out with all the trimmings and the tree with my mother," Gongora said. "Also, driving my two granddaughters and my mother to the (Christmas light) drive-through displays."

Traveling is a tradition that millions of people do to see family and friends, but this year has put a halt to most traveling.

The Centers For Disease

Control And Prevention (CDC) have urged people to not travel this holiday season, to avoid a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Sophomore Annette Vergara travels to Dallas every year for Christmas to spend time with her grandparents. This year is no different and her family plans to drive to Dallas to celebrate the holiday.

"COVID-19 hasn't affected any of my family members, so we plan to all see each other in Dallas," Vergara said. "We usually have a Christmas Eve party, in which we cook and listen to music, but this year we will have a smaller gathering with immediate family, and we all will be wearing a mask and staying safe."

Created by Zoey Madrid

Seniors in last high school seasons

By Michael Martinez
Sports Editor

For senior athletes, their journey of playing high school sports soon will come to an end.

This year will be the last time they step on a court or field at Stevens. For some, the moments are bittersweet, knowing that their last year to play sports is upon them, but for others, their stories are just beginning.

Quintero, Varsity Soccer

Andres Quintero is a key player on the Stevens Varsity

Soccer Team.

"I have been playing soccer for the past 12 years," Quintero said. "It means a lot to me because it is something I have played my entire life."

Quintero has high expectations for his senior year.

"My feelings and expectations are high for this year," Quintero said. "This season I want to try and break every record I have set for myself throughout my four years at Stevens, and my goals are very possible to achieve this year. Our team is also pre-

dicted to make the playoffs and have a serious shot at district."

Quintero plans to go all out this season. Although this is Quintero's last year playing soccer at Stevens, his journey in soccer will not come to an end after high school.

"My plans after high school are accessing the right scholarship for me," Quintero said. "I have over 10 scholarships to play soccer at the moment, and I am waiting for a little more to come in after this season. I want to make sure I

have all options before I commit and see what college I go and play for. My overall goal is to see if I can go semi-pro or professional after college."

Elizondo, Varsity BB

Alyssa Elizondo is an all around athlete who is in season right now with basketball, but also plays softball for Stevens.

Raised in a competitive family, she has been playing sports through her entire life.

- continued on page 7

Gonzalez selected for H-E-B All-Star game

By Michael Martinez
Sports Editor

Senior Joshua Gonzalez has been selected to participate in this year's San Antonio Sports All-Star Football Game presented by H-E-B at the Alamodome on Jan. 30, playing for Team Black.

Standing at six foot three and 295 pounds, Gonzalez is an absolute monster on the defensive side of the ball. He is a part of the 2019-2020 Defensive Line 1st Team All District 29-6A and has played on the Falcons Varsity Football Team for all four years of high school, three of those years as a starter.

Gonzalez has definitely proven himself as one of the best football players in the district and has also recently committed to the University of Incarnate Word, where he will continue to pursue his career in football.

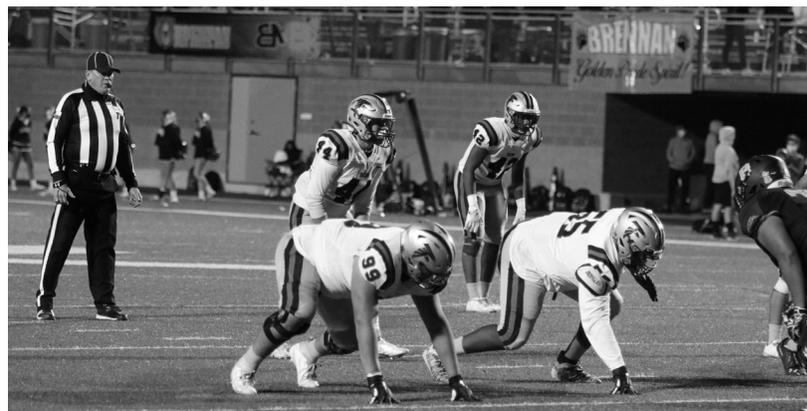
The starting defensive lineman talked about how he felt

when he found out he was chosen to participate in this year's San Antonio All Star Football Game.

"It is a huge honor, and I am grateful to have been chosen among some great talent on our squad," Gonzalez said. "I feel extremely blessed, as this is something I have strived for and has always been a goal of mine. This opportunity provides me so much more motivation for when I play at the next level of my football career at UIW."

For Gonzalez, all the hard work that he has put in over the years as a Falcon is paying off as he is now going to participate in this year's All-Star Game.

"I feel a huge sense of accomplishment," the starting defensive tackle said. "I love playing the game, and it's an honor to be out there representing Stevens High School. I am thankful for the support and the nomination of my coaches."



ALL-STAR BOUND. Starting defensive lineman, Joshua Gonzalez, #99, will play in the San Antonio Sports All-Star Football Game at the Alamodome on Jan. 30. Photo by Sami Gonzales

Check out Gonzalez representing Stevens High School on Team Black at this year's San Antonio Sports All-Star Football Game on Jan. 30 at 2

p.m. The game will be televised on CW35 and broadcast on ESPN 1250 in San Antonio.

