

# Against *the* GRAIN

Shop students explore materials, careers in real-world environment

story by m. holcomb

Outcasted from the mainstream student culture, misfits find a home located at the bottom of the stairwell. Shop classes offered practical experience, whether math, English, or science was involved. Students escaped from hypothetical word problems and embraced measurements and calculations. They departed from essay writing and communicated on a project. They came from biology and engaged in raising chickens. Shop was a reprieve from the

droning hum of the day.

"Shop's a place to unleash the beast of your captive creativity," **Kristen Moyers** [12] said. "But still get done what needs to be gotten done."

Agriculture teacher **Roger Jones** announced the hiring of a second teacher for the 2015-2016 school year in order to offer more classes, opening even more opportunities.

"They will give you a chance to test the waters of a career before you actually spend money on it at a university," **Collin Goode** [10] said. "The biggest thing that this program offers is diversity and opportunity."

Since the district hired Jones in 2013, kids of all backgrounds have concentrated their efforts onto a class that provides real-world experience, but natural limitations exist.

"Obviously, I can't get you straight into a career," Jones said. "We are limited, and I can't teach you everything, but I can let you know how careers in that area work. If you succeed here in this shop, you will have the discipline necessary for the real world."

Ag mechanics provided students with real world experience as they created projects of wood or metal, materials which are covered in the first and second semesters, respectively.

"Everything has to be cut at the exact angle and length," Goode said. "Wood is a bit more forgiving than metal. You can always warp or sand wood. With metal, once it's cut, it's cut."

Not only did shop teach hands-on skills, but also skills in commitment and dedication. Jones was the biggest example for putting in extra time, despite a newborn baby at home.

"He comes at six a.m. and stays until 12 at night," **Mike Maglott** [12]. "Jones puts in way more than we do. He's like another father figure to most of us down here. He's such a good person to look up to. I'd actually like to get a degree in welding, then become an Ag Mech teacher. I don't want to be apart from this. I'd be lost without it."



Hard at work with the sander, **Kristen Moyers** [12] puts the finishing touches on her octagonal picnic table. Shop kids often sold their pieces at shows and competitions throughout the year or kept them for personal use as Moyers did. photo by m. holcomb

shop **063**  
design & copy by m. holcomb

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Job # 1974 School White Oak ISD

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# Where the **WILD** things are

Staffers join journalism despite extra workload, build friendships

story by m. malone

They gave themselves extra homework. They subjected themselves to diminished social lives. Not only did they cancel Wednesday night or weekend plans, but they would scare students off with pencil and paper. This was a part of the marriage vow they made to journalism. They cared for it, in sickness and in health. But most importantly, they promised to see it to the end. Till publishing do us part. The deal required dedication and sacrifice, but it promised reward and friendship. That's why they chose journalism.

"Journalism was pretty much the only reason I came to school for the last three years," **Madi Borden** [12] said. "Without having yearbook and Gauger to look forward to every day, I'd have stayed home with my cat. I formed close bonds with some fantastic people, some that I wouldn't ever have spoken to if we weren't in that little, windowless vortex."

The vortex provided a second home to staffers as they ate, talked and slept in there. Even when almost every other senior staff member had previous experience, the room and people still made first-time member **Virginia Mogavero** [12] feel comfortable.

"There are so many memories I shared with everyone in this class," Mogavero said. "It's going to be hard to just bring up one without it starting a chain reaction of other hilarious memories. But some of my favorites were going to Austin."

Most of the staff trekked to Austin, Texas for the Interscholastic League Press Conference April 18 and 19. While there, they

learned from veteran advisers, journalists, photographers and designers.

