

## Upcoming EVENTS

### STONY POINT PTSA

**REFLECTIONS:** Oct. 26, 2015 is the submission deadline. See the library for details.

## Testing DATES

**SAT:** On Nov. 7, students can take the SAT at SPHS. See the library for more details

**ACT:** Dec. 12, the ACT is being administered at SPHS. See the library for more details

## College VISITS

### AMERICAN UNIVERSITY:

Oct. 19, from 12:15 to 2:35 p.m. in the library

### TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY:

Oct. 26, from 12:15 to 2:35 p.m. in the library

## Prowler Selected as NSPA Pacemaker Finalist

The National Scholastic Press Association announced this week that the Stony Point High School Newspaper has been selected as a finalist for the 2015 Newspaper Pacemaker Award. Since 1927, the Pacemaker has been recognized as one of the highest national honors a student publication can achieve for excellence in student journalism. The award is often referred to as the Pulitzer Prize of scholastic journalism.

"We've spent hours behind the scenes making sure that students' stories are told in a matter that goes deeper than just telling stories," senior Delilah Rivera, a member of the newspaper leadership team, said. "Giving a voice to the school is the main focus every time a new paper is being edited, rewritten, and sent to press."



by Victoria Collins-Becker

## Academically Minded...

### PSAT PREPARATION

On Oct. 14 the school administered the PSAT exam. Prior to the real testing date, students who participated in the summer's PSAT Summer Scholars Program were invited to a final practice test session on Oct. 3. "Students were invited to wait for scores after the test," teacher Victoria Collins-Becker said. "The brilliant cup sculpture resulted."

# Truancy Law Changes in Texas

Direct statements from parent email dated Oct. 2, 2015  
RRISD

This past summer House Bill 2398 of the 84th legislative session was enacted, changing the truancy laws in the State of Texas. Effective Sept. 1, 2015, it became a school district's responsibility to address student truant conduct, including creating truancy prevention measures and referring a student to truancy court.

Truant conduct is defined in

section 65.003 of the Texas Family Code to be failure to attend school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

In Round Rock ISD the only excused absences are personal illness, death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent or a member of the immediate household), or school-related absence.

If a student misses 10 or more

days in a six month period during the same school year, without a valid excuse, the student is truant. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to take the necessary measures to make certain that the student is attending school regularly or the student will be referred to a truancy court.

Round Rock ISD attendance procedures are addressed in the secondary student-parent handbooks on pages 40-48.

# The American Way

## Exchange Student Explores Differences Between Experiences in His Home Country, the United States

by staff reporter  
Carlo Moran

He sits quietly in front of the English class, absorbing everything: the diction, the mannerisms. Junior Pablo Serrano studies his classmates and tries to learn what they do differently. The emphasis on certain words, the pauses at the end of sentences.

"The people here are more open and closer," Serrano said. "Americans are very warm and friendly compared to those in Europe."

Beyond personal interactions, Serrano also lets his taste buds explore the differences between here and his home country.

"I love the food here," Serrano said. "I love the Mexican food."

Serrano fell in love with tacos, that spicy food the U.S. adopted from Mexican cuisine. It is much more colorful and exotic than the

food from his home.

Serrano, a foreign exchange student from Spain, was born and raised in the capital of Madrid.

To have the opportunity to become an exchange student, Serrano used a company that matched him up with a host family in a



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host country. Since school started, Serrano has been immersed in the American education system by attending school at Stony Point.

"I was excited to get to go to America and live like in the films," Serrano said. "The school

buses are so yellow like in the movies it's very weird."

Like everything else, school is different here compared to the school he attended in Madrid. He says the amount of sports and classes offered is his favorite part of the school.

"In Spain the schools are harder, you have

to study more and write out the exams instead of getting test questions. We also only don't switch classes. We stay in one class all day and the teachers are the ones that move. I like Stony Point better."

## ACADEMICS IN PERSPECTIVE: PERSONAL TAKE

# Tuition Costs

## Opportunities to Help Low Income Students with College Financing Need to be Explored



by  
staff reporter  
Nayma Villalpando

Parents and students are struggling every day to pay for their college tuitions or to pay off their student debt, and with college tuitions rising every year, the struggle will only become much more of a stressor in the future.

The total borrowing amount for all students has gone up to \$106 billion dollars. "Even if the increases are slightly smaller than they have been in the past," said Ben Miller, a senior policy analyst at the New America Foundation in Washington, "if family income isn't growing, any tuition rise is going to be painful." 57 colleges are charging more than \$60,000 or more for tuition, fees, room and board for 2014-2015, according to a chronicle of higher education listing of tuition data released by the college board.

As of November of 2014, college tuition and fees for private non profit colleges has increased by 3.7 percent on average. Not only that but a decade ago, tuition and fees rose 10.4 percent for students attending a public four-year college.

Many of the top high school graduates who come from low-income families attend community colleges or four-year institutions closer to home, because of these scary statistics, because they are unaware of the amount of financial aid available or because they just haven't had someone help them

consider a top college because of their home circumstances.

According to a recent study taken by two long time education researchers, Caroline Hoxby of Stanford and Christopher Avery of Harvard, "Only 34 percent of high-achieving high school seniors in the bottom fourth of income distribution attended any one of the country's 238 most selective colleges. Among top students in the highest income quartile, that figure was 78 percent."

As a result, low-income students have fewer academic resources and lower graduation rates, which results in less opportunities in their future.

Trying to lower the tuition rates at top colleges is nearly impossible, and it's definitely not fair that a majority of students that pay the tuition end up dropping out and not graduating from college. Therefore, colleges with a higher rate of students that come from a low-income should get more national funding to increase the chances of their students graduating and finding a good paying job that they will enjoy and continue to be a part of as they grow older.

In order to better future generations we need to improve our current conditions for lower rate colleges and institutions. We cannot allow ourselves and all of our future children and their children go to waste by sitting around and allowing our schools to diminish the chances of students graduating.

Outside school, Serrano explores what it is like to live an American life. The American people, of all origins, blend and provide the world unimaginable contributions, Serrano says.

"Everything was so different when I came here," Serrano said.

For Serrano, things that Americans find as simple facts of life, like the vastness of the cities and the mobility of people feels different.

"Everything is so big here," Serrano said. "In America I hate that you have to use the car for everything. In Spain you just walk or use a bicycle to go to places."

What does Serrano think so far?

"I think the American life is different. It's so busy," Serrano said. "Everything is so different, but you can get used to it fast."