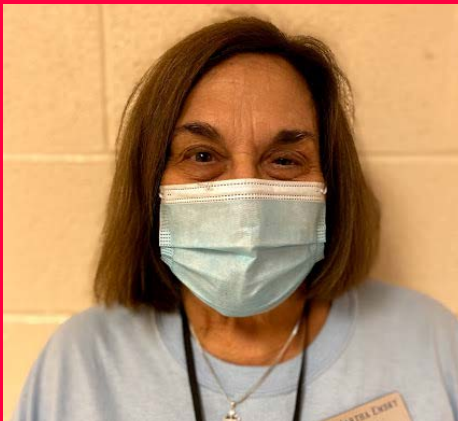


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A SPECIAL TRIBUTE



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& MUCH MORE

REGGAE BASH ABSOLUTE HIT, OVERCOMES RAIN TO END THE YEAR

By Michael Drew (12th)

It is that time of year again! May is always the busiest month for students with AP tests at the beginning and graduation at the end, but right in the middle is Reggae Bash! Due to COVID-19, the Back to School Bash, which was meant to be held in the fall, was unfortunately canceled. As a result, the leadership team, along with administrators, decided to have Reggae Bash, a night filled with music and games.

Unlike Reggae Fest which is normally held at the Union High School football stadium, Reggae Bash was held at the Union track field. With the change in venue, more movement and activities were allowed.

Reggae Bash took place Thursday, May 20th from 6:30-7:30pm. Reggae Bash was open to 9th-12th graders; however, the event was for Union students only. This was the first event of the year where masks were not required, providing a sense of normalcy rare to many Union students this year. Tickets were sold for \$5 and students had to bring their ID's to enter.

Due to rain, Reggae Bash was altered in some ways; water prevented planned live music from happening therefore all acts scheduled to play had to be dismissed. This was a needed, cautious step to ensure a successful event, but luckily, it didn't rain and the event was able to proceed normally in most ways. Music was played through the main speakers the field and there were games such as Spikeball, volleyball, and gaga ball that students could play. At the end of the evening, the student-favorite color war, an element regularly a part of Back to School Bash, occurred and students threw colored powder at each other. Students could also eat snacks at the event. Reggae Bash was and is traditionally the last official school event, and the last school event ever for seniors. This memorable night filled with music, games, and friends is surely a night students, and especially seniors, will never forget.



Students enjoy themselves by playing volleyball with peers as well as participating in the color war by throwing colored powder at their friends; the beautiful sunset added a great backdrop for the color war. Pictures taken by Emily Sanchez (12)

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

UNION VETERAN HISTORY AND LEADERSHIP TEACHER MARTHA EMBRY RETIRES AFTER FIFTY YEAR CAREER

By Braxton Tempest (12th)

After twenty years at Union High School, and over fifty years of teaching experience, history teacher and leadership sponsor Martha Embry is retiring. Mrs. Embry has taught at Union since 2000, where she has impacted thousands of students' lives in the classroom. She has also served as a leadership sponsor during her time at Union and has built, grown, and sustained a culture of student involvement and spirit through her contributions to the Union Leadership Program. Mrs. Embry has taught at various other schools besides Union during her veteran career. Immediately after she graduated from Oklahoma State University with a teaching degree she began to inspire students. "My first teaching job was in Pea Ridge, Arkansas. My husband was still in college at the University of Arkansas," Mrs. Embry remembers. This first job was eye-opening to her as she had never worked with kids from a culture like the kids from Pea Ridge.

After her husband finished college, The Embrys moved to Tulsa and Mrs. Embry began to work at Monte Cassino, where she taught in the all-girls 7-12th grade secondary school. At Monte Cassino, working with only girls every day, Mrs. Embry remarks that there she "learned that females can achieve anything; they just have to believe in themselves." During her time at Monte Cassino, she also attended graduate school to obtain a degree in counseling. She became the student counselor and she says this is where her journey with student leadership development began. "In 1986 I went to Metro Christian Academy as a high school counselor. The school was in its early years, so everyone worked hard to make it successful," Mrs. Embry remembers. Mrs. Embry helped grow the

leadership program substantially at Metro. In 2000, Mrs. Embry went from being a counselor back to the classroom to teach. "In a school as large as Union, I am able to know my students better as a teacher than as a counselor." Mrs. Embry says she has never regretted that decision.

