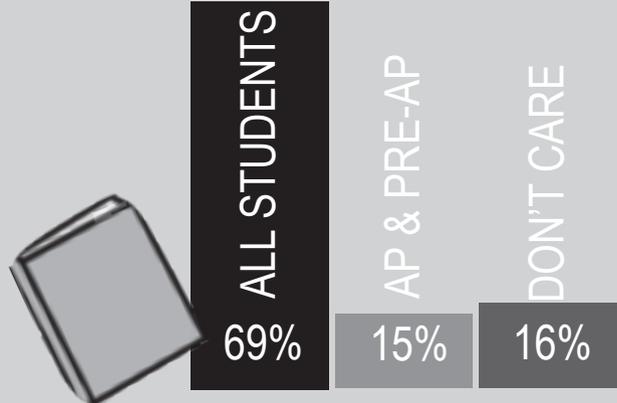




WHAT IS IN

Q: Do you think Learning Lounge should be for...



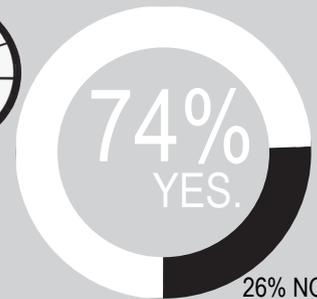
OLD "AP & PRE-AP" LEARNING LOUNGE POLICY RE-ENFORCED DUE TO DISTRACTING STUDENTS. **PG. 2**

Q: Do you have any class in the A-building that might be displaced due to future demolition and reconstruction?



CONCERNS DELAY DEMO, REBUILD. **PG. 3**

Q: Are you willing to add ten extra minutes into a school day if it means having fewer days of school total?



NEW LAW ON SCHOOL HOURS WILL HAVE LITTLE TO NO EFFECT ON NORTHSIDE ISD CAMPUSES.

PG. 4

Q: What question do you most wish you had the answer to?

38% CAN I MAKE IT ON MY OWN?

10% WHAT COLLEGE SHOULD I CHOOSE?

24% HOW DO I PAY FOR SCHOOL?

28% WHAT SHOULD MY CAREER BE?

What?

OPINION: QUESTIONS REGARDING FUTURE CAN HOLD YOU DOWN.

PG. 5

Q: Do you think Holmes students have accomplishments we should be proud of this year?

88% YES

18% NO

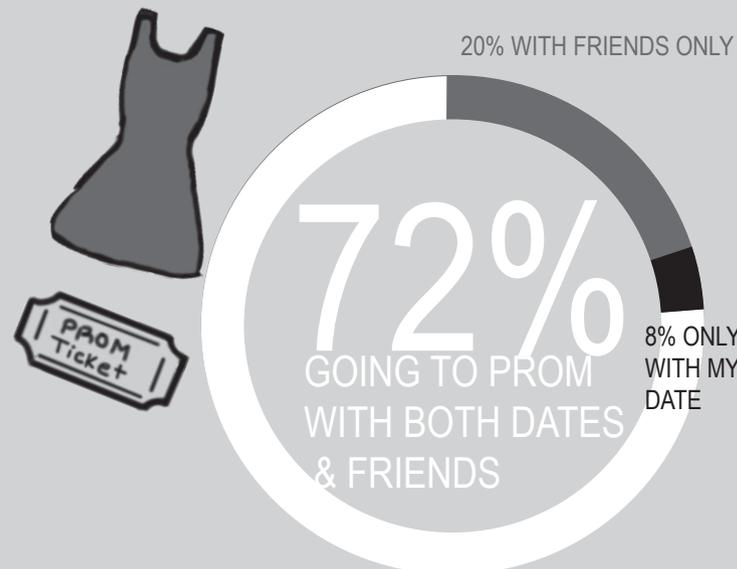


HUSKY PRIDE IS JUSTIFIED. **PG. 6-7**

THIS ISSUE?

Why the questions issue? Because on our campus there are many questions students, faculty members, and even visitors want answered. From events that are occurring around our world to what's going on inside our own round walls, there is vital information that we need to know, which can affect us all. In this issue, we answered questions that were submitted directly by some of our readers, as well as covered some very sensitive topics that some of us may be too afraid or embarrassed to ask about. In addition to answering your questions, we've asked some questions through our @holmesbcnews twitter polling, and we're proud to present your answers here. For your burning questions that apply to Holmes and the Holmes community, The Gavel staff has the answers. We hope you enjoy it.

Q: Is it more fun going to prom with friends, with a date, or with both?



PROM: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIG NIGHT. **PG. 8**

Q: How would you like your prom proposal to be?

56% EXTRAVAGANT

44% LOW KEY

BREAKING DOWN THE PROMPOSAL. **PG. 9**

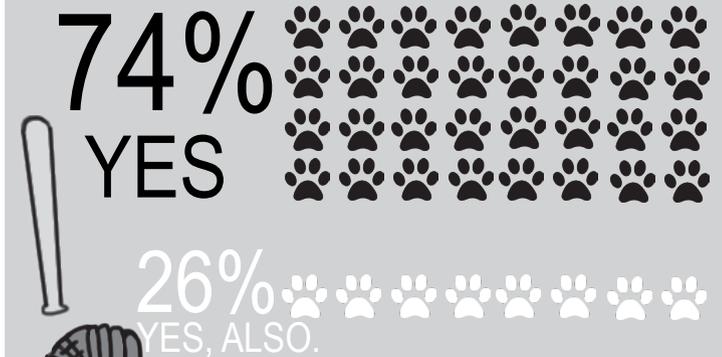
Q: Have you or someone you know been affected negatively by divorce?



32% NO EFFECT

HOW STUDENTS AND TEACHERS BATTLE THROUGH ISSUES RELATED TO DIVORCE AT HOME AND SCHOOL. **PG. 10**

Q: Do you believe baseball and softball can make the playoffs?



