THE ORACLE

SOUTH TEXAS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

NEW YEAR - NEW US - NEW NEWS!



TUG OF WAR AT MEDIEVAL FAIR HOSTED BY WORLD SCHOLARS - STUDENTS VS STAFF!

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NOVEMBER
STAFF OF THE MONTH



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MS.OLGA VASQUEZ
RECEPTIONIST

NOVEMBER TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Read their interview on page 13

MRS.NYTASHAH GUERRA
7TH GRADE ELA

Spartan Sports

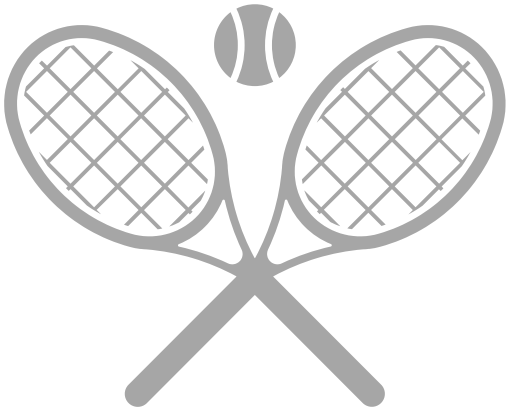
TENNIS

by Catherine Newton



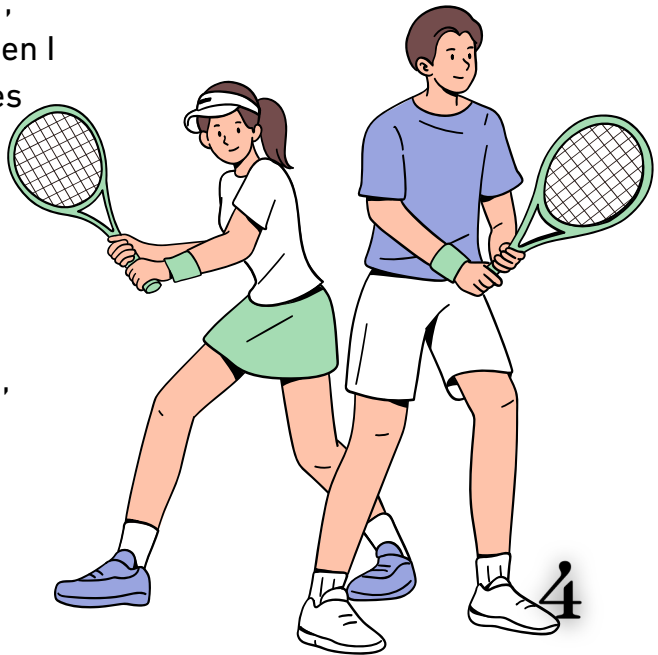
The South Texas Preparatory Academy (STPA) tennis team consists of dedicated students who have worked hard to earn a spot on the team, as well as committed coaches who help them develop their skills and deepen their passion for the sport. One such coach is Coach Zapata, who plays a pivotal role in training and encouraging the players.

We asked Coach Zapata, “What inspired you to help coach the STPA tennis team?” She shared, “I wanted to become one of the tennis coaches because I was so inspired by all the kids who wanted to join the team. I also enjoy watching the sport on TV; just watching it keeps me entertained.” It's clear that Coach Zapata is deeply inspired by the team and has a genuine love for tennis.



When we asked, “How has your coaching experience been at STPA?” she responded thoughtfully, “It has been really awesome. The athletes are great, and their hard work has really motivated me to be the best coach I can be. So far, I’ve had a fantastic first year at STPA, and I hope to continue working here for many years to come.” We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated coach on our team.

To gain insight into the student perspective, we also interviewed one of the team’s skilled players, Valeria Lema. When asked what she loves about tennis, she explained, “I love how tennis helps me relax and clear my mind after a tough day.” We then asked her, “What motivates you to keep playing?” Valeria responded, “When I see professional players and how far they’ve come, it motivates me to keep pushing forward.”



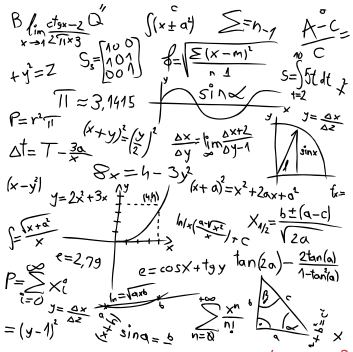
Finally, we asked her, “How do you think you can continue to improve?” Valeria said, “I think if I continue to practice consistently and put in longer sessions, I’ll keep improving my game.”