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Falcons defeat Laredo 22-12 in 1st round

By Michael Martinez
Sports Editor

Putting the first game of the playoffs in the books, the Falcons defeated the Laredo United Longhorns 22-12 on Dec. 11 at the United Independent School District Stadium in Laredo.

After a great team effort and impressive showings for players like senior Jeremiah Mestre-Elliot and senior Ian Riles, the Falcons advanced to the second round of the playoffs, where they will face the Harlingen Cardinals at 3 p.m. Dec. 19 at Buccaneer Stadium in Corpus Christi.

In order for the Falcons to qualify for playoff contention, they had to defeat O'Connor on Dec. 3, which they did in a 28-6 victory, and Marshall had to defeat Warren on Dec. 5. Marshall pulled off a big win against Warren 58-28, which meant that the Falcons qualified for playoff contention for the second year in a row.

In his second year as

Continued from page 6

Senior athletes optimistic for final seasons

"I started playing sports when I was three years old," Elizondo said. "I started out playing basketball, softball and soccer. Sports means everything to me because I come from a competitive and athletic family. Sports is a big part of my life, and I love how it brings my family together."

Elizondo, like many other athletes, has mixed feelings on this being her last year playing sports at Stevens.

"I'm both excited and sad about this season because it will be my last year of high school sports," she said. "COVID-19 has also made this school year very difficult, but being

Falcon head coach, Anthony Boykin is headed to playoffs, a very impressive statistic for Boykin as he goes into the playoffs again this season with a motivated and hungry Falcon roster ready to leave their mark in the playoffs.

Boykin said he was both surprised and pleased when he learned that Marshall defeated Warren, and the Falcons would be headed to the playoffs.

"It was good to see all the hard work pay off that the guys and coaches all put in," Boykin said. "We beat O'Connor, which we had to do Thursday, and then had to wait until Saturday to cheer for Marshall. It's also easy to cheer for anyone against 'Purple' is what we call them. It was a super surprise, Purple lost and Marshall won."

Before the playoff game, Boykin had expectations for his team.

"We get in the playoffs, and it's like the NCAA Basketball tournament, it's to survive and advance," Boykin said.

able to play makes me happy that COVID-19 did not completely ruin senior year."

Elizondo said playing sports at Stevens have given her great memories, but, after this season, Elizondo plans to stop playing sports.

"I am excited for this senior season, and I want to make it one to remember," Elizondo said. "However, I do not plan on playing sports after high school. My plan is to focus on my academics, so I can go into the medical field."

Elizondo recently learned she is the recipient of an Alamo Bowl Scholarship.



SWEET VICTORY. The Falcons defeated the Laredo United Longhorns 22-12 in the first round of playoffs on Dec. 11 in Laredo. The second round will be Dec. 19 at 3 p.m. at Buccaneer Stadium in Corpus Christi. *Photo Courtesy of Diana Cohen*

"It's the most fun part of the season, and it's the payoff for all the work that has been put in. In the playoffs, everyone that gets in is good,

so it's constantly going to be coming up with a game plan, executing it, winning a ball game, and trying to make it to the next week."

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HOME COMING 2020

Homecoming Royalty

Queen Aliana Briones
King Edward Saucedo

King Nominees

Masen Aleman
Jeremiah Mestre-Elliot

Queen Nominees

Sasha Black
Faith Leal
Madyson Montalbo
Jenisah Tejada

Juniors

Princess Angelina Rivera
Prince Nathan Alfaro

Sophomores

Duchess Marina Jasso
Duke Evan Ayala

Freshmen

Lady Isabelle Chavez
Lord Sebastian Sanchez

Faculty

Empress Lisa Cylkowski
Emperor Pete Vega



1. Crowning Glory. Homecoming royalty crowned during halftime were Queen Aliana Briones and King Edward Saucedo. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

2. Masked Leader. Leading the band is assistant drum major junior Tamara Jackson. *Photo by Annmarie Overton*

3. The Sound. Playing the baritone in the stands is freshman Christopher Almaraz. *Photo by Annmarie Overton*

4. Mums the Word. Showing off their Homecoming mums are seniors Kaitlyn Ybarra, Alexis Sanchez, Julianna Saiz, Alexa Jasso and Savannah Greenwood. *Photo by Annmarie Overton*

5. O-Line. Protecting their quarterback are sophomore Dominic Cardenas (#34) and seniors Alex Garcia (#74) and Colton Brook (#70), while Kevin "KK" Brashears prepares to pass. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

6. Sky Spirit. Sky Dancer junior Joslynn Rosas performs during the Homecoming game. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

7. Touchdown! After a pass interception against the Panthers, junior Leonard Adams (#16) goes the distance to score the touchdown. In pursuit is O'Connor senior Dylan Brought. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

8. Pep It Up. Pep Squad Lieutenant Jazmine Torrez cheers from the stands. *Photo by Annmarie Overton*

