

Student profile

Kelsey Kunk
Regents Academy

Age: 18.
Grade: 12th.
Favorite Subject in school: Spanish and math.
What I do to relax: Read a good book or play the piano.
My most embarrassing moment at school was: The time I was playing goalie and I ran to stop a goal, ended up colliding with the goal post.
Something I can't live without is: My Bible.
My favorite movies are: "Tangled" and "Prince of Persia."
My favorite snack food is: Iced Oatmeal Cookies
The worst cafeteria meal I've had is: Scrambled eggs.
The song I listen to the most is: "Just The Way You Are" by Bruno Mars and "Perfect" by P!nk.
The text message I send the most is: Prolly or idk.

One day, I hope to visit: England and Carlo's Bakery,
My friends say that I am: Loyal, happy, studious and Italian.

My BFF is: My sister, Miranda.
After school I usually: Do homework, practice my cello and exercise.

Next summer I am: Going to Spain on an SFA study abroad trip.

You forgot to ask: Where I am going to college? The University of Mary-Hardin Baylor. Go Crusaders!



Field and forest facts

Stars – beacons of wonder in the night sky

If you get a chance before the city completely blots out the night with garish glaring outdoor lighting in our fear of the dark side demons and our worship of glittery advertising, take time to go outside and look at the stars. Whether fall, winter, spring or summer, the skies and the space that surround our planet are filled with stars – thousands, millions, billions of them.

We can only see a few thousand of them with our unaided eyes, even under ideal dark skies, but humans have long been fascinated, awed and intrigued by their presence. Indians thought they were the flickering campfires of dead departed spirits, other ancient people thought the night sky was a black dome with pinholes letting in light. So preoccupied were the Greeks and Romans that they conjured up imaginary patterns in the stars and incorporated them into religion. Those same constellation patterns are still recognized today.

What are stars, really? Quite simply, they are suns, differing only in minor degree from Old Sol that illuminates our days and warms us with its rays. All of those stars or suns are the focal point of solar systems around which, almost daily, astronomers are finding new planets, some astonishingly like those in our own solar system. Think of it. Millions and billions of suns with the potential of harboring earthlike planets. I wonder how many people there are out there, looking at their night sky back toward our Earth, a single, perhaps rather uninteresting glimmer amid the broad expanse of their star-filled sky.

Sacrilege or blasphemy? I don't think so. To me it is the height of egotism to think that an all powerful "God of the universe" only found it worthwhile to populate a single planet with intelligent life among the numberless "worlds without end" which He is said to have created. Some day, I suppose we'll know, but in the meantime, I see no harm in dreaming.

So here we are, on a rather small Earth, floating around in space, orbiting one of those pinpricks of light in the blackness of the void and deriving from it virtually everything we have on earth. It is, in the final analysis, our sole source of energy. It was respon-



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University of Michigan.

For generations of time people have looked at the stars scattered across the night with wonder, amazement and reverence.

sible for the photosynthesis in ancient forests, swamps and bogs that became the coal and oil fueling our power plants. It is in the gasoline of our cars, the food in our markets and the meat on our plates.

Tilted on our axis by about 23 degrees, our orbital travel around the sun causes seasonal day length changes with longer days in summer and shorter in winter. Although few of us think much about such things, those shifts are powerful, controlling the flowering of plants, influencing cats and dogs to grow winter coats and shed them in the spring, triggering the appearance of color in fall leaves, as well as the mating cycles in insects and many other animals.

Positioned as it is, 93 million miles away, our sun warms but doesn't cook us, only because we just happen to rotate at exactly the right speed on the rotisserie of our axis. A little change in that velocity, and we'd either fry or freeze. During the night, we get a little taste of what it would be like without the sun, as the day's heat radiates into the emptiness of space at a truly frightening rate, dropping the air temperature an average of 30

degrees. What if the earth got stuck, and we had a night that ran for 24 or 48 hours? By the long-awaited morning, we could be experiencing nighttime temperatures 120 degrees lower than normal — about 50 degrees below zero.

The complexities of our existence in the cosmos never cease to awe and inspire me. It seems that most of my life has been spent learning more and more about life on this little orb and yet as advancing age dogs my footsteps, the realization comes that my understanding is still extremely limited, even about the things I think I know. At the same time it is unsettling, challenging and exciting to know that I will never cease to inquire, to learn and to strive for better comprehension of all it means to be alive.

So, let me challenge you. Don't just wander aimlessly through life with your eyes on the ground. Look up, see the stars while you can, and strive to grasp their deeper meaning to us, as they pass across the darkened fields and forests of Texas and the world.

Dr. Paul Risk is a professor in the College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. E-mail: prisk@sfasu.edu.

NHS Alumni Association

Where are they now:
Dennis McDuffie

By MILTON PITTS,
Class of '54

Dennis McDuffie, a graduate of Nacogdoches High School in 1965 said of the teachers who were a positive influence on him were Sara Beth McDougald, Coach Gene Hale and Baker Denman.

"They taught me I could, when I thought I couldn't," Dennis said. "Some people say the real world comes after high school, but high school is as real as it gets."

"There are many life-defining moments in high school, and you have to be around people you like and don't like, overcome challenges, build friendships, put up with the gossip, the rumors and the drama. NHS and my teachers gave me a solid education and training for life. Members of the Class of 1965 are my brothers and sisters and will be part of me forever."

After graduating from NHS, Dennis went on to Stephen F. Austin State University, where he received a bachelor of arts in political science and history. As a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve, he earned the rank of quartermaster.

Following service in the Naval Reserve, he worked briefly in Nacogdoches as an adult probation officer, until he entered the Air Force, serving as an instructor navigator for seven years. He then served as an air operations officer for the U.S. Air Force Intelligence Reserve for three years.

While in the military, he earned a master of public administration degree from Ball State University in

Muncie, Indiana.

Upon receipt of his graduate degree, he became city manager and executive director of the redevelopment agency for the city of Delano, Calif. He remained in

California for most of the 1980's and 1990's, serving as city manager for the cities of Rancho Palos Verdes and San Juan Bautista and also as state health and safety director for the California Farm Bureau Federation in Sacramento.

McDuffie returned to Texas in 1998 when he was named the administrator for the city of Jamaica Beach, Texas, and then city manager for the towns Glenn Heights and McGregor.

In 2008, he returned to East Texas as city manager for Diboll. Professionally, he is a member of the International City/County Management Association, the Texas City Management Association and the East Texas City Management Association.

Dennis is the only child of Ralph McDuffie (deceased) and Bettie Louise McDuffie of Nacogdoches. He is married to Kathy James McDuffie, and they have six children and six grandchildren. A son, Ryan McDuffie, died Feb. 11, 2011. Dennis' hobbies are golfing, hunting and spending time with his family at their Crystal Beach bay house.

When the Nacogdoches High School Alumni Association chose its new slate of directors last fall, McDuffie was elected unanimously.

For information about the NHSAA, call 936-462-1403 or go to: www.nhs-alumni.org.



MCDUFFIE

Fredonia Hill
Baptist
Academy

Above: Fredonia Hill Baptist Academy 2011 science fair fifth-grade winners, from left, are Shaun Sturtz, fifth place; Brandon Smith, fourth place; Reuben Ninan, third place; Emly Boyland, second place. Drew Sebastino, not pictured, won first place. **Below:** Fredonia Hill Baptist Academy 2011 science fair sixth-grade winners, from left, are Ricky Gonzales, third place; Conner Williams, first place; Trey Birdwell, fifth place; Emily Robinson, second place; and Madison Payne, fourth place.

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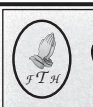


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