SPORTS SHORTS NEWS BRIEFS. **PG. 11**

Q: How much do you know about the religion and culture of Islam?

46% ALMOST NOTHING

38% A LITTLE, 16% A LOT

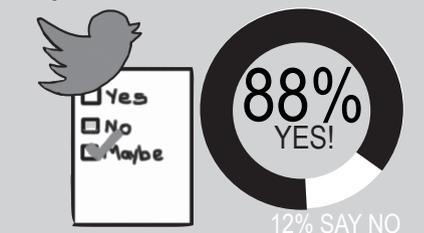
OPINION: WE NEED TO LEARN ABOUT AND BE SENSITIVE TO OUR MUSLIM FRIENDS' CULTURE. **PG. 12**

Q: Do you think extremist groups like ISIS are representative of the Islamic religion?

74% NO

14% YES, 12% NOT SURE
MUSLIM STUDENTS COMBAT JUDGEMENTS AND CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING FAITH. **PG. 13**

Q: Do you like surveys?



TWITTER POLLS: OUR QUESTIONS, YOUR ANSWERS.

PG. 14

THE GAVEL

Holmes/Business Careers High School
6500 Ingram Road, San Antonio, TX 78238

Holmes Principal: Ada Bohlken
BC Principal: Randy Neuenfeldt

Adviser: Matthew Singleton

Editors: Alicia Yanez & Amanda Rocha
Design Editor: Victoria Falcon
Photo Editor: Clarissa Silva
Copy Editor: Alondra Martinez
Advertising Director: Skye Knight
Online Editor: Lizbeth Perez
News Desk Editor: Madeline Sierra
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Keren Cumpian
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Chelsey Alvarado
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Abigail Torres
Deonte Wilson

Social Media Team:
Adrianna Gallegos
Sarah Molina
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Analisa Sanchez
Ramiro Villarreal

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Letters to the editor are encouraged, and may be submitted via e-mail to matthew.singleton@nisd.net, or presented in person in room A102d. The staff reserves the right to edit all letters for length and/or appropriate language or libelous content. All letters must be signed. For advertising information or rates, e-mail Matthew Singleton, or call (210) 397-7054.



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HELP!

WHO IS ALLOWED IN LEARNING LOUNGE?

OLD “AP & PRE-AP ONLY” LEARNING LOUNGE POLICY RE-ENFORCED DUE TO DISTRACTING STUDENTS

by Alondra Martinez, Copy Editor

Two policies regulating who can attend after school Learning Lounge tutoring sessions are being questioned by some students on campus. An old rule that students in non-AP or pre-AP can't go to Learning Lounge has been reinforced, and a new rule, that attendance recovery hours cannot be made up there anymore, has been implemented. The rules were established because of disruptions from students not using the space for studying, who were making it challenging for teachers to tutor students there to work and learn.

Originally, Learning Lounge was established for Pre-AP and AP students to have a space to come get help twice a week in a casual tutoring session in the library. Students not in Pre-AP and AP classes attended as well. Due to an increase of distractions because of the amount of students going in not to study, administration decided to enforce the rule again.

“Since before I was here, [Learning Lounge] was created to be a place to assist students that are taking Pre-AP and AP classes. I believe what has happened is that all students were allowed to go in there and use the facility. It's not that we don't want students to go in there, we do. I think there was an incident that students would go in and were not really studying so it became a distraction. It wasn't anything major, but it was enough that we needed to focus on the problem and to ensure that the students who are in there are going in there to study,” Principal Ada Bohlken said.

Physics instructor and regular Learning Lounge tutor Eric De La Cruz described the circumstances that led to the changes.

“Word got around like ‘Hey let's go to the library and hang out.’ That's when we would have like a hundred, a hundred and twenty kids signing in. They were all in there just to make up hours. That's when the discipline became a problem. If they were coming in and just being quiet, I don't think it would've been a problem, but they were being loud, bringing in their loud card games where they would yell or scream, but not fight, just yelling,” Eric De La Cruz said.

As a result, not just disruptive students, or students who were abusing the time to make up hours, but all non-AP students are blocked from attending.

“Learning Lounge is a place for tutoring and doing work, it's not a place to make up hours. Even though we were allowing them to do that, kids started coming in, signing in and leaving. It's just unfortunate that the fact that they were abusing the opportunity, ruined it for other students,” Librarian Melissa Santellan said.

Students in non-Pre-AP or AP classes who are affected by the rule, like junior Angela Villanueva, find it unfair because they were not

disruptive and were there to get tutoring and their work done.

“It helps me because most of my work, mainly essays, is online and I don't have a laptop at home, so I can use the computers there and print what I need to. I also go to finish my work, so I can go home and relax. I heard about the new rule and it really annoys me because I think that's so unfair to the regular kids that need a working space or just need to finish work like me,” Villanueva said.

Many students share Villanueva's frustration and come from backgrounds that prevent them from getting work done at home, like not having access to technology or internet. For those students, not having access to Learning Lounge will complicate things and make getting school work done more difficult. Just because students take non-Pre-AP or AP classes, doesn't mean they're disruptive.

“I don't think it's fair if they me with a bunch of makes it hard. to come here. don't you think? prove Fran-

are in a situation like siblings or home life They should be able That's sort of elitist Correlation doesn't causation,” senior cisco Villafranca said.

