MISSION STATEMENT

The eclectic is a collection of stories, essays, poems, and artwork in which ESA students are encouraged to express their individuality, creativity, and talent. It is meant to foster individuality. It is also a way for students to share their works with the rest of the ESA community.
NONFICTION

MEET THE EDITOR

SWEP NELSON

Hey there. I’m Swep. My favorite subject is history and I like stand-up comedy. I’m going to be the nonfiction editor for The Eclectic this year. I enjoy speaking in accents and pina coladas. (and dancing in the rain). I hope to see some great submissions about some of the interesting events that have happened in your lives.
Inside ESA: Cross Country

By Clarke Patrone

In Cade at 6 am, it’s still completely dark, but the flood lights illuminate the quad in greyish light. While many of us are still sleeping, the ESA Cross Country team is stretching in preparation for another grueling practice. The team has its eyes set on the state championship after finishing in third place last year. “I think we are going to be a legitimate contender,” says freshman runner Oliver Vreeland. The practice begins in full with two thirty minute runs with a brief break in between, and this is considered an easy day. If any members of the team are tired they aren’t showing it as we start out at a chipper clip of the team joking and chanting as they run. Team seniors Brayden Hernandez, Drake Broussard, and Evan Bramlet set the pace as we meander through the campus. Bramlet remarks, “These practices train us to be mentally tough.” Running through Camelot in the pitch black and trekking through stretches of deep mud by the cane fields highlight the run.

Cross Country running is by nature an individual activity and yet the strength of comradery between runners is clear. Coach Graycheck remarks, “Practices are tough, but it really is a social thing and that helps make it fun.” The motivation is visibly there. “I do it to get a rockin body. I think I work best with four hours of sleep,” jokes senior Claire Storment. Running cross country is as much a mental strain as it is physical. Sophomore Libby Menard observes, “Whatever you put in you get out, so you constantly have to put in 110% percent effort.”

On Saturday, ESA hosted the “Aint No Shade in Cade” meet featuring over four-hundred runners from across the state. Senior Captain Brayden Hernandez, whose personal-record 18:04 finish was good for second on the team and thirteenth overall called the meet, “A huge success,” saying that it showed that the team, “has a real chance of winning the state championship.” The boy’s squad finished second in the meet behind class 5A Comeaux High School and was led by junior Henry Schneider’s blistering 17:40 time. Incredibly, seven ESA boys runners, including junior Henry Schneider, senior Brayden Hernandez, freshman Oliver Vreeland, junior Riley Nickel, senior Evan Bramlet, freshman Daniel Magann, and senior Drake Broussard all finished with sub nineteen minute times. On the girls side, middle-schooler Samantha Withers stunned everybody by finishing in third place overall with an absurd 20:06 time. This figures to be the one of the most impressive individual performances for an ESA athlete in recent memory. Withers in conjunction with freshman Oliver Vreeland represent the young talent that gives this Cross Country team dynasty potential. Meanwhile, the team will continue to train in preparation for the state championship in mid-November. However, as Vreeland quipped, “The most important race is the race to the shower.”
The peculiar story of an Angry Korean, male Jennifer Anniston, and concussion camp by Swep Nelson