Mrs. Embry says her favorite memory of Union High School is the pride Union students and teachers have in their school. "I hope that students who I have encountered know that they can accomplish anything they set their mind to," Mrs. Embry said, "good enough is neither good or enough. Take pride in what you do."

Union High School has greatly impacted Mrs. Embry's journey as a teacher and has greatly contributed to her personal growth as well. "Our student body is extremely diverse, and that diversity has taught me so much about the world. It is so much easier to understand different cultures when I have students from those cultures. I have learned to never stop learning. Never stop asking questions. It is easier to teach students when you somewhat understand where they are coming from."

Over the last twenty-nine years, Mrs. Embry has also been an active contributor to the Oklahoma Association of Student Councils (OASC), which is a network of student leaders and teacher sponsors from around the state who collaborate to improve student leadership initiatives. For the last ten years, Mrs. Embry has served as a director of the OASC Basic Leadership Workshop where she oversaw the workshop curriculum. This summer, Mrs. Embry will serve her last summer as director.

During retirement, Mrs. Embry is excited to travel with her husband. Their first retirement adventure

will be to Wales later this year. She is also looking forward to spending time with her family; all of her children and grandchildren live in Tulsa, so she is very excited to be busy with them. She says she will enjoy finding things to keep her busy.

Mrs. Embry's contribution, commitment, and service to Union High School and student leaders in Oklahoma will never be forgotten; and, for those lucky enough to have known Mrs. Embry, their lives will be forever touched. "Teaching is a calling. In answering that call, I hope I have made a difference." Thank you, Mrs. Embry, for the unforgettable legacy you left at Union High School and beyond.



(Left to Right) Mrs. Embry, Austin Lopez (2021) and Kennadi Cox (2020) during SHAKA Week 2020

FINE ARTS

UNION BANDS SENIOR XAVIER WILLIAMS TALKS FUTURE PLANS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PURSUING FINE ARTS

By Abhi Narayanan (12th)

Throughout high school, students are exposed to numerous professions and opportunities. While academics are crucial, extracurriculars and other non-academic-related topics often influence one's career path. Contrary to a traditional academic route, many students choose to pursue a career in the fine arts. One of Union's musicians, Xavier Williams, shared his opinions on his music career thus far and for the future.

Xavier has participated in Union Bands since the sixth grade, and he will be attending the University of Oklahoma. He plans on pursuing his Bachelor of Music Arts in music education, and later, aims to be accepted into a conservatory to receive his Masters and Doctorate of Musical Arts in clarinet performance.

Apart from his major, Xavier intends to claim a chair in an "internationally prestigious orchestra or band, while also teaching low income and BIPOC children, both as a teacher and private lesson instructor." He hopes to gain not only his degree but experience and tips so that one day he may be able to teach others. Afterward, he plans on making a name for himself and becoming world renowned, along with owning a clarinet studio and a business dealing with music and instruments.

The fine arts offer extensive career possibilities, ranging from music education to performance. Regardless of societal stigmas, many people continue to pursue the arts and further their education in music. As a message to high schoolers currently in a fine arts program, Xavier believes it is worth continuing in college. He stated, "Arts and theatre are slowly dying as the era of technology and consumer culture gradually takes its hold on society. Art is often overlooked as a passion and the fields of sciences and math are desired for professions, yet music can connect people in a way that numbers cannot."



Xavier Williams will attend The University of Oklahoma next year where he hopes to continue exploring his passion for fine arts.

SPORTS

UNION JUNIOR HIGH AND VARSITY TENNIS TEAMS EXCEL, QUALIFY FOR STATE, AND WIN BIG AT REGIONALS

By Ankit Jalipalli (11th)

The Union High School tennis team has had an outstanding season this year and their continued success deserves many congratulations. The team has won many tournaments and represent Union High School amazingly across the state.