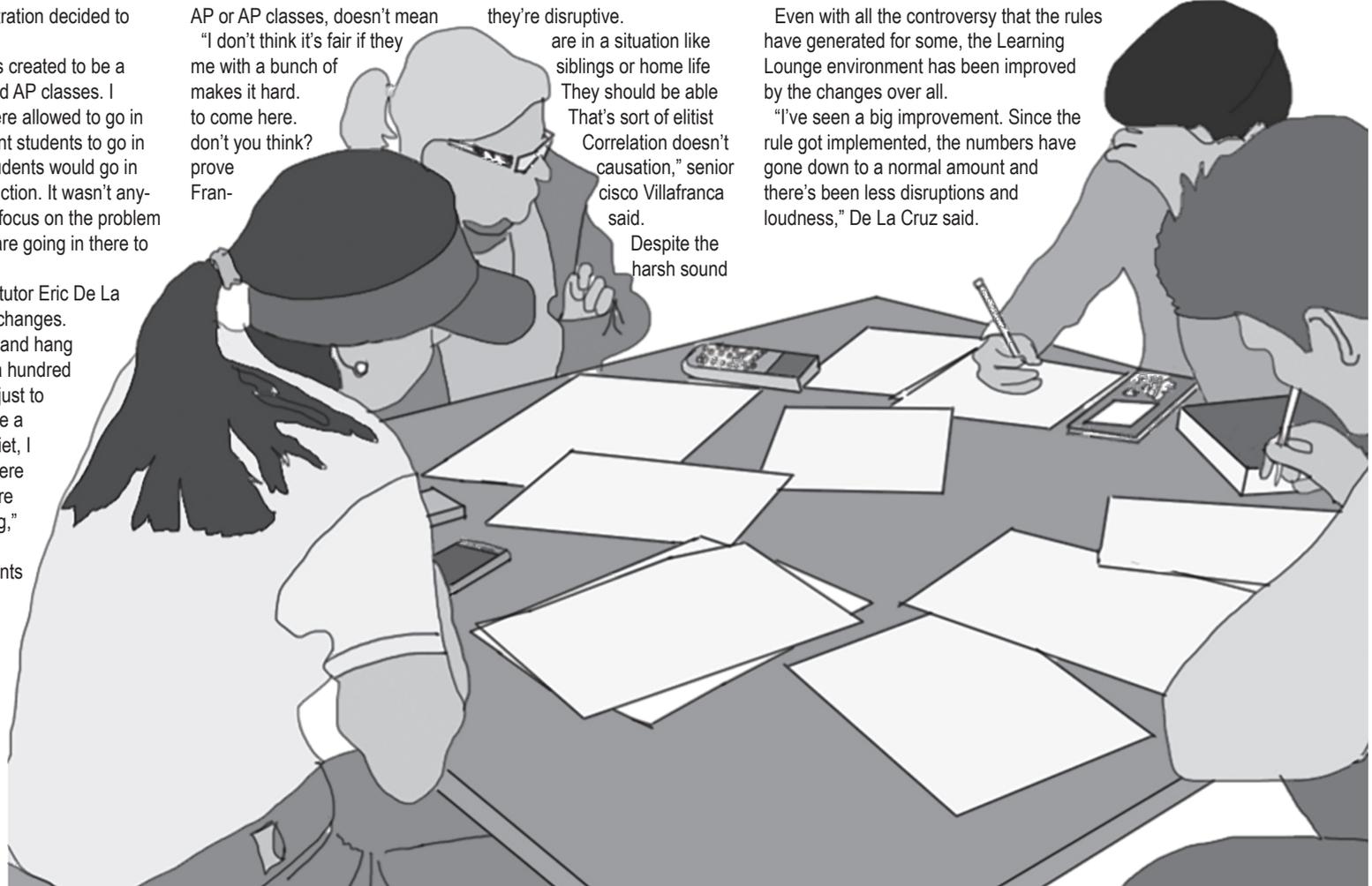
Despite the harsh sound

of the new rules, the tutors at Learning Lounge are still willing to let any student come in and work if they need it. The enforcement of the rules depends on the situation at hand. Students who are not disruptive and are actually working will not be pushed away if they're not being disruptive and they're actually working.

“If you're there to genuinely make up work and do something educational, then it's fair. It becomes unfair when people are being disruptive. It may not be fair to you because you want to make up hours, but it's fair to them. It depends on the circumstances. I have some regular students who are there to do work and I don't want to have to push them away. They're good kids and they want to be there,” De La Cruz said.

Even with all the controversy that the rules have generated for some, the Learning Lounge environment has been improved by the changes over all.

“I've seen a big improvement. Since the rule got implemented, the numbers have gone down to a normal amount and there's been less disruptions and loudness,” De La Cruz said.



original artwork by Alondra Martinez

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ALL THE CLASSES IN THE A-BUILDING?



CONCERNS DELAY DEMO, REBUILD

by Alicia Yanez, Co-Editor

Originally, the demolition and new construction of the A-building was scheduled to begin this summer, but it has been delayed a year over concerns about the difficulty of displacing fine arts programs and students while still providing enough parking on campus.

"We aren't going to be demolishing anything right now. The district is still talking to contractors. We must come up with a contractor that gives us a good bid, and we will resume with that, but I do not see that happening this summer," Holmes Principal Ada Bohlken said.

There are many departments that will be displaced such as art, band, theater and many other classes that need special needs.

"Some art materials are heat sensitive and I'm worried about storing some of these heat sensitive materials and the kiln room can only be in a ventilated area. It has to meet specifications as far as the electrical outlet and a portable cannot give the certain voltage the kiln needs," Art teacher Erica Taht said.

Art needs many things such as running water and it can affect the levels of art being taught. Band is also another example who will be affected by the weather, and their equipment is very sensitive to heat and humidity. They also have an issue with the storage of the instruments and practice rooms will not be an option.

"We are talking 180 students with all their instruments. We are going to be crammed. Everyday instruments we use take up space. You have to have one room for storage and another for the students," Band director Rod Herrera said.

Each extra curricular activity has many specific needs that have to be met to be able to function properly. Portables that are small and not fit to each class might not be the best thing to meet teaching and storage needs.

Bohlken brought these concerns to district administrators, which led them to the decision to delay for a year.

"I did put a proposal together with the district, but that doesn't mean its going to be approved. I put something together where we would get more portables, so the proposal is somewhere here on campus if there is an area that's approved by the district or renting some space from the theater behind us. Still none of that has been approved and that is just something I put together," Bohlken said.