The strangest dream I have ever had occurred over the summer. Here it goes. It was me and three friends from Virginia and this strange guy who claimed to be my friend’s uncle but no one actually knew who he was, and we decided we were going to take a road trip to New York. However, for some reason we first had to drive to Florida and from there take a plane to New York (this is the most mundane abnormality in the story so prepare yourself). We started driving and on the way we stopped at a Ben & Jerry’s. Now for some reason the Ben & Jerry’s was in a creepy attic above a Dollar General, so I went up there and it was just me and this angry Korean man working the register. He let me try a sample of their new flavor of ice cream and when I said I didn’t like it he tried to charge me $35, to which I promptly refused. This incensed the cashier and he proceeded to chase me out of attic Ben & Jerry’s with a meat cleaver. When I got to the parking lot, we all raced to the car and sped away, shouts of anguish yelled in Korean trailing us in the distance. Once we finally arrived in Florida and boarded our flight, I got nervous about the Korean guy and fainted, hitting my head. When I woke up I was in what was explained to me as a subterranean summer camp for people who got concussions, and it was mandatory to stay there for 3 weeks if you had one. A number of ESA people were campers, including Blythe Bull who frequented the camp so much that she had built a summer cabin there. There were also people from my senate page job I had over the summer. Also somewhat random and completely impertinent to the rest of the story but Jennifer Anniston was there too, except she had had a sex change and was now technically a man… I don’t want to begin to imagine what this detail might mean about my subconscious, but anyway I digress. So I was in subterranean concussion camp with this Eclectic™ assortment of people and for some reason they all loved the place, Audrey Gutierrez even remarked, “I’m going to concuss myself again so I can stay another three weeks!” This sentiment was utterly inexplicable to me and to my relief there was a way out. Every day you could take this test and if you passed, they would let you go, however you had to get the highest score of people testing that day to leave. The first day I took it this guy I absolutely despised from the pages took the test to just so he could get a higher grade and prevent me from leaving, an endeavor in which he succeeded. Luckily, when the second day rolled around he was gone and I prevailed and was allowed to leave. Once I was out, I met up with my friends and the uncle who know one knew and we continued on to New York, and then once we got there we decided the sand was too hot and we left.
Strangest Dream by Drake Broussard

There I was, sitting in my recliner watching my daily episodes of "Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide." I was munching on a bag of cheddar Bugles. Suddenly, I heard a large thump. Then another, then another. They occurred one after the other for a few seconds, then the thumps stopped. Suddenly, I heard a roar much like that of a dinosaur. I decided to go outside to see what was going on. The sight that lied in front of me was horrific.

A gargantuan T-rex was hovering over my aunt’s house next door. I thought about running away, but I garnered the courage to run their way to warn them. Suddenly, the dinosaur turned towards me, roared, and proceeded to rip the roof off of my aunt’s house. The strange thing is that he ripped it off all in one piece.

He threw the roof into the canefield as I watched in horror. My great-grandmother was inside the house and burst through the back door. She began running around the house hysterically as the dinosaur pursued her. Being that she was 92 years old and 4’10”, the dinosaur had no trouble catching up to her. At this point, I knew I had to save my grandmother, so I ran to her, picked her up, and ran into the canefields.

This is all that remains of this deram. I do not know whether my family survived. I do not know whether the entire Earth survived or if they tranquilized it and my family became famous. What I do know is that my grandmother and I were safe.

Dream Journal Entry by Mallory Gaspard

I tend to have weird dreams, and I tend to have them often. I wish I could adequately explain their origins, but unfortunately, I cannot. However, I have vivid memories of some of my strangest dreams, so I will share a few of them.

Throughout elementary school, Marie Claire deKeyzer and I were inseparable. We finished each other’s sentences, spent nearly weekend together, sat next to each other in class. One night in fifth or sixth grade, as I lay sleeping peacefully in my bed, I had an obscure, yet quite realistic dream about Marie Claire and I. Marie Claire and I were enjoying our weekend, tending to our American Girl Dolls and perfecting our Barbie city. It was late, nearly midnight, and we continued playing our Barbie games. As midnight turned into one o’clock, we began to fall asleep. We put the Barbies away and crawled into our pink sleeping bags. The only light visible was the light coming from the television screen, and the only noise around was the soft, nearly inaudible hum of Disney Channel’s reruns. As we drifted off into a light slumber, we heard faint footsteps sliding down the corner in the hall. Those didn’t sound like my father’s lazy footsteps. The quick steps were the footsteps of an intruder. Immediately, we looked up, looked at each other quickly, and began devising our escape route. We decided that the safest place for us was in my closet, so that’s where we hid. We quickly climbed up to the top of it and positioned ourselves as stiff as boards. We continued lying there anxiously until our worst fear became reality. There were two intruders opening the closet, coming for us. We reacted as quickly as we could. As soon as our demonic kidnappers opened the closet door, Marie and I threw a baby stroller at their heads, immediately killing both of them. Petrified, we looked at each other, and I said,

“I guess we should call the police.”
WEIRD DREAMS DRABBLE  by AUDREY GUTIERREZ

I've had some pretty weird dreams in the past. Among them is the dream I had wherein I was standing on a fancy, Japanese-style wooden bridge. My hands were spatulas. Hippos popped out of the water in front of me and each time they did, I'd rush to hit them with one of my spatula hands. After the loud smack, they'd smile at me and sink back into the water. I don't even want to know what that says about my subconscious.