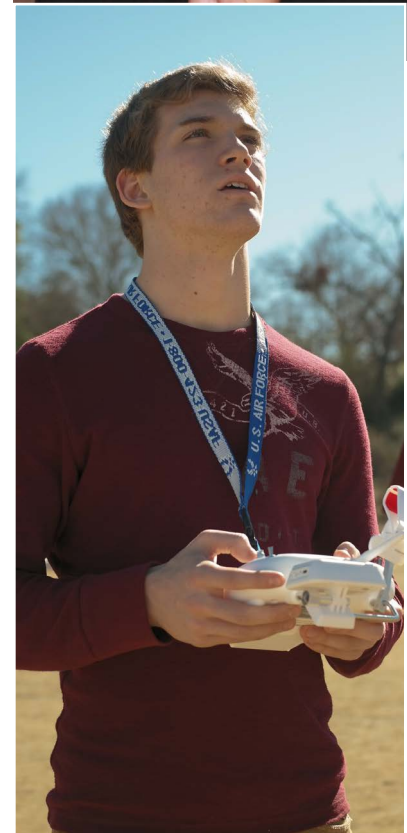
"Watching my students react to the speakers as they spoke about a field that has changed my life since I was their age was amazing," adviser **Becky Davis** said. "This staff has impacted my view on teenagers more than any group of students. I cannot wait to see the mark they leave on the world."

The yearbook work schedule, as always, cut into staff members' summer break. Work hours ranged from a nine to five day to night shifts, separating the regular staff members from the MVPs, those who showed up day after day.

"I have gotten close enough with the summer staffers that I trust them with my money and food, and that's kind of a big deal for me," **Isaac Rodriguez** [10] said. "We go to each other for advice on not just yearbook, but anything that troubles us."

Whether a first-time staff or veteran editor, everyone gained something from journalism which is an idea and a set of skills as much as it is an organization.

"The newspaper will fade and the yearbook will be put in a box, but the memories will keep us connected," **Aimee Rodriguez** [12] said. "Journalism is about having such a passion for people that you go out and seek their stories. You have a need to go talk to people and more importantly, to listen. You never know what you'll learn just by asking a person one question."



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# NECKS

## cash CHECKS

Students get jobs to earn extra cash, get experience

story by a. rodriguez

**T**hey were tired of asking their parents for money. They wanted independence and freedom. They cashed in with part-time jobs and the initiative to make their own cash. Along with their busy high school schedule, some students found time to work at local businesses to earn a little extra cash.

"I decided to work at Brookshire's because it's a clean, cool environment with plenty of nice and neat people," **Gunner Guida** [11] said. "The money is nice, and the job seems simple and reliable. I don't have any bills to pay at the moment, so I can keep one hundred percent of my income."

Once they received their license, some students couldn't wait to get a job and start making their own money. **Carter Wheat** [10] started working at Chik-fil-A after he turned 16.

"The people I work with are in my same age group from 16 to early 20s, so it was really easy to fit in and it's always a good thing to like the people and what you do," Wheat said. "Plus it's not a very demanding job and the hours are really flexible."

Having a job means more responsibility for planning a schedule and saving up money for any expenses that may catch students off guard. **Colleen Pulpan** [10] works at Snojoes, which is owned by English IV teacher **Nikki Seimears**, and learned the hard way that she needed to save money.

"I'm glad I can be accountable for money," Pulpan said. "I was never accountable until now. I had to change the battery in my car and my mom made me pay for it. She told me that I'm going to have to learn how to use my money and how to save it up."

After working at a job for a while, many students realize how gratifying it is to earn an income.

"Having a job as a teenager is a good way to learn responsibility and accountability, and it's a good feeling to actually earn the money you get," **Macy Templeman** [11] said. "I look forward to my birthday and Christmas for some gift money, but the feeling that I earned it is even better. It teaches you to really appreciate every dollar you earn, especially when you're young and not responsible for bills yet."



Pro at Snojoes, **Colleen Pulpan** [10] tops shaved ice with syrup to finish making a snowcone. English teacher Mrs. Seimears owns the local business and employs White Oak students. "Working under Mrs. Seimears is definitely a lucky position because she shows me the ropes of having a job," Pulpan said.



Cash in front of her, **Macy Templeman** [11] counts the days earnings at the Splash pad. "One reason I got a job this summer was because my parents told me I had to at least try to get a job while I wasn't going to school all day," Templeman said.



Expressing great Chik-fil-a service, **Carter Wheat** [10] hands his customer their receipt. "I started working in March and I wanted to start working there since I turned 16 and was able to drive," Wheat said.





