LIFE OF A MM REPORTER
BY LAUREN CHEN

I have been a Monthly Mustang contributor since 3rd grade, and it has been very fun. I enjoy writing articles for our school newspaper. Monthly Mustang is fun because you get to contribute to your school, and you feel good about it. There are a variety of types of articles you can choose to do. Some of my favorites are interviews and comics. I have been able to meet new people and make old friendships stronger through Monthly Mustang.

For every edition of Monthly Mustang, the first thing I do is choose what type of contribution I want to make. Some of my choices are to do an article, interview, comic, crossword, review, or basically anything that goes in a newspaper. After that, I choose the subject for my contribution. If I’m writing an article, I might write about important things that are coming up in the month (such as a holiday) or about something that the readers might be interested in. If I’m doing a review, I might review a new movie. I turn in my idea for the teachers’ approval. Once it is approved, I start writing. I always begin with an outline, which is the plan for my writing. Then I start working on it.

I learned how to write an interview at Monthly Mustang. A special thing I need to do for interviews is schedule a date to meet with my interviewee. I learned what kinds of questions should be asked and how to format the interview. Continued next page see Monthly Mustang

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH THE ASTRODOME?
BY MARY PLUMB AND JULIET KUBAN

The Houston Astrodome is known around the world. It was the first air-conditioned indoor dome. Many famous people performed there, and the Houston Astros and Houston Oilers both played there. It has not been used since 2006.

We interviewed our classmates and faculty and asked what they would do with the Houston Astrodome. Keep reading to find out about their ideas.

Principal Disch: [It (the Astrodome) was the] the first place I saw a baseball game. I’m sentimental. If I had all the money in the world, I would make it an amphitheater for a concert or an indoor ski resort.

Nurse Paula: If you open the walls and keep the dome, you could make it a nice park with nice plants and vegetation. . . . [It could be] a beautiful green space with flowers and plants.

Mr. Zerber: I’ll tell you exactly what you can turn it into. I volunteer for the Houston Rodeo. Several years ago, we stored our rodeo plaques and badges and we were getting them in there. The guys taking apart the Astrodome were from Sweden, and their company takes apart old buildings and refurbishes them. They have created exotic car malls and have three floors of malls with all these cars. That’s what I think they should do with it. Continued on next page
THE DR. SEUSS EXPERIENCE BY KELSEY YIP

Do you like Dr. Seuss? Dr. Seuss is a children's book author who wrote funny books. If you like Dr. Seuss, you will love the Dr. Seuss Experience! The Dr. Seuss Experience is located in downtown Houston and will be open all summer long.

The Dr. Seuss Experience is filled with lots of rooms, and each room is based on one of Dr. Seuss' books. For example, the Sneetches room is filled with lots of Sneetches and The Grinch Stole Christmas room is filled with lots of presents and you have to use a fishing rod to catch the presents. The Wocket in My Pocket room has strange creatures hidden around and you have to find them. The Cat in the Hat room has a screen inside a fish bowl with a fish talking. It also has machines that shoot out things and you can make a mess and clean up afterwards. There are more rooms with even more surprises but I won't spoil them all.

There were hand sanitizer stations all around that you can use and everyone needs to wear a mask. You can take off your mask to take a picture. Once you've been to all the rooms, you come to a gift shop. The gift shop has lots of Dr. Seuss clothes, lunchboxes, water bottles, balloons, and much more!

My favorite part of the experience was seeing all the different rooms with so many colorful and surprising things I didn't expect to see. I also really liked how it was a surprise. When we went, my mom told us we were going somewhere after school but she didn't tell us where until she picked us up from school. Then when we got there, my brothers and I were very excited that it was something new we had not done before. We had lots of fun and I would recommend the Dr. Seuss Experience to everyone!
BIRDING: TIPS FOR BETTER BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS  BY NAOMI FAN

Summer is out, but it doesn't mean just pool parties and popsicles. With the pandemic, gatherings are now risky. One single person's hobby is birding. Birding can be fun when you are hiking remotely and spotting an interesting bird. It can also help you connect with nature. Though many birds tend to breed in the spring, migratory birds breed in the summer. Here are some tips for better birding.

