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1st Place award-winner from the American Scholastic Press Association



# The Lion's Roar

The voice of Liberty High School students

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FREE

## Farewell T-wing, hello new-wing

By Tanner Wieland  
Staff Writer

Liberty is constantly changing, whether it's a new parking lot, building, or changes to T-Wing. With the new wing being built and teachers being moved, the key purpose of T-Wing has been fulfilled. Over the last few years, Liberty's gone through changes, one of which is an additional wing of classrooms by the PAC. The new two story building contains classrooms on both floors, and will replace the T-Wing portables, which served as overflow for the surplus of teachers and students. With the approaching deconstruction of T-Wing, teachers will be reassigned to new classrooms. This comes as a struggle for teachers, who were provided

some boxes to move all of their belongings. Many teachers are well set up in their classrooms, and have had to spend hours packing up before March break. Not all T-Wing teachers will move into the new building, but senior teachers will have priority in choosing their classrooms. The future of the current T-Wing area will include expanded parking spaces. Another upside to the removal of T-Wing is a more centralized classroom environment, and less of a walk between wings. This could help decrease tardy rates, and increase student morale by giving them more time to talk to friends between classes because they don't have to rush to class. When asked about her feelings on the move, math teacher Mrs. Wilson stated that, "Moving is always hard,

but I am excited that I am going to be in a new-to-me space, and I look forward to getting settled in. Ideally, there will be something about the new room and location that can help me serve my students in better ways." With these changes quickly coming, both teachers and students are full of anticipation to see the new building come to life.



T-Wing, having been created as temporary classrooms, lives in a state of disrepair at the back of the school.



Photos by Kristina Busch

## Liberty's tale of two plays

By Toby Bartling  
Staff Writer

Students all around campus are saying *Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!* to the news of two musicals at Liberty. *Mamma Mia* and *Tick, Tick... Boom!* are taking the Liberty stage. Although two performances may sound exciting to the crowds, double-casted students are dealing with the stress of twice the memorization, choreography, and vocal rehearsals. Actors in both performances are singing *No More!* after the long weeks of constant run-throughs.

The stress of doing two shows on top of homework and other extracurriculars racks up quickly as their schedule becomes more jam packed with performances and rehearsals. Most actors say they can kiss their social lives goodbye for this period of two months of continuous practice.

"It's really fun, but also rough trying to manage it with schoolwork as well and sometimes the rehearsals are double booked," sophomore Addison Saylor mentions, thankful for the memories whilst reluctant towards the long hours. Being in two shows also comes with the responsibility of memorization and heavy workloads. Learning lines for several plays at once can be confusing, but fortunately the contrast in themes

and musical genres makes it easier for actors to differentiate between them. "I have a bigger role in *Mamma Mia* than in *Tick Tick Boom*, so it's easy to do both." Jackson Baggie says. Not only are the plays different, but the drama teacher makes an effort to spread out larger roles amongst students. However, seniority does come into play when casting for the spring performance. In this case, casting seniority may seem less important as there are two shows, but it is still very prominent. Most leading roles go to the seniors, but the reason is not limited to these

being their final productions. For example, the levels of experience from the seniors are a very important aspect of casting the perfect person. "There's definitely seniority for spring shows, but they all deserve it because it's their last show of high school." Saylor says. Whether seniority comes to play when choosing roles, most cast members can say all seniors in leading roles rightfully deserve the spot they were given. Above all the stress, all of the actors are beyond excited to be able to show off the time and hard work they put into their performances.



Photos courtesy of Barry Anthony



Pictures from both shows and information on how to buy tickets for upcoming showings can be found on the LHS Playmakers' Instagram.



The new wing, B-Wing, will be home to many teachers from Science, English, Special Education, and Social Science. Photo by Frankie Brown

## The new and improved downtown Delta Theater

By Ella Follett  
Co-Editor

The movies are an ideal spot for teens to enjoy their favorite upcoming films, and a local theater is a great place to make memories close to home. That will hopefully become easier with the re-opening of the long-closed Delta Theater in Downtown Brentwood. Ariana Matin, a senior at Liberty High School, recalls going to the theater in downtown Brentwood as a child, stating that the Delta Theater played a big part in their childhood. Matin also expresses the fact that once the Delta Theater re-opens they will be excited to go watch new movies coming out in the local theater. They hope the renovations

of the theater include spaciousness, and they're excited for new amenities. Matin states, "I also hope people will be respectful since it's been under renovation for so long," and she hopes the reopening of the theater creates an opportunity for small businesses, surrounding the theater, to gain more support. Downtown Brentwood's Delta Theater has had plans on opening in early 2024. Local business owner Sean McCauley and his business partner Ron Harrison have purchased the theater and are continuing the improvements on it. They first started renovations on the theater in 2020, with an expected finish date in 2022, but it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For

the upcoming re-opening of the Delta Theater, McCauley plans to keep the charm of the retro theater, yet with updated features such as reclining seats, loveseats, as well as an updated sound system. With that, McCauley plans to offer new food items, and bathrooms that fit the retro aesthetic. Josh Caudle, an operator at the Delta Theater, mentions CineLux Theaters, a family-owned company that became the new owners of the Delta Theater. After changing ownership, movies aren't the only focus of the theater anymore. Caudle states, "We're going to have many live events as well, from music to plays, from comedy to celebrity appearances." Caudle says the audience likely to be

there is everyone who wishes to escape from reality; he then mentions that it helps people escape from the negative news of the world and gives people an environment that local neighborhood theaters like the Delta Theater can give. Caudle also believes that teenagers from Brentwood schools like Liberty and Edna Hill will frequent the theater. He claims the Delta Theater will be welcoming and safe for teenagers to attend. The theater will offer discount days and student discounts, which bigger chain theaters don't provide, and could be attractive to young students. "The Delta is something unique, something special, and something you're just not going to find anywhere else," Caudle comments.