Some of the tentative solutions for displacing fine arts programs includes the possibility of the creative use of portables, and for programs that need special things such as water access, they might provide a portable bathroom or other teachers will be displaced. All of these decisions will be considered carefully, and final approval rests in the hands of district administrators.

After these decisions are made, the process will resume. In the mean time, questions about what the final product will be and what it might look like are still being hammered out. The other questions about the new building's look have finally made some leeway.

"What I have seen so far, the sketches do not involve a round building. It involves building up because we are landlocked, which means instead of two stories it would be three stories. There isn't anymore room in any other area besides in the area of the one you are taking down," Bohlken said.

The A-building houses specialty programs like fine arts and journalism, and administrators are working on a plan to accommodate all of the specific needs including storage, practice spaces, specialty equipment, sound-proof rooms and more. Pictured above are a portion of the specialty spaces and equipment in the A-building that must be displaced during demolition and construction.



Are the rumors about school hour changes true?

NEW LAW ON SCHOOL HOURS WILL HAVE LITTLE TO NO EFFECT ON NORTHSIDE ISD CAMPUSES

by Keren Cumpian, Staff Writer

The Texas House of Representatives passed a law introduced as House Bill 2610 that changes the way mandatory school days for students in the State of Texas are counted from 180 days of school to measuring the time in minutes, with 75,600 minutes of school required. While the bill went into effect immediately, causing people to wonder about changes to the number of school days or school hours per day, it is not likely to affect Northside ISD high school students any time soon. This change comes via the Texas legislature, and the reason for the change has still not been explained to school districts by lawmakers.

"We don't think that there will be any great impact on Northside students, other than the additional minutes in the elementary level and perhaps adding one day to school calendar but that has not been decided by the school board yet," NISD Public Relations Director Pascual Gonzalez said.

The only change district-wide is the possibility of adding around ten minutes to the current elementary school schedule, since they fall a little short of the required total minutes as it stands.

"When you look at the start time and ending time for elementary schools in NISD we're a little bit short on that and so what NISD is going to have to do [next year], although we haven't changed the calendar yet, we will add some time, maybe 10 minutes or so," Gonzalez said.

The only possible effect this law might have for high school and middle school students might come in a conflict with the district's school bus schedule. There is a chance the bus schedules will be strained, and that might cause delays in district-wide transportation, but according to the district, NISD has a staggered schedule and enough busses to transport the students to and from school to avoid many of these issues.

"This will have minimal impact on [the busses] because we have enough time in between the time that elementary schools and high schools end. So the time in there is enough that if we need to add some time it would not impact bus schedules," Gonzalez said.

The passing of the law won't mean any major changes for NISD high school students this year, but there is plenty of speculation by students and community members of how this law could impact schools in the

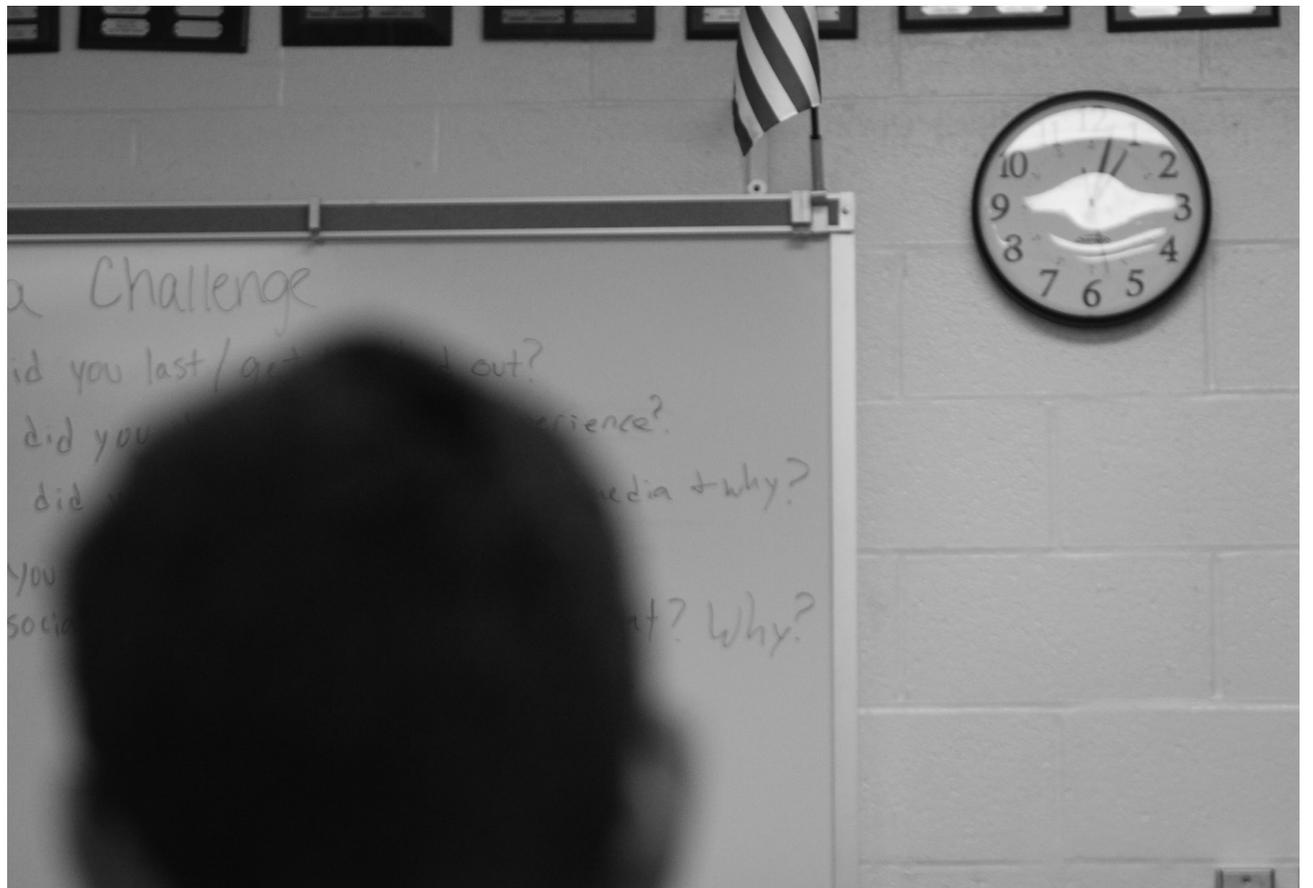


photo by Clarissa Silva

future. In a recent poll of Holmes and Business Careers students conducted by the Gavel Online, if the district did decide to add ten extra minutes to a regular high school day, it would mean having three to four fewer days of school a year, and 74% of students who responded to our survey favored that trade-off.