**Stealth and Concealment**

To keep from alerting your presence to birds, slowly and quietly move towards the bird to get a better view. They are very aware of their surroundings, so try not to make any sudden movements or noises. You should also resist the temptation to point out a bird. The bird may get scared and fly off.

Dressing in neutral colors, such as tans, browns and grays, can help conceal you. Bright prominent colors such as black, red, and yellow serve as warning signs in the wild. Face paint and camouflage can also help. Simple fabric patterns such as plaid will also work.

**Attracting birds**

Pishing is an excellent tactic to attract birds. It is called pishing because you make pish sounds with your mouth. You can also make psst, sip, or seep noises. It is very easy to learn and can attract flocks of birds.

A second method is squeaking. You can do this by placing a curved finger up to your lips and sucking in air. This makes a sharp squeaking noise. Using a combination of pishing and squeaking can greatly help since sometimes birds get bored of consistent pishing or squeaking. Cont'd next page

**Behavior of the Birds**

Behavior is another key detail to identifying a bird. Typical behavior, feeding behavior, flight behavior, flocking behavior, mating behavior, and nesting behavior all contribute to correctly and efficiently identifying a bird. The two main ones are typical behavior and flight behavior.

Typical behavior is behavior that differs from other birds. Typical behavior is always done constantly. For example, the spotted sandpiper, a common shore bird, is always oddly bobbing its tail up and down while walking around. It also has an unusual teetering walking style. Tail bobbing is only unique to a handful of birds, such as waterthrushes, phoebes, and some sparrows and warblers. These details can help you narrow down the possibilities.

Flight behavior is the most distinct way to identify a bird in air. All birds have distinct flight patterns. Ask yourself: what does the flight look like? Bouncy? Are the wingbeats fast or slow? Woodpeckers, for example, seem to bounce in flight as they alternate flapping and gliding. Some birds of prey, such as falcons and goshawks, tend to fly in a straight line, using speed and element of surprise to catch their prey. While other birds, such as red tailed hawks, tend to circle and soar. Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards. When you see a bird flying backwards, it is definitely a type of hummingbird. Using these flight patterns, it is easier to tell a bird in the air.

By using these tips, it is easier to identify a bird, even if you do not want to become a birder. To find more about birding, go to https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/youngbirders/how-to-find-birds.php
NATIONAL DONALD DUCK DAY by CLEMENT DING

The world was introduced to Disney’s beloved character Donald Duck on June 9, 1934. He is so popular that he is a national hero in Finland! This year, Donald Duck Day is celebrated on Wednesday, June 9. Here are some facts about this hilarious cartoon character.

1. During the experimental phase of Donald’s character creation, Disney read about Australian cricketer Donald Bradman, who became famous after getting dismissed for a duck.

2. In the 1940s, Donald Duck overtook Mickey Mouse with over 128 independent short films.

3. The animated film “Der Fuehrer’s Face,” featuring Donald Duck living in Nazi Germany, won an Academy Award. It was American propaganda for the ongoing World War II.


DONALD DUCK DAY ACTIVITIES

1. Go to Disneyland or Walt Disney World.
2. Throw a Donald Duck theme party.
3. Watch Donald Duck movies and books.

NATIONAL PARKS PROGRAM by EMEKA NDEFO

Did you know that you can collect stamps from each park you visit?

This year for Spring Break, we went to the Grand Canyon in Arizona! We stayed at the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel and took a train to the Grand Canyon. My brothers are fifth graders so you guessed it! Free!

If you are a 4th or 5th grader this year, be sure to take advantage of the National Park Program this summer if you can. My fellow third graders, next year is our year to treat our families to a free adventure! The National Parks are an important part of life in the United States. They are really fun to visit. Let’s find out more!

There are 423 National Parks! That is a lot for a republic! What surprised me is that out of 423 national parks, Texas only has TWO! Those are Big Bend National Park and the Guadalupe Mountains. Big Bend is over nine hours west of Houston, and the Guadalupe Mountains are in El Paso, Texas.