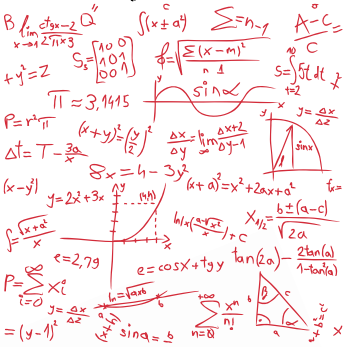
It’s clear that both the players and coaches at STPA are driven, passionate, and committed to improving. Their hard work and dedication make them an incredible team to be a part of, and we’re lucky to have such talented individuals representing the school.

Academic Excellence: UIL in Focus

NUMBER SENSE

by MAHDI POURNIK





Number Sense is a UIL event that tests students' knowledge of accuracy and speed in math. In Number Sense, you have 10 minutes to answer 80 questions. You will receive 5 points for every correct answer and lose 4 points for any skipped question before the last one answered or for any incorrect answer. Any marks or work shown will disqualify you from the event, as all math must be done mentally. It is advantageous to use a blue pen because sometimes the printer makes marks that might appear as if they were made by a black pen.

STPA has been very consistent in qualifying fr state. Some of the best competitors this year are Aden Paul and Shresth Yadav (7th grade), Milind Patil and Manaali Lambat (8th grade), and Yeon Hwang and Kelly Hou (6th grade).

For more questions, ask Mrs. Garcia in Room 106.



Beyond the Bell: Club Feature

HOSA

by Madeleine Newton



President
Madeleine Newton



Secretary
Valeria Ocanas



Social Chair
Victoria Obregon

HOSA is a club in which students grow their leadership skills, attain knowledge of health professions, and utilize teamwork. HOSA contains many events to compete in, ranging from Health Career Display (where students in teams of two research a health career and make a visually engaging poster board about that career), Life Threatening Situations (students are challenged to think critically and fast during a life simulated scenario), Medical Terminology) students challenge with how well they know medical terms), and more! Eighth grader, Hannah Teixeira, also had a few words to say about this amazing organization! “I’m Hannah Teixeira, the vice president of HOSA at our school, and I am currently studying to compete in HOSA Bowl with my teammates. HOSA Bowl is trivia about the HOSA organization and the medical field, and what we do to prepare is study medical books, online resources, and most importantly, learn from Mrs. Silva. One of the main reasons I chose to be in HOSA was because of my passion to pursue a career in the medical field in the future.” From what HOSA is and from Hannah’s words, an outline can be drawn that HOSA is an amazing organization that helps prepare students for medical professions and improve healthcare delivery.



Treasurer
Manaali Lambat



Historian
Desirae Gonzalez



Vice-President
Hannah Teixeira



Event Chair
Avery Elizondo

Ms. Diana Garica

by Marisol Ruiz



Every choice is a new path – be brave, make new friends, trust yourself, follow your dreams and take the one that leads to your best future."
– Diana Angelica Garcia

We have such caring, and diligent counselors here at STPA. Ms Garcia, our very own sixth-grade counselor, is one of them. I started the interview by asking her, "What inspired you to pursue a career in counseling?" She told me that the desire to help and understand students was what inspired her to become a school counselor. The next question I asked her was, "What is your favorite part of your job?" She told me her favorite part of her job was, "To provide a safe space to discuss thoughts, emotions, and to develop coping mechanisms and intimately to improve mental health and well being." We are very lucky to have many counselors who take their jobs seriously and who focus on helping students. I interviewed two students at STPA and asked them why they think counselors are important. The first student I interviewed said counselors are important because it's vital for the student body to stay informed and have help staying on track. The second student answered by saying counselors are important because they help students whenever they're in trouble emotionally and they support you.

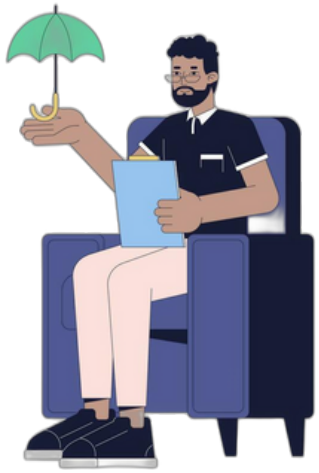
Mr. Javier Gonzalez

by Mulan Cao



Mr. Gonzalez our seventh grade counselor was inspired at a very young age to pursue a career in counseling he wanting to help people at a very young age he offering a helping hand and volunteering for his community. Which made him wanting to he a teacher at first he was a Pe coach but soon decided in counseling
Which is a grater way to help more students than the ones that are in his classroom. His favorite part of his kid is helping people like when a teacher needs some or a student needs someone to talk to, and overall he hopes to impact the students so they can better understand themselves and self advocate.