"It would be fine to have less school days because it's only ten minutes. I feel like it's more of an advantage," sophomore Samantha Ruvalcaba said.

While the possibility of adding minutes and removing days of school is popular with the student body, it's not as popular among some teachers on campus.

Pre-Calculus teacher James Hamric doesn't see much use to adding minutes to the school day, but instead believes school start times should be moved to later in the day if the state really wants to help students.

"Honestly, researches show that the later in the day teenagers can start, they tend to perform better because of the way the brains are wired. So starting a little bit later in the day would probably be the best solution for the high school kids," Hamric said.

For now, changes in schedules and school days are only suggestions and ideas, and for district high schools, things will remain the same.

Q Should questions about my future stress me out?

OPINION: QUESTIONS REGARDING FUTURE CAN HOLD YOU DOWN

Personal Opinion Column by Stormy Rice, Staff Writer

High school students are harassed by the never ending questions about what we are going to do once we graduate. Where are you going to college? Are you even going to college? What are you going to major in?

Just four years ago we left middle school. Most of us didn't have a single clue on what we wanted to do with the rest of our lives.

The same goes for those close to graduation. In just four short years, we are expected to know what we want to do with the rest of our lives. And if our answer isn't, "I want to be a brain surgeon or a lawyer," then adults are often disappointed that we haven't planned out the stereotypical successful future with the short amount of time we were given.

Then there is a huge percentage of us who are going in the direction that our family wants us to go in, like running the family business, or enrolling into a business school hoping to create a CEO out of us. But not all people want to go down the pre-arranged path that our family or society sets. What if things changed and people could become what they truly desired? What if we stopped letting our parents and society influence our future, and thought about what we were passionate about?

When I came into high school, I was planning on running my own engineering company, hoping to become wildly successful. Then one day, I told my parents that studying business wasn't my dream, and that being a journalist was. My parents heard me out, and let me explain why I loved journalism, and what my plan after high school was. They were very accepting, and told me that the only thing that mattered was if I was happy with my choice. If every child stood up and went after what they dreamt about, how much different would our world be? A lot of people have absolutely no clue what they want to do when they graduate, and that is totally okay. It creates a sense of adventure in your life, and you are open to so many new things that are undiscovered to you. High school is the ultimate time to try out new things.

So instead of worrying and stressing about your future, take a class or join a club that you wouldn't usually think about taking, like chess or theatre. You may find a new passion in your life all because you stepped outside your comfort zone. This is a great way for underclassmen with their future ahead of them to try new things, instead of being locked into a future they may not even want, which has been even more common with the state's move to endorsements. Spending some time being undecided in life is so important to who you eventually become because being undecided allows you to go searching for new interests, and to completely discover who you really are and what you really love.



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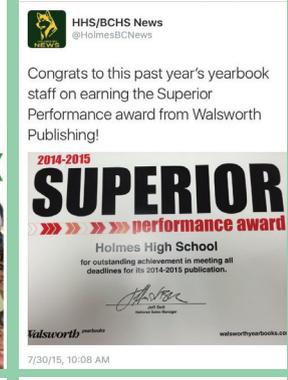
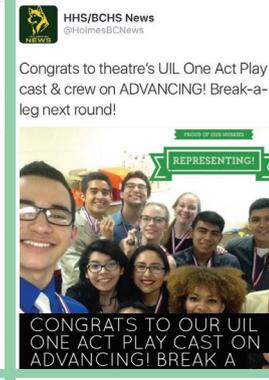
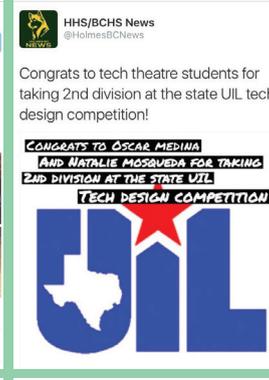
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HUSKY PRIDE IS JUSTIFIED

by Janelle Martinez,
Senior Staff Writer

Do you know about the things your classmates are achieving? Here are some accomplishments from different students and groups on campus that have exceeded in not only sports but academics. This doesn't include all of the official awards and accomplishments, but it's a good start. Next time you hear someone suggest that "Holmes never wins anything," you might tell them to think again.



WHAT GIVES US HUSKY



What should everyone know

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIG NIGHT

by Amber Villanueva, Senior Staff Writer

You may be wondering about the big night. Here is some information on prom that you should know. We talked to Class of 2016 sponsor Emily Vasquez and various businesses around our community in order to get you the scoop on the who, what, when, where, and how of this year's prom.

When is Prom?

"Prom is April 30th, which is on a Saturday."

Where can I get a tuxedo or dress?

The Dress Shop
Men's Warehouse
Al's Formal Wear
Macy's

What time is prom?

"Prom is from 7-11 p.m. not a.m."

When should people start heading to prom?

"I would say around 7:20 p.m."