Have you heard of the “Every Kid Outdoors” program? It is where 4th graders and their families get to go to National Parks for free! If you’re a fifth grader this year, you and your family also get to go for free! Fifth grade is included this year because the pandemic happened last year and a lot of people could not travel.

I look forward to being a fourth grader because of the National Parks! I would like to visit Yosemite National Park when I am in the fourth grade. It is located in California, and it has waterfalls and unique rock formations.
Summer is almost here. It’s almost nice and clear. It’s time to play! Let’s have some fun and explore our National Parks. Let’s take a ride through the woods, and why not say “hello” to all the animals that live there? We have no time to waste. Let’s get to it.

There are about 423 National State park sites in our country. Of those, 63 were selected by Congress because of their uniqueness and importance. These parks are protected areas with resources for public use. At these parks, we can discover and experiment with new things. We can observe nature, wildlife, and their habitat. We also might be able to hike, walk along the trails, or go stargazing. The parks are full of adventures.

Here are some of the most popular National Parks and highlights:

- Yellowstone National Park: Gorgeous Mountains, lakes, valleys, geysers, and wildlife.
- Yosemite National Park: Impressive waterfalls and the giant El Capitan Rock.
- Glacier National Park: Known by the water and mountains surrounding it.
- Grand Canyon National Park: Beautiful huge canyon.
- Zion National Park: Paradise for trail seekers because it has dangerous paths.
- Grand Teton National Park: It has hundreds of trails through prairies and lakes, as well as snow-capped peaks.
- Bryce Canyon National Park: It has all shapes of pillars of rock.
- Arches National Park: It has sandstone monuments in the form of arches. This place is great for rock climbing.
- Rocky Mountain National Park: Beautiful landscapes, trails, lakes, and peaks taller than 10,000 ft.
- Sequoia National Park: Beautiful towering sequoia trees—the largest trees in the world.

Before you start your wonderful trip, let’s take a look at the things you must pack.

- Map and compass
- Proper Attire: comfortable clothing appropriate for weather, good hiking shoes, light raincoat, and a walking stick if you want
- Light backpack
- Snacks and a good bottle of water
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Bear Spray
- Safety gadgets if you are climbing
- Camera

This summer I am heading to Yellowstone, the most popular National Park in the world! I hope you can visit a National Park one day, share your experience, and encourage others to do the same.

Have fun and stay wild!

Do Mask Mandates Work? By Kavan Pandya

As you may know, Texas recently lifted its mask mandate policy. But you may be wondering: Why do we need a mask mandate? What is the purpose, and is it effective?

First of all, a mask mandate is when you are required to wear a mask, whether it is indoors or outdoors. During the beginning of Covid, scientists said that mask wearing should not be controversial, which led to mask mandates in some states. During October, the Covid Tracking Project Case and State Policy Act did a study to see if the mask mandate states had less Covid than the non-mask mandate states. The result was that most states that had or have mask mandates almost always had less Covid than the states that don’t have mandates.

One of the strangest things though is that Florida, a state that does not have a mask mandate, has the same number of cases per capita as California, a state that has one of the strictest mask mandates in the country! This is due to other factors such as population density and access to health care. California has more people living in crowded conditions than in Florida. More people in California also have poor access to health care, which also affects rates of Covid. Two states with no mask mandates, North and South Dakota, had at some points the highest rates of Covid per capita.

So are mask mandates effective? The answer is an absolute yes because mask mandates will lead to less of the Coronavirus. So, the next time you wish to burn your mask, remember the only way to do this safely is to get the shot!
**SUMMER GARDENING** by Alexis Chen

School is almost out. If you are wondering what to do for summer, I have an answer: gardening! There are so many things you can plant, such as vegetables, flowers, and trees. I have planted flowers with my mom, and it is so much fun. Gardening is soothing. It is something to do outside instead of staying indoors and watching TV all day. The most exciting part about planting is tasting the produce that you grow or smelling the flowers that have bloomed.