“You are capable, resilient, and never alone. Every challenge is an opportunity for you to grow – so speak up, ask for help, and always advocate for others.
-Javier Gonzalez”



Ms. Lillia Liguez

by Hannah Teixiera



> “Always remember that you are capable of greatness.
> -Diana Garcia”

Counselors play a vital role in helping students navigate their academic and personal lives. But what inspired them to choose this career, and what is their favorite part of the job? We sat down with Mrs Liguez to figure out.What Inspired You to Pursue a Career in Counseling? "I have always been passionate about helping others, especially when they are going through tough times," said Mrs. Liguez. "When I was growing up, I had a mentor who helped me during a difficult period, and I realized that I wanted to offer the same kind of support to others." What is Your Favorite Part of the Job? For Mrs. Liguez, the most rewarding part of her job is "watching students grow and succeed. There's something special about seeing a student who was struggling find their confidence, whether it's in school or in life." We also spoke to two students about why they believe counselors are so important. An Stpa student, explained, "I think counselors are important because they keep our schedules in order, and they help us with in-school and out-of-school issues." Another student, said, "Counselors are important because they help us determine our pathway in life! They guide us on making decisions about our future and help us figure out who we want to be." From offering guidance to supporting emotional well-being, counselors play an important role in shaping the future of their students.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The International Holocaust Remembrance Day is a international memorial day on January 27th that commemorates the victims of the Holocaust. This day helps spread awareness for the lives lost during the Holocaust.

Whenever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must— at that moment— become the center of the universe
-Elie Wiesel

"Think of all beauty still left around you and be happy"
- Anne Frank

The Butterfly - Pavel Friedmann

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone...
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished
to kiss the world goodbye.
For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto
But I have found my people here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut candles in the
court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.
That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.

"We honor lost loved ones by sharing the lessons of their past to ensure a better for all"
-Judy and Mark Mascaro '

We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.
-Elie Wiesel



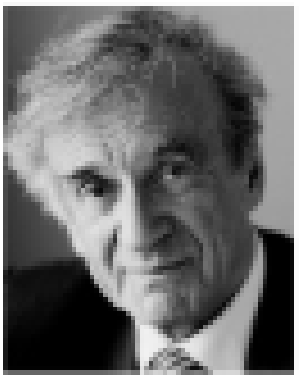
The shoe exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.



Houston's 'Butterfly Project' Honoring the Children of the Holocaust



Anne Frank
A 15 year old girl who was alive during the Holocaust. She is most known for the diary she kept during the Holocaust. Her diary was published by her father, Otto Frank, after the Holocaust was over. Her diary is now more well known as "The Diary of a Young Girl"



Eliezer "Elie" Wiesel was a Romanian-born American writer, professor, political activist, Nobel laureate, and Holocaust. He wrote fifty - seven books including "Night", "Dawn" and "Day"

2025 Resolutions

Will we stick to them?



This month *The Oracle* asked STPA students what their New Year's Resolutions were and how they were going!

by Jonathan Sebastian and Isla Mejia

As the first month of 2025 comes to an end, students are reflecting on their New Year's resolutions—setting goals for self-improvement, academic success, and athletic achievements. The Oracle checked in with a few students to see how their resolutions are going so far.

Austin Luna is off to a strong start. "My New Year's resolutions have been going well so far in the first month of 2025. Building off of last year's success, I'm excited to continue bettering myself as the year progresses. My main goal is to stay consistent and keep pushing forward all year long!"

For Brady Lee, this year is all about athletic growth. "My New Year's resolutions are going incredibly well! One of my biggest goals is to improve my stamina for track. I hope 2025 brings me a successful season as I work hard to reach my full potential. I'm looking forward to a year filled with progress, determination, and joy on the track!"

Catalina Sanchez is aiming high in the classroom. "My New Year's resolutions are going wonderfully! One of my main goals this year is to earn straight A's in all of my subjects—including STAAR! I'm determined to stay focused and put in the hard work to make 2025 a year of academic success and accomplishments."

With the year still ahead, these students are staying committed to their goals. Whether it's academics, sports, or personal growth, their determination sets an inspiring example for us all.

TikTok on the Clock

Should the app be banned?



This month The Oracle asked students and parents to weigh in on the highly controversial TikTok Ban. Here's what our community had to say:

by Sofia Munoz and Mia Franco

In recent years, TikTok has taken the world by storm, becoming one of the most popular social media platforms among students. But as its influence grows, so does the debate over whether it should be banned. With concerns ranging from screen time to security risks, opinions on the app vary widely—especially between students and parents.