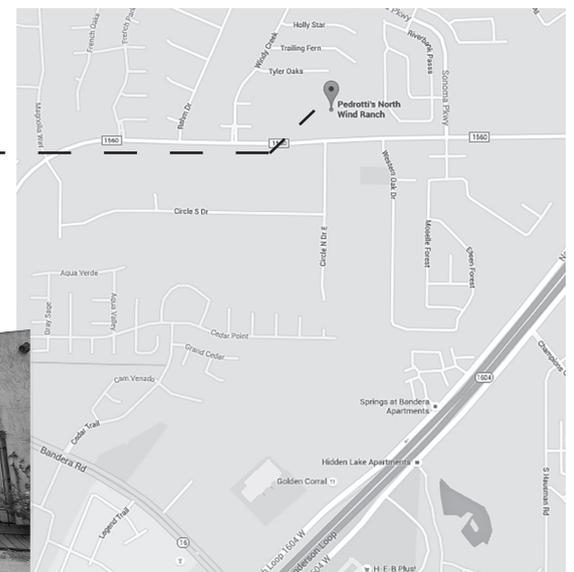
"If you're not going to go out to eat then come around 7:15 p.m."

Where is Prom going to be?

"Prom will be at Pedrotti's North Wind Ranch in Helotes, TX."

When is the last day to purchase prom tickets?

"April 27th for \$75."



about Prom?

Where can I eat before?

Olive Garden
Saltgrass Steakhouse
Spaghetti Warehouse

What kind of food is going to be served at Prom?

"We're going to have Chicken Strips, a nacho bar, a fruit bar, cookies, candy bar."

Where can I get hair and makeup done?

ULTA Beauty
Sephora
Hair 4 You LLC



Where can I buy a corsage?

Flowers by Grace
Blooming Creations Florist
House of Blooms

Where can I rent a limo?

A-List Party Rides
Elegant Limousine and Charter
San Antonio Limo

Q: How do I pull off a good proposal? Breaking Down THE PROMPOSAL

Thinking of asking that special someone, or even just a friend to be your prom date? Make sure you propose the right way. While proposals are banned during school hours, we have the tips to make sure your after school proposal gets you a "yes!"

- Buy flowers. —
- Have a theme for your proposal.
- Make a clever poster.
- Buy balloons at the Dollar Tree and make all of your friends deliver them.



photo by Patricia Rodriguez



photo by Tori Falcon

- Do it in a public place
- Cut out big individual letters to spell out their name.
- Make sure you have enough friends for the amount of letters in her name, and the other posters.

Q • How do you deal with divorce?

HOW STUDENTS AND TEACHERS BATTLE THROUGH ISSUES RELATED TO DIVORCE AT HOME AND SCHOOL

By Amanda Rocha, Co-Editor

Everything starts off so simple. You have both parents, always there for you, being your number one supporters, side by side with one another. Then all of a sudden, you get hit with the phrase, “We’re getting a divorce.”

Your world crashes down on you and your mind starts going in all different directions. You are no longer sure if anything will ever be the same again.

Who are you going to live with? Where will you call home? Will you even have any place to call home once your parents are no longer under the same roof together? Where will you keep your stuff? Do you need a suitcase? How did this happen? Was it your fault? What did you do wrong now that’s led to this major decision of a divorce?

According to Huffpost, just about half of the marriages in America do not work out. It is not uncommon for a high school student to have experienced their parents or even stepparents going through divorce, which often takes a great toll, but on other occasions can bring relief to the individuals involved.

Every marriage is different, and they all consist of their own problems and issues because no relationship is perfect no matter what it may look like from a third person’s point of view.

Psychology and sociology teacher Leola McKenna recently experienced a divorce of her own and as a mother of a 16-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son, has seen first hand how this difficult process can affect a family and teenagers.

“Their initial reaction after Sean [McKenna’s ex-husband] moved out was ‘Great! Fun! Joy!

We have mom’s house and dad’s house! This is really cool,” McKenna said.

As the divorce process continued however, the tension progressed between the adults and it began to impact the everyday life of their

children and they started acting out and showing signs of serious anger. Kids being kids, they began to start pointing fingers, and it just so happened to be their mom that was the one being blamed.

“I was blamed because I made a mistake and I had to tell my kids about it because Sean’s parting words were, ‘I’m going to tell everyone

While McKenna’s kids may have looked to put fault on one parent over the other for the divorce, in reality, like many divorces, it was inevitable years before anyone declared that it was going to happen. Many years before the divorce, a distancing between the couple grew and it was simply not evident to the kids along the way.

“Ryan, now that the divorce is final, is much more social when he’s with me. He doesn’t choose to isolate himself the way he did throughout the divorce. They both however are now in therapy and have been for six months now, together, because I knew Ryan would not see a therapist without his sister,” McKenna said.

For other students on campus, the division and strife in a parent’s marriage was well known, and the divorce was not a surprise.

“My parents had already been arguing a lot at home and it was getting bad to a point where my mom had to call the cops because of the whole situation. So one day [our parents] just sat us down and let us know what was going to happen,” Senior Arianna Delgadillo said.

Although Delgadillo was a little young to completely comprehend the situation, she remembers her older sister, who was about 12-years-old at the time, being very heartbroken over the situation. For students like Delgadillo, it’s accepted that divorce happens for a reason. Couples that once gathered together in the sacred bond of marriage rarely look at divorce as a choice, it is something that has to happen. For most, divorce isn’t the option they turn to when they’re happy, it’s the one they turn to when they no longer have any other options.

photo by Clarissa Silva

what you did to me and I’m going to make sure everyone knows exactly what you did to me,’ and I didn’t want my kids to hear that from their dad. I chose to tell my kids, and while that was the most difficult thing I’d done, I knew it was the right thing to do,” McKenna said.

“I would say that if your parents have come to the agreement to separate, that means that it’s basically the last straw so they’re doing it for the better. If there’s ever arguments between the two of them, the child should never blame themselves. The parents are the ones that got themselves in the predicament and they’re the ones that failed the marriage, not the child,” Delgadillo said.