The tools you need for gardening are a shovel, pots, soil, water, and gloves. There are many vegetables that you can grow in the summer. You can plant vegetables such as broccoli, corn, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, and onions during the summer. There are not many flowers that can survive the Texas heat; however, there are a few you can plant. Pentas are flowers that my family likes to plant. They come in a variety of colors. They are small and pretty. There are a few more flowers you can plant, such as columbine, coreopsis, and more.

Find seeds that you want to grow, and make sure there is enough space between different types of seeds. Finding the right seeds is a very important step, because your seeds will not nurture. If you do not have enough space for the seeds, they can cross pollinate. That would be a bad effect. If you cross pollinate raspberries and blueberries, it may taste differently than what you were used to.

Here are the steps to gardening:

- Pick what you want to grow.
- Choose where you want to grow your garden.
- Buy your basic tools and soil.
- Find seeds that you want to grow.
- Plant your own garden!
- Harvest it when it is ready.

The benefits of gardening at your home are that you can help the environment and help give bees food. Then, they help back by pollinating the plants. So, if you are sulking in monotony over the summer, I recommend you try gardening.

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**BASEBALL COMMUNITY** by Gavin Terrazas

Baseball connects people in many ways. You can meet new people who will become your friends on the bleachers or in the dugout. In this article, I will write about how baseball connects people all over West U.

Here’s a great fact about teams: you can make friends with your teammates. On a team, you learn to trust your teammates and your teammates learn to trust you. You need that on the baseball field or else you probably won’t win any games. It’s also great because it helps you and your teammates become better friends. The more friends you make, the less nervous you are going to be when you join a new team because you might know somebody from your previous teams. I know that has helped me a lot when I go on new teams. I am less nervous, and it is easier for me to talk to more people.

Baseball is also great to bring families together. I know that my brother has made many friends coming to my baseball games. I feel like that is a good thing because my brother makes friends with my teammates’ little brothers and I make friends with my teammates. That means that when we see them again, we are both happy to see them instead of one of us being mad that one brother gets to see his friend and the other one doesn’t get to see his friend.

I often see my little brother playing with his friend, Sammy. Sammy is my teammate’s little brother. My brother always seems happy playing with his friend. He isn’t bored and he runs around while I play baseball, so he gets exercise. I like that a lot. Another plus is that he doesn’t spend his time playing video games. He’s really smart, and I want him to put his education to good use. And vice versa, when I go to my brother’s game, I get to meet new friends and play with them. It is amazing how the more baseball games we have, the more I get to play with our friends.

Baseball is more than the players and their siblings. Parents don’t have to sit around being bored because they can talk with my friend’s parents who they have also made friends with. It’s a win-win for all of us! I also love the fact that parents normally give their friends their phone number, so whenever I want to hang out with my friend, I can ask my mom or dad to call my friend’s parents. A lot of grandparents also come to watch the games, and even families that are not in Houston watch the games online and it makes them feel connected from far away.

Another example is during championship games. During the West U Little League Minor A finals, the tension was really high, but everyone was still hanging out with their friends. Oh right, and congratulations to the Hooks!
DINNER & DESSERT BY BRAYDEN LIM

Are you looking for a good dinner and dessert combination? If so, let me tell you about my favorite restaurant, Chuy’s, and my favorite bakery, 85°C Café.

Chuy’s is my favorite restaurant for many reasons. First, when you order the kid’s meal, they give you an orange push pop to eat. The push pops are good because they are juicy, and I like pushing them up. They sometimes melt when we are eating them and make our hands very sticky. When our hands are sticky, we usually wash them off, but sometimes lick them.

Another reason is I like the appetizers. The appetizers at the restaurant are chips and salsa. I like the chips and salsa because the salsa is spicy enough, but not too spicy. The chips are crunchy and warm. The workers always give us so many chips to eat. They also sometimes give you some free tortillas. They do this because they are nice to kids and give them one while they are making them. The tortillas are always fresh and hot because they come right out of the oven. The tortillas are so fluffy; they kind of feel like they have two layers.