Some of the team's achievements include the junior high ladies qualifying for the state tournament by winning first place out of 16, the junior high boys earning the title of runner up at the Union Tournament as well as qualifying for the state tournament, and the varsity boys tennis team finishing second place at the Broken Arrow Tournament. Lastly, the entire Union varsity girls team pulled off a second place finish at their regional tournament and qualified for state.

The many achievements of the Union tennis team this year point towards a bright future that will hopefully include many more well-deserved victories.



Jenna Mitsdarfer (10th) played at this year's regional tournament.



Gracie Pereff (10th) gears up for a serve at the state tournament.

COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER

COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER GATHERS CLASS OF 2021 DATA THROUGH SENIOR SURVEY

By Bow Bajela (12th)

It's the end of the school year, and that means that the College and Career Center has asked for the help of every graduating senior in filling out this year's senior survey. The advisors and supervisors within the CCC work hard year-round to ensure that Union High School students are able to work towards their post-graduate goals, but after college decisions have been finalized and students have made the decision to enter into the workforce or armed service, the CCC asks seniors to give back to the school by sharing where their efforts have led them post-graduation. This also provides the CCC the opportunity to celebrate their plans with the senior signs that are displayed on the lawn at the front of the school.

With the help of Mr. Douthat and Career Connect, many students are able to obtain on-the-job experience with the career fields that interest them.

This survey helps Career Connect better understand what job shadowing and work-study programs have been most helpful in students' lives in order to better shape the program in the future. One of the goals of this survey is to be able to identify trends in the types of programs that are offered through the Career Connect program. By learning through the survey what students are most interested in, Career Connect can better provide opportunities to UHS students. This survey also has the potential to serve future UHS students as the school may find the need to change the offered curriculum to suit their career interests.

The College and Career advisors within the CCC also have a lot to gain from the results of the survey. The CCC works hard to get students to think about what comes next after college. From teaching freshman and sophomores the important distinction between pursuing a job versus a career to teaching juniors and seniors the basics of formulating a college application, these advisors work hard to ensure

that students have every opportunity to succeed outside of high school, and after that process has been run, it is helpful for the advisors to hear the feedback of the seniors on how their efforts have resulted. Additionally, the advisors use this survey as a means to ask for feedback on how they can improve the CCC overall. Often one of the most helpful things for underclassmen can be to hear the advice of the graduating seniors, and this survey allows the CCC to compile that advice conveniently in order to then disseminate it back to younger students.

Some of the findings the advisors have been able to collect have included feedback on how students have reacted to the pandemic and how their high school careers have affected the lives of students. Amongst some of the data that the CCC will further investigate in the summer, the CCC has found that a good number of students are enrolling in technical school. Additionally, they have seen an increase in first-generation college students. The CCC has also made an effort to identify and help students who are headed into the work field without a plan to gain employment.

We Want You!



Writers, Designers, Photographers, Leaders & More Needed for UHS Today for 2021-22 school year!

ANY GRADE!

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CURRENT EVENTS

HONORING HIDDEN HEROS CHRIS AND ELIZABETH AT THE CYBER CAFE

By Bre Farhood (12th)

Being a high school student has many obstacles and hardships that make it difficult to stay motivated, so it is more refreshing when teachers remind us that we are doing a good job. Not only do the teachers have the power to make us feel important, loved, and motivated through their encouragement, but there are influential people who we see every day and sometimes don't even recognize. Some of these figures are the nutritionists at Union High School. They may be hidden in the shadows, but they are a prime example of adaptation, strength, and determination. I had the opportunity to speak to the women who work in the Cyber Café, and they happen to be some of my favorite people. Chris and Elizabeth are two individuals who not only always have smiles on their faces, but they also make you feel like you're the most important person in the world. Their genuine kindness is truly something that helped me overcome the struggles I've faced this past year; they are loving people and work extremely hard every day to make sure every student who comes in is welcomed with open arms and a warm smile.