SPORTS SHORTS

from the Gavel News Desk

NEWS BRIEFS

The following information was collected on March 28, 2016, at the midpoint for most of the spring sports. For more up-to-date articles and score reports, follow Holmes journalism on our social media accounts @holmesbcnews, or visit our online paper at studentnews.nisd.net/holmes

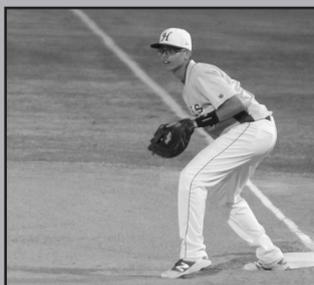


photo by Tiareka Woods

BASEBALL

District Wins: 7 Losses: 2
 "We've come far. Beating some of the best teams in district like O'Connor, Clark, and Brandeis has us in first place in district and ranked tenth in the city."
 -Omar Garza, 12th

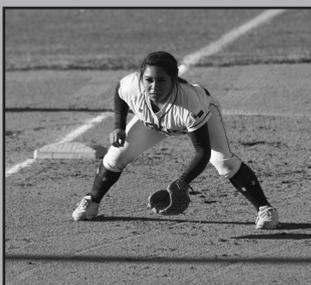


photo by Alexis Trevino

SOFTBALL

District Wins: 8 Losses: 2
 "We have had our ups like beating O'Connor 8-1, but we've also had our downs like losing players. We will keep fighting to see where it takes us."
 -Omni Garcia, 12th



photo by Joseph Vasquez

BOYS SOCCER

Wins: 6 Losses: 12 Ties: 3
 "Unfortunately, we put ourselves in a bad position with a must-win to make playoffs. Overall it was a huge improvement from last year that we'll build on."
 -Mauricio Hidalgo, 11th



photo by Maria Garcia

GIRLS SOCCER

Wins: 0 Losses: 17 Ties: 1
 "At the beginning, we were a very strong team that was developing, but we had a lot of players get injured. We played as hard as we could."
 -Cynthia Ramos, 11th



photo by Makayla Sloan

VARSITY TRACK

1st place at South San Meet
 2nd place at Heroes Meet
 "We've made tremendous strides toward being one of the best overall teams in the district."
 -Ethan Hageman, 10th

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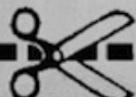
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Q

are we
allowed
to joke
about this?

OPINION: WE NEED TO LEARN ABOUT AND BE SENSITIVE TO OUR MUSLIM FRIENDS' CULTURE

Personal Opinion Column by Victoria Falcon, Senior Staff Writer

The other day I was receiving help with my physics work from my friend who happened to be Muslim, and another guy, who is also his friend, made a comment, "Hey man, don't plant a bomb in my calculator or anything." I was shocked by the comment, and got a bit upset on behalf of my friend, so I told this guy how what he said was a mean comment. The student's response was that, "it was a joke" and "I was just kidding," and "I didn't mean that!" I watched as my Muslim friend remained stoic during this encounter and tried not to look upset. He told his friend, "It's okay man." This same friend who was the target of the jokes told me a week or so before that he received many comments and jokes like that and that they are hurtful. I trust that the student who made the "jokes" to my Muslim friend didn't mean real harm but, these jokes really aren't jokes to those they are directed at. The reason I stepped in is because such comments are common, and the more people are insensitive to the weight of their words the more it becomes acceptable to say such things. This is an issue that people need to pay attention to so they know how deep their words can cut.

My Muslim friends explained to me why these comments are so wrong. It may be a joke to others, but some people are very misinformed on what the difference between the religion Islam really is, and extremist terrorist groups. This has an effect on the perception of their culture. Muslims are constantly profiled as something they aren't because of stereotypes that label them as extremist, Jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda, and more recently, ISIS. It is important to be informed on these differences and to understand that how we talk about these things is relevant to the world. Jihadists have been connected to some of the most tragic terror attacks, including the recent Paris terror attacks, the San Bernardino shootings in California, along with the most recent attacks in Belgium. Extremists claim to be what they insist is the 'true Islam.' In the Islamic religion, there are two main denominations, Sunni and Shia. Extremists groups tend to be Sunni, and although this is true, it doesn't mean that all or even most Sunni-Islam are terrorists. These extremists just happen to be Sunni. Many people are very misinformed, and associate all Muslims with these terrorists. What most fail to see is that Islam is a religion of peace, and love, as most religions tend to be. Islam does not in any way promote these evil agendas to kill and harm others. In fact, the acts of terrorism are viewed by most Muslims as a sin, instead they encourage kindness. Terrorist groups are people who use Islam to cover their disgusting activities. Terrorism has no religion, culture, or race. This isn't new. Several types of groups have used something to justify their actions: The Klu Klux Klan

uses "Christianity" to defend hate crimes such as the lynching of Black people. Hitler, and the Nazis used "German pride," and "patriotism" to promote the concentration camps and killing of innocent Jewish people. Most people wouldn't look at a Caucasian person, and immediately use hate speech and hate crime against them because they know that they cannot blame an entire race for the faults of a few. We should extend the same respect to Muslims. Never should we ostracize and blame an entire culture of people for the acts of a few people. Additionally, Islam is the second most populous religion in the world next to Christianity. It makes up 23% of the world's population, which is 1.6 billion people. If it were true that all Muslims were terrorists, then wouldn't western culture have been destroyed already? All of my friends explain how important it is for us to make it a point to read and learn about the world around us. If not, we will always only know what makes its way in our path. If we don't try to discover and figure out what Islam really is, we will only see what uninformed social media opinions tell us. We must be open-minded to culture and beliefs of others because it is the right thing to do. One of the most important qualities a person can hold is the ability to humanize all people. There are qualities that will be foreign to us, or that we may not necessarily agree with, but humanizing others gives the subject a story deeper than an impression. It helps us relate, and find ourselves in such people. Even if we don't agree we will learn to respect them. Opening yourself to other cultures instills empathy within you and opens you up to so many great opportunities, and points of view. Even if you aren't someone who spews hate speech at Muslims, you may have made a terrorist joke every now and again, and it's not okay. Many of us never lived the reality of the negative stigma against our entire upbringing and culture, so we must learn to be aware of other's lives and emotions, and be considerate of the baggage they carry. I feel I don't have the right or authority to speak for this culture because I've never had to deal with this, but definitely reading and informing myself on the topic has made me more sensitive to the situation. Only good will come from informing ourselves on these topics, and there are a few things you can do to start educating yourself. A good place to start might be by watching the TEDTalk "Islam: a Religion of Peace or Violence?" by Mustafa Syed, and read the article, "Muslims Are Not Terrorists: A Factual Look at Terrorism and Islam" from *The Huffington Post*. Hopefully from these pieces, we may open our minds and, become more aware of how to better support and be friends with our Muslim neighbors and classmates.