One of my favorite bakeries is 85°C Café. It is my favorite because it has a large variety of pastries. It has lots of aisles where you can choose different pastries. My favorite pastries are a taro bun, a mangotale, and an egg tart. The taro bun is good because I like the taro filling inside. The mangotale is good because it has mango on top of it and mango inside it, and I like mango. The egg tart is good because the inside is filled with cream and the outside is very crumbly.

If this article has convinced you to visit Chuy’s and 85°C Café for the tasty food and pastries, you can find their locations at https://www.chuys.com/ and https://www.85cbakerycafe.com/. Enjoy!

MINECRAFT: AN OLD BUT BELOVED GAME BY TOBY YIP

Minecraft is one of the most popular games of all time. It’s a virtual world where you can do anything! You can build luxurious houses. You can fight zombies, skeletons, creepers, and more in this infinite world. There are three different worlds in Minecraft. They are the Overworld, The Nether, and the End.

The Overworld is the regular world that you think of when you think of Minecraft. It’s the one full of different biomes like desert, grassland, forest, and beach. Most of the biomes are not very dangerous and are full of different types of animals. It is also the only world where you can sleep in a bed.

The Nether can only be traveled by using a Nether portal. It has vast lava oceans and only two mobs don’t attack you there. It also has very dangerous biomes full of mysterious stones, and you guessed it: more lava! Black, ominous fortresses are full of good loot. It’s a very dangerous place if you’re not prepared.

The End is the final area where you fight the Ender Dragon (the final boss), and it’s full of Enderman, Shulkers, and floating islands. Under everything is an inescapable pit of death: the Void. You fall in and you lose all your items permanently. Be careful to not look at the Enderman; black tall monsters with purple eyes will attack you if you do. The Shulkers will levitate you into the air and then drop you to your death. But through all these hazards, in the depths of the End, you can find the ultimate item: the Elytra! This device allows you to fly in the air! It is super overpowered.

Bosses are another main thing in Minecraft. There are two main bosses: The Ender Dragon and the Wither. The Ender Dragon is found in the End. You must take out its crystals on pillars and then hit it until its health drains. But be careful - it breathes fire and can knock you out of the sky. The Wither can only be summoned with four blocks of soulsand and three wither skeleton heads. It can break blocks, shoot explosive skulls, and hit you hard. When you kill it, it drops a nether star used to make a beacon that can enchant your physical abilities within its area of effect.

When I first played Minecraft, I thought it was amazing and very fun. It's full of different biomes and structures. You can take a nice fishing trip in your boat, make a farm full of goats, explore a Jungle Temple, or conquer a bastion in the Nether from some Piglins. The possibilities in Minecraft are endless. Minecraft is rated “everyone” and for ages ten and up, but it’s not just for kids. People of all ages can have fun.
HOCKNEY-VAN GOGH: JOY OF NATURE EXHIBIT AT MFAH
BY MIA PLISKIN

On Easter weekend, I got to visit the Museum of Fine Arts for the first time in over a year to see the Hockney-Van Gogh: Joy of Nature Exhibit. The exhibit is made up of paintings of nature by Vincent Van Gogh and David Hockney. Hockney is a very famous artist living today, who was inspired by Van Gogh and his paintings of landscapes. Most of his paintings at the exhibit were of nature in Yorkshire, England. The coolest part about Hockney is that he not only uses oil paints, but he also used the iPad to create some of the most magnificent paintings on display at this exhibit.

What was also impressive about Hockney’s artwork is that he uses colors you wouldn’t normally associate with nature, like pink trees, purple branches, and blue roads, but when you stand back and look at the entire landscape, it looks exactly how it probably looked to him in that moment. Like Hockney, Van Gogh’s art also looks very unnatural up close where you can see each brushstroke, but, when you step back, it all makes sense.

I loved walking through each room with paintings of trees, four seasons, and large forests hanging on colorful walls. Hockney once said, “How can you be bored with nature? Landscape is infinite, isn’t it?” I agree!