Pushing against the defensive player, **Riley Edmondson** [7] prepares to dribble around the screen set against her. Players practiced offensive dribbling regularly to prepare for a game situation. photo by m. malone

# a touch of TOUGHNESS

Middle school girls basketball team gain strength, insight through teamwork, dedication

story by j. jowman

**T**hey wanted to try something new, find something fun, and forge new friendships. What they found was strength and endurance in an athletic setting. Basketball was a chance to grow physically, mentally, and together as a team. For **Lexi Haney** [8], basketball has given her a chance to grow mentally and physically.

"Basketball has showed me how to be more tough," Haney said. "I got a lot stronger."

Besides making players stronger, basketball helps grow friendships and a sense of family.

"Practices are always fun because of them [teammates]," **Erin Bagley** [8] said. "I actually look forward to practicing and socializing because I know it will be great, I love them and don't want to let them down."

The consequences of playing basketball tend to fall positive in the long run.

"I like basketball because I think it makes me stronger and tougher," **Kate Williamson** [7] said. "I like playing with my friends because we have fun times together and it is more

comfortable with them. I like games because they're challenging, but practice is fun."

Basketball helped the girls prove their toughness and hand-eye-coordination through rigorous the coaching that was provided.

"The thing I like about coach [Lacey Klein] is that she is hard on us and it makes us better," **Destiny Morgan** [8] said. "She has helped me improve my skills a lot and she is very knowledgeable about the sport and is willing to help."

With the assistance of her coach, **Kaydyn Scott** [7] grew with athleticism.

"It's made me more athletic," Scott [7] said. "I have become stronger and have become more hand-eye-coordinated."

With the assistance of coaches, many of the players have gained a great understanding and running knowledge of basketball.

"Coach Klein always helps and she gives us great tips," **Victoria Madewell** [8] said. "I thought basketball was just running down the court, but now I know there's more. The ball is the main part of the game. You have to defend it and offend it."

middle school girls' basketball 145  
design & copy by s. smith

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Waiting for the ball to be served, **Layla Sharkey** [8] and **Harley Devo** [8] keep a hold and steady grip on their racquets. Each tennis player would get the opportunity to play singles or a part of a doubles team at their last tennis meet in Kilgore. all photos by i. rodriguez

## Novice tennis players learn game through practice matches, motivation to succeed

story by s. nix

The distinct thunk of contact between ball and racket resounds throughout the court, and the screech of tennis shoes on the rubber court indicates the players chasing after stray balls. Fresh into the season, the novice players struggled with coordination.

"The majority of middle schoolers have never played tennis before, so at the beginning of the season they are very unsure and uncomfortable on the court," coach **Tammy Cloud** said. "By the end, they are more at ease and confident, and I see more smiles."

The students were trained to utilize the racket, which was viewed as an extension of their arm, and to recognize where to position themselves on the court to hit the ball accurately.

"It takes determination as well as agility," **Simi Millwood** [7] said, "Well, you don't necessarily need that, but it definitely helps."

Tennis not only trained hand-eye coordination, but also opened doors for players to make new friends.

"Tennis is a very friendly sport, I guess you could say," **Bayleigh Elliott** [7] said. "You're not always with the same people either. That really helps. You get to know people outside of what you hear about them around the school."

However, not all was fun and games. Being new to a sport

came with hard losses and disappointments, but even through the struggles, the players learned that more practice will get them to their goal. Personal improvement was increased through practice singles matches where one player covered the whole court by his or herself and teamwork skills were targeted through practice doubles matches where two players trusted each other for cover.

"I probably like doubles the most since I get to share the work with a partner," **Nathan Wood** [8] said. "But I like singles as well, since I get to see my skill level improve."

Since a large portion of the high school varsity tennis team will graduate in 2016, varsity slots will open up to freshmen and sophomores. To improve for high school, coach Cloud offered information about summer camps to the middle schoolers.

"My hope is to familiarize the kids to the lifetime sport of tennis, teach them the basic skills, and hope they have an enjoyable time and want to learn how to play it better," coach Cloud said.

Success was a big goal for middle school tennis players, but even more important was to have fun while they learned.

"My favorite memory was our first match," **Christopher Martin** [8] said, "We completely lost and got chewed out, but I was just happy to be playing."