Are Islam and ISIS the same thing?

MUSLIM STUDENTS COMBAT JUDGEMENTS AND CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING FAITH

by Victoria Falcon, Design Editor

Imagine being misunderstood by your peers, and even by your own teachers. Imagine being asked questions about your association with some of the most violent and horrible things happening in the world today. Picture the invisible weight you would have to carry because of misconceptions that are the opposite of the culture and religion you identify with. Now realize, this is a sad truth for Muslim students on campus every day.

The fear and judgement of people of the Islamic religion predominantly began after the 9/11 terror attacks by the extremist group Al-Qaeda. Islam has since gained a negative stigma that has continued to be perpetuated by the chaos created by other Jihadist groups, the most infamous of which is currently The Islamic State in Syria & Iraq or ISIS. Because of this stigma, even students and teachers on campus conclude that all Muslims are associated with these groups, and few go out of their way to check their conclusions against facts.

Senior Ayat Hamide, junior Ali Hamide, and senior Amir Alsaiddi know this first hand. These students often experience what it is like when others are misinformed, and how the words of others can be offensive.

"They never try to know anything about my culture, so on accident they just say some stuff, but I'll be fine because I'm open-minded," Ali said.

Ayat, who is Ali's older sister, tells of another specific disturbing instance of how some misunderstand her faith.

"There was a teacher who told me 'why do you wear that thing?' I told him it's a hijab. I tried to tell him it's a part of my religion but he doesn't respect that, and he tried to tell me 'you know you're ISIS?' and 'all Muslims are ISIS,'" Ayat said.

Dealing with a preconceived idea of what others have made you out to be is not uncommon for Muslim students on campus

"Once people know you're Arabian, they just take that as the whole idea of who you are,"

Alsaiddi said.

Most of these issues occur because many on campus admit they're not clear on the difference between ISIS and the Islamic Faith. Islam is a peaceful religion, for the majority of people who practice it, while groups like ISIS abuse it to kill and cause harm give Islam bad name.

"Islam is a religion for love, forgiveness and to live in peace. ISIS is for killing people. You can tell the difference. It's not everyone wearing a Hijab," Ayat said.

Alsaiddi is educated on how ISIS came about,

"I just want to tell everyone I am not ISIS. I am myself. I'm a Muslim girl, but I'm not ISIS."

explaining the Shia and the Sunni are the two major denominations of Islam, and that ISIS is of the Sunni denomination. Alsaiddi describes the difference between the religion Islam and terrorist groups such as ISIS, by using a lesson taught by the Prophet.

"It's a long problem between the Shia and the Sunni. ISIS people just want to control the country for benefits, and Islam mentions equal rights for everyone. Islam can't kill, the Prophet got some prisoners and the people wanted to kill them, and he said, 'no we are going to let them teach us and let them go give me something useful so I can give you something useful,'" Alsaiddi said.

Muslims who convert to extremism may do so for several reasons, but Ayat believes that people who follow extremism don't understand what Islam truly means.

"I believe some Muslims follow ISIS because they don't know the truth or understand what they

have," Ayat said.

Ali takes it a step further, believing that these terrorists aren't Muslim, nor do they belong to any faith. Ali believes all religions were created to keep civilization, so people of violence are not with any faith.

"The definition of a Muslim: you need to be at peace, and respect everyone and every religion the way it is. If you kill someone, God never told you to kill anyone, so you're not any religion because all the religions say to act in a peaceful way," Ali said.

Many people unfamiliar with Islam assume it is violent or "evil," and encountering these people is nothing new to Alsaiddi. Uninformed Christians often hand his mother cards with Christian ideals and beliefs when out in public.

"A lot of times people see my mom in the hijab and just come and hand her a card and say, 'You need Jesus,'" Alsaiddi said.

Ayat recently had to handle some judgement when a friend of hers made a joke to go back to her country. Comments that are meant as jokes actually hurt Ayat because going back to the country of her birth, Iraq, isn't that simple.

"When someone tells me that...it's not my choice to come here, I have to come here, I can't go back there," Ayat said.

Friends may make jokes, and they have to not take it too much to heart, Alsaiddi believes jokes like these must be taken lightly.

"For fun, people make a joke and it's not funny they just say it. But you can't get mad or you'll get in trouble so you have to take it," Alsaiddi said.

Ali says he must handle people's judgements with consideration of their perspective. He knows others may not mean to say hurtful, and could be misinformed so he must be open-minded to them, and hopefully they will be to him.

"You need to be open minded to understand others and others understand you," Ali said.

It can be frustrating to deal with the association to extremist groups, and be discouraged about the religion you practice.

"I just want to tell everyone I am not ISIS, I am myself, I'm a Muslim girl, but I'm not ISIS," Ayat said.



Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK? TWITTER POLLS OUR QUESTIONS, YOUR ANSWERS.

design by Victoria Johnson, Senior Staff Writer and original artwork by Bryanna Ramirez