Another extremely strange but more complicated dream I had was one in which I was hiding out in a glass building at an amusement park. Crowds of people had attempted to evacuate the park, but giant robots were trying to catch all the people and kill them. I managed to escape the park on the back of a llama, who just happened to be standing right outside the glass building. Then, the scene changed and I was standing in a lodge resort with some of my friends. The majority of us were waiting in a line, except for Blythe and Swee who were on the opposite end of the line. They were facing us with serving spoons in their hands, steaming food in front of them, and their hair tucked away in harnets. After each of my friends got their food, they went outside.

So after Blythe and Swee gave me a tray of food without recognizing me, though I tried talking to them, I went outside to join the others. There was a futuristic highway and no one was there. I went back inside, but Blythe and Swee were gone too. Going outside again, I plunked down on the sidewalk and started eating. Out of nowhere, I heard this German-sounding techno music. A sleek white racecar that looked like that car from Speed Racer pulled up on the road, stopping next to me. The driver rolled down the window, revealing Colby wearing a blonde wig with pink rollers tucked into the curls and matching pink lipstick on. "Get in," he said girlishly.

Befuddled, I did as he said and then we started driving down the outer space-ish highway. We drove past long white columns and we didn't stop until we reached some mountains. Colby stopped the car and said, now sounding like his normal self, "See ya!" His wig fell off into the dust as he slammed the car door behind him. He cackled loudly, running off into the trees. Oddly calm about the entire situation, I drove the car until I was outside of my sister's room which has moved from Columbia to the middle of nowhere. I woke up before I knocked on her door.

NEW GIRL  by AJANI AUBREY

I have caught myself watching "New Girl" on Netflix recently. It's the story if Jess the grade-school teacher (Zooey Deschanel) moving in with three guys. A very basic plot is the common fare: the neat guy and the messy guy butt heads, the girl has a boyfriend over that she doesn't know is weird, etc. Occasionally, they reach into deeper subjects, but it's not like they're talking racism in the working world. It's a pretty average TV show with ok acting. It's no Frasier and not the next Seinfeld, but it's fine being a passable comedy. Taking a look at the other things I watch, you're going to find things that people consider "tasteful." However, there is also semi-crude to mediocre entertainment. Depending on what entertainment of mine someone sees, they'll make a judgement of my taste. This judgement will determine whether they will share with me what they watch and/or look for my recommendations. Even this weekend, a friend that I share a netflix account with questioned my repeated viewings of "New Girl." He knew me as the person to talk about Frasier, Community, or some other "smart" comedy with. He didn't take me as the type to watch "New Girl." He's a great, funny guy that I share a lot of things with and he also shares a lot of things with me. However, when he asked me "So why have you been watching 'New Girl'?" I could feel that little inner judgement ticker shift oh so slightly. I explained to him that I enjoyed the show because it was simple, funny, and it wasn't trying to be something that it wasn't. I didn't go on a tirade about how shunning a program for exhibiting simplicity or even mediocrity is bad because it breeds snobbish, uninformed opinions, but there was a hint of the sentiment in my curt "I like it. It's pretty funny." If I did, it would have been an amazing, thought-provoking, and jarring criticism of the judgement of peers based on their source of criticism. But I didn't. That's because taste is unimportant and only a source of judgement and generalization based on decisions one might make when they genuinely didn't care. So what reason do I have to argue about something that I find unimportant.
AUDREY GUTIERREZ
Hi, I'm Audrey, and I'm the editor of the fiction section of The Eclectic. I enjoy long walks on the beach. Stop Ajani. Don't type that. Are we leaving that in there? I've been reading and writing since I was young. I am also the Discipline Council President and an archer.
Beast in the Woods by Luke Legoullon

It is a foggy day out in the woods. The only sound I can hear is my feet crunching on the dead leaves after each step I take. I can barely see five feet ahead because the fog is so dense. It is one of the worst times to be out in the woods. I am in the woods to try to escape the life I had where all I would hear is the sound of my parents screaming at each other. My dress is starting to get damp with sweat. I do not have other clothes because my parents only care about buying drinks and not anything for me. I do not care where I go as long as it is away from the nightmare I call home.