When I asked Chris what her favorite part of her job was, she said, "We like the kids because they are pretty nice and polite, and we see a new face every day." Chris and Elizabeth love their jobs and enjoy each other's company. "We make a good team, and when you enjoy the person you work with, it makes a big difference on our day," says Chris, "when you work with someone every day, you build a strong bond ... I love her". While they explained how much they loved working at Union, it filled me with joy and made me realize how good life can be if we surround ourselves with people who make us happy. Although Chris and Elizabeth faced a few trials this year with COVID, they have adapted and learned to persevere, "when we weren't able to work in Cyber it was hard because we had to move to Street Market, but we adapted." Elizabeth says that her biggest challenge is probably "the language barrier, but we work together to understand." Chris and Elizabeth are a great team and work together to overcome any challenges they face along the way; they think of the school as a "second home" as Chris says, and a lot of it has to do with the bonds they've created. I think a lot of times as students we forget that teachers, principals, counselors, nutritionists, and so

on are also experiencing things in their own lives that they must learn how to navigate. There are so many people at our school that aren't ever recognized for the things they do, but they work so hard to make Union the best place for the students. Take the time to build relationships, get to know them, and most importantly thank them for all the things they do for Union High School, despite the challenges they've faced this past year.



Chris and Elizabeth pose in the Cyber Cafe which they often decorate for holidays.

GET AHEAD ON CREDITS, DO ONLINE SUMMER SCHOOL

By Ankit Jalipalli (11th)

Do you want an opportunity to earn high school credit over the summer to make room for your schedule? If you said yes, then the UVLA summer virtual school is perfect for you! UVLA summer virtual offers a selection of classes to enroll in and complete over the summer. The courses involve students engaging in class work over the summer as well as checking in with their teachers to ask questions or assess their knowledge. The program is available for

students that are currently in grades 8-12, and students must have a current GPA of 2.5 or more. The courses will last eight weeks, and students must have internet access or unlimited data and cannot take more than five days off, so make sure to plan ahead. Students must attend a virtual orientation with their instructor on June 7th. If they cannot attend that date then they must attend the alternate meeting date of June 2nd. The academy is offering Spanish 1 and 2, French 1 and 2, Fundamentals of Technology, Digital

Information of Tech, US History, World History, English 12, and Geometry. Students enrolled in Geometry will have set class times they must attend, per the instructor. Classes are \$100 each and can be paid by cash or credit. The deadline is May 26th, so make sure to enroll in your classes as soon as possible. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to finish credits off during the summer and take the classes you are looking forward to during the year!

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

BLACK SCHOLARS OUTREACH AT GROVE ELEMENTARY

By Destiny Reyes (11th)

On April 25th, members of the Black Scholars Club spent a day at Grove Elementary. High schoolers who attended the event include but are not limited to Casey Piercy, Jasmine Gracey, Austin Lopez, Tayler Hill, and Mauri Jones who were accompanied by Mrs. Felstein. President and Vice President of Black Scholars, Jasmine Gracey, and Casey Piercy, prepared a presentation to show to kids in Pre-K all the way to 5th grade. Students ranging in ages from Pre-K to second grade were shown a simpler version of the presentation in order for them to better understand what was being taught. Third graders, fourth graders, and fifth graders were shown the full presentation. The full presentation included discussion questions on diversity and the different types (internal vs. external), how to be inclusive, and videos consisting of puppets of immigrant and disabled children, and a read-aloud of the differences of the many people who live on Sesame Street. After the presentation, student volunteers played card games, read books, or read to the children. Spending quality time with elementary students allowed them to feel seen and safe. The intent of the outreach was to influence students positively and teach valuable lessons from an early

A final club meeting worth celebrating was the End of School Award Ceremony that took place on May 14th. Logan Mohr, Makayla Goode, and Destiny Reyes all received rewards for their commitment to the club. Additionally, Reyes was named president of the club for the incoming school year while Goode was named vice president. The Black Scholars Club has succeeded in various endeavors in the past school year despite the many obstacles thrown its way. The club was able to end on a high note and will be ready to start back in the fall in order to serve future generations.



Club leader Destiny Reyes reads to Grove Elementary Students.

IT'S Summer TIME

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