To get a sense of how our school community feels, The Oracle asked students and parents for their thoughts.

Many students defended TikTok as a source of entertainment and stress relief. Seventh-grader Sofy Vela shared, "No, because for me it's a way to distract myself from school and relax." Several other students echoed this sentiment, explaining that TikTok serves as a creative outlet, a way to stay connected with friends, and even a learning tool through educational content.

However, parents saw things differently. One parent expressed a strong stance in favor of a ban, saying, "I think yes, because it will allow my kids to spend more time with me." Others voiced concerns about excessive screen time, online safety, and potential distractions from schoolwork.

This divide between students and parents highlights the ongoing debate surrounding social media's role in daily life. While students appreciate the fun and creativity TikTok offers, parents worry about its impact on family time, academic focus, and well-being.

So, should TikTok be banned? That question remains open for discussion, with arguments on both sides continuing to spark conversations at home, in schools, and across the country.

JANUARY

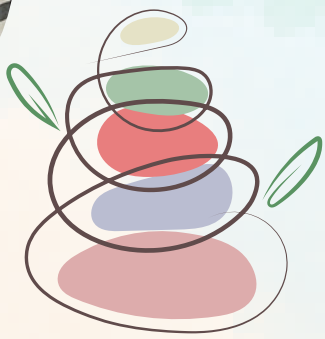
STAFF OF THE MONTH



MRS. OLGA VÁSQUEZ









by NATALIA FOMBIN

The staff of the month for December was Mrs. Olga Vasquez, Mrs. Vasquez works hard to make sure everything runs efficiently in the front office. Mrs. Vasquez stated that she was extremely surprised but very happy that she was recognized as staff of the month. She said that getting recognized motivated her to keep up the hard work for our school. Great job Mrs. Vasquez!

JANUARY TEACHER OF THE MONTH



MRS.NYTASHAH GUERRA

Be the change you wish to see in the world.

by McKenna Santos

Miss N. Guerra was teacher of the month for December. She told us that she believes patience is as quality of a strong teacher because we all make mistakes and when we realize that about each other we can be more effective as teachers. When we asked Miss Guerra how she feels about getting teacher of the month of December, she stated she is honored because that means she has been recognized by her colleagues, which are truly amazing people. For this reason she believes them seeing something in her is a true honor. Congratulations to Miss N. Guerra.

ACHILLES ADVICE

by Teresa Trevino

Credit By Exam - Is it the Right Choice for You?

Every year at STPA, 7th graders are given a chance to take a credit by exam test to try surpassing 8th grade language arts and reach English I. With even more CBE opportunities later on it leaves you with a choice, should you try it or not?

Credit by exam (CBE) is a method for students to show expertise in grade level or course content according to the TEA.

It can allow students to even graduate earlier by earning course credit. At most even save you money for college classes. Taking classes before others can help you to be ahead and not have to worry about them later.

In order to pass it though, you have to score a minimum of 80%. Since it isn't a state-developed test, there is no official study guide unless a third-party provider offers one. CBE courses in Texas also include APs, and CLEPs. By the way, these credit by exam tests can even be applicable to your transcript!

With all of this information now known, is it for you?

by Emily Sarmient

How to handle puberty

Puberty is the period of physical and emotional transition from childhood to adulthood. Our bodies and minds are changing, and some of these changes can wreak havoc! Mood swings, body hair, growth spurts, and who can forget our lovely friend, acne. Luckily, professionals have tips to deal with puberty.

Mood swings are caused by hormonal fluctuations that happen during puberty. They are abrupt changes in mood. Mood swings often "swing" into more negative emotions, like anger, sadness, or fear. Mental health professionals recommend doing things that make you feel happy, exercising, and getting a healthy amount of sleep.

Personal hygiene is very important during puberty. One way to limit bad odor is to shower daily and use an antiperspirant (aka deodorant). If you want to add a personal touch, adding some perfume can make you feel fresh and confident.

Last but not least, dealing with acne. Acne happens when pores are clogged. Although it isn't fully understood, it is thought that the rising levels of hormones in puberty make acne a lot more likely. Experts on skin care advise keeping your skin clean, trying an OTC acne treatment (Benzoyl peroxide), and wearing sunscreen will help limit acne.

Although Puberty can feel like a rollercoaster, it does not have to be overwhelming. Following recommendations from experts can help us navigate this process with success. Remember, we are not alone on this journey.



BREAKING NEWS

The Oracle

SPECIAL EDITION

WORKING HARD TO KEEP YOU INFORMED AND ENGAGED

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TUESDAY
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EVERY OTHER WEEK