There are mosquitoes swarming everywhere. I make desperate attempts to try to swat them away but it is too hard. My skin becomes infested with mosquito bites and starts to itch like crazy. I feel helpless just like all those times at home when my parents would get drunk and argue. I try to run away from everything, all the times when my parents would argue, away from the times they would go days without talking to each other. I can't help but start bawling on the ground. I can run away from home but I will have to live with the memories forever.

Just as I was starting to settle down I hear footsteps to the left of me. I cannot see anything because of the fog. The footsteps are loud and sounds like no human.

I yell in a scared voice, "Get away from me!".

The rustling gets louder and I cannot escape. I try to run but my legs will not move. No one could possibly hear me scream.

Then suddenly it all falls silent. I can no longer hear the rapid steps of the figure approaching. The silence is terrifying. I want to scream but I know it won't help. I turn in all directions making desperate attempts to hear the sound again.

Then I hear the footsteps, but this time it is much closer. I turn all around trying to see who is making this sound. I see nothing but white dense fog.

The footsteps are getting so close that I can now see the shadow of the figure. It is inhumanly tall. Suddenly out of the white fog appears the beast. I scan over its inhuman body. From the feet to the neck it looks normal, wearing a black tuxedo. Expecting to see a normal human I look at where a face should be. Instead of a human face all I see is white. I have seen horror stories featuring this beast on the internet. Everyone says he is fake but he is right here. I think of all the horror stories I have read featuring this beast, trying to think of some way to escape this beast. I reach out to touch the beast knowing this cannot be real. My hand never reached his body.

He swats my hand away in one swipe. The force is inhuman. I hear a big crack and know the whole hand is broken. I look down at my hand. It is a purple color and I am not able to move my fingers. I am fighting to stay conscious. I am stunned by the pain and I fall down. I am horrified he will murder me in one punch; therefore, I slowly back away.

I scream, "Don't hurt me!" as he starts walking towards me.

As he approaches I think of ways to run. Quickly, I burst from where I was sitting and run the opposite way. I know it is impossible to run from Slenderman but my life depends on it. All of a sudden I see Slenderman ahead of where I am running. How is this possible! Just a second ago I was running from him trying to escape. I try to turn again but I see Slenderman appear right there. There is no way I can escape. I am not ready to die! I am ten years old and can't die now especially in this way. I am right next to Slenderman waiting for my death, but it never comes.

Slenderman writes on the dirt "follow." I start stumbling over towards him. He leads me to this clearing in the woods with a
Slenderman writes on the dirt “follow.” I start stumbling over towards him. He leads me to this clearing in the woods with a bloodstained hut. Inside he displays severed heads that all have a look of pain and fear in their eyes. I gasp in surprise thinking I will be the next person in his hut.

In the dirt Slenderman writes, “This is my collection”. Horrified I try to escape again. This time Slenderman grabs me and bring me back in the hut. He writes, “Tell me where your parents are and you are not going to be part of my collection.” Knowing all my parents have done to me, I still can’t see myself as a murderer. Slenderman is getting impatient and is motioning for my response. I yell “I’ll never tell you where they are!” The last words I see are “You made your choice!”
POETRY

MEET THE EDITOR

JACKSON BEACH

Howdy, I'm Jackson Beach. I've been in the ESA musicals every year. I'm also in choir. Boy, do I love singing. I love Dota. I definitely wrote this.
DEPARTING THOUGHTS OF JOHN PROCTOR
BY DANIEL HOLLAND

Confess or Die?
Confess or die, why oh why?
I pray for the mercy of God
To feel the hum of rope or he
How should I decide?

No win, only lose
How would a righteous man choose?
For I am not

My nave or neck, where to bet?
I am a slave to the Truth

For I have broken thy chains, which lead to more
chains
I am a traitor to His name

Who to blame?
I cannot play this game, for I am slave to the
Truth

No, I choose my breath over thy death
For I am a slave no more

But wait, the gates await
For I am slave to the Truth
Hello, I'm Ajani and I'm the editor for the art section of the eclectic. I design the issue and all of the stuff like that. Here's a sample of my work.
Top: Landon Lingle
Bottom Right: Blythe Bull