I highly recommend that you check out this exhibit, which is here until June 20, 2021. When visiting the museum, you must check out the new building, and you’re in for a colorful surprise as you walk the tunnels to the new building. Also, don’t forget to see the sculpture garden outside; some of the sculptures can even move. Enjoy!

COLONIAL PARK BY SOPHIA TANG

Don’t you like the refreshing sun shining on your body? Don’t you think that spending your day at Colonial Park is the best thing you can do nearby?! Among many parks in the West University area, going to Colonial Park is always a blast for me, given the amazing full-of-fun water park and the newly improved playground.

In the summer of Houston, all you think about is taking a dip at the water park. The pool was closed due to the pandemic for the 2020 season, but now it’s back in session! The swimming area, lily pads, a rock climbing area, and a plethora of waterslides are for kids of all-ages! No matter whether you’re a competitive swimmer or just swim for fun, you will have a great time either way. Water cannons are available around the pool circle to shoot your siblings or your friends. Yummy food and candy are right at the corner to pick up. It will be an unforgettable memory to have one of your childhood birthday parties at the water park.

The newly designed and improved playground at Colonial Park is now open to the public! The new Youth Fitness Challenge Obstacle Course resembles a national Ninja Warrior Course. It even has a timer so you can race with your friends. Along with the previously renovated playground, such as the toddler sand area with a sailboat, playhouse, sand diggers, buried fossils, new slides, climbers, play panels and pavilion, kids will have endless fun with their families and friends. People can also have a picnic, play sports, and get some fresh air in a large grass plain right next to the playground. Not only that, but there is even a tennis court you can reserve. If you don’t know how to play tennis, no worries, you can always have a coach come to teach you.

There are so many special events that the park provides to us. West University Place did a creative and fun Halloween drive through at Colonial Park last year. Now, since the pandemic is slowly wearing off, the Park resumes the outdoor movie nights, making families and friends’ get-togethers more fun!
HOUSTON BALLET’S RETURN TO THE STAGE

The Houston Ballet has done many virtual performances due to Covid-19, but as things are getting better, it has started doing in-person performances. On May 7, I saw a performance by the Houston Ballet at Miller Outdoor Theatre called Houston Ballet Reignited. The Houston Ballet dancers were very excited to perform back in person, and I was excited to be able to see them in person, too!

I felt completely safe at the performance. The Miller Outdoor Theatre enforced mask wearing at all times, except when eating or drinking. They will be having many outdoor performances, because it is a great place for the return of the arts during the pandemic. It was a wonderful place for the Houston Ballet to have as their first place to perform since the start of the pandemic.

Here are some of the highlights from the performance that I saw. There was a great virtual video of a dance called Restoration. The music was provided by Dead South, and the dancing was awesome. It was filmed all over Houston. If you would like to watch this video, you can search Houston Ballet’s Creativity Unleashed on YouTube. Once you find it, go to minute marker 18:10 to see the dance.

One of the live performances was called Flower Festival in Genzano. It was one of my favorites because I loved the dancing. It was a pas de deux, which is a dance for two people. The male ballet dancer did many big, turning jumps across the stage. The female ballet dancer was so graceful as she demonstrated her fancy footwork! The other live performances also included excerpts from the ballets, Madame Butterfly and Romeo and Juliet.

Overall, it was an amazing experience! I was happy to be an audience member and to see all of the ballet dancers return to the stage. I even saw Stanton Welch, the artistic director for the Houston Ballet, in the audience. He called out, “Bravo! Bravol,” after each of the performances. I clapped really loudly!

If you would like to view some of the Houston Ballet’s digital performances, you can search on YouTube for the Houston Ballet. If you would like to know what ballets they will perform in the 2021-2022 season, I will list them now. They will perform The Nutcracker, Jewels, Madame Butterfly, Pretty Things, Originals, and Sylvia. If you go to see a Houston Ballet performance, I hope you will enjoy it as much as me!
Find the word in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other also double word answers like Air Force, are treated like separate words and may not appear together in the puzzle.

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SUMMER WORD SEARCH
By Ana Choi