Renovations will improve the experience of Brentwood moviegoers. Photo by Loujain Habibi

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### Upcoming events:

3/16 - 3/31 No School - Spring Break

4/24 - Day of the Arts

4/8 - 4/18 CAASPP Testing

4/27 - Junior Prom

# BREAKING NEWS

March 15, 2024

## Playtime's over: The new rise of child labor in America

By Marina Hernandez Rodriguez  
Staff Writer

With a pencil in hand, looking down at the test in front of them, the students' minds go to the previous night, staying up attempting to finish all of their overdue assignments. Just yesterday, some of those students were operating machinery in factories, handling money working in fast food restaurants, picking fruits and vegetables in the fields, or working in a meat packing plant. Their bodies are marked with bruises, pain spreading through their bodies, their hands blistered or calloused, yet the students are expected to maintain the normality of a day of school. Child labor is defined as children under sixteen working in hazardous conditions that jeopardize their health or education, and it's still a serious issue today. With an increase of jobs on the market, more and more teens are looking for work, in all fields. Many states have either already passed



About 37% of teens and tweens work, which is higher than recent decades.

Photo by Marina Hernandez Rodriguez

laws or have laws pending regarding child labor. Thirteen states, however, do not regulate child labor as toughly as others. Most notably, Iowa recently wrote a bill that would allow children

from the ages 14 to 17 to work in dangerous fields like mining, meat plants, and roofing. In response, the president of the Iowa Federation of Labor, Charlie Wishman,

said, "We got a bill that's written by industry groups and multinational corporations that are looking for cheap labor out of our kids, and it's really disappointing."

Some of the laws passed include extending the maximum hours allowed of work on school days, lowering the age to serve alcohol, and removing the requirement for work permits.

As Wishman stated, companies are looking for cheap labor. In 2023, Nebraska introduced a law that would allow 14-17 year olds to be paid a dollar and fifty cents less than adults working the same job.

Furthermore, the United States has over 48 million immigrants, many of which work in cheap and rigorous forms of labor, and the low pay forces them to have their kids employed in the same dangerous fields. There is an estimated 500,000 children of immigrants working on farms or in other dangerous industries.

David Weil, a professor at Brandeis and former official in the U.S. Department

of Labor, spoke on these issues with the Department of Health and Human Services, exclaiming, "Clearly, the HHS needs to very quickly change their policies to make sure that these children, when they are brought into this country, are well protected... so that they don't face the kind of pressure that's leading them to seek this kind of work."

The department is responsible for maintaining the health and wellness of all Americans, no matter their age. However, the lack of protection given to children who suffer from poverty has a tremendous impact on the youth of America. Not only have many laws disregarded migrant children, but some have been orchestrated to benefit larger companies.

The surge of labor-intensive jobs and desire for quantity of employees over quality has led to a child labor problem in America. Many groups are advocating for children and protesting, so that all companies recognize a child's rights as a human being.

## Staff puckers-up for FFA's "Kiss A Farm Animal"



On February 23., staff members supported the Future Farmers of America at their Kiss A Farm Animal Event. Teachers and administration raised money for weeks, and the more they raised the bigger the animal they kissed. Pictured below, Mrs. Wallace and Mr. Gonzalez both kissed pigs. There were cows, pigs, chickens, rabbits, and goats at the event, all from FFA's on-campus farm.



Photos by Ryann Griggs and Loujain Habibi

## Starbucks stirs the pot with new Oleato drinks

By Addie Homer  
Staff Writer

Steam rises as the warm coffee spills into a paper cup rimmed with cream. It's mixed and stirred in the Starbucks Café, until it melts into a silky light brown. It's almost ready, but there's one ingredient left to blend into the mix: olive oil.

Having been released just at the be-

ginning of the year, Starbucks' Oleato drinks are still fresh on the menu. When asked about the taste of the new Oleato drinks, an anonymous Starbucks employee said, "I had a hazelnut oat milk shaken espresso with the Oleato... it was a few sips worth. At first the drink was good, but the olive oil began to separate, and I didn't like the feel of it. I can see the appeal, but it's not for me. She added that many

Starbucks drinks are made with a lot of different ingredients, so olive oil is hard to fully mix in.

Based on the images released by Starbucks and many sponsored content creators, you can see that this is true.

Furthermore, many content creators such as Miles Bonsignore and Forbes Vetted refer to the coffee as "disgusting," "gross," "a waste of money," and "a legit laxative." It was also described as having a strange, lingering aftertaste.

In most videos of the drink, you can see how the olive oil builds up on the top and creates a layer above the coffee. Another major change with the Oleato drinks is the price. The average Starbucks latte is about \$3.75, while the Oleato ranges from \$6 to \$7.50. With all of the negative reviews and leap in price, why would people still want these drinks?

Olive oil can be very beneficial to the body. It can lower the risk of heart disease, reduce fat deposits in the liver, prevent strokes, fight Alzheimers, and provide your body with helpful antioxidants. Something to remember, however, is if ingested too much olive oil can have the opposite effect.

Overall, despite the negative reviews, the Starbucks Oleato drinks have truly gone viral and created a steep rise in Starbucks' profits.



Starbucks' Oleato drinks, made with olive oil, caused an uproar even before their official release.

Photo courtesy of Starbucks

## The outbreak of Stanley stans

By Emily Lazaro  
Staff Writer

The smooth metal surface that could withstand anything; reusable, so it can be kept forever. "It may be expensive, but it's high quality! And if you break it, they send a replacement," fans say. It can hold a lot of liquid, and keep drinks hot or cold for a long time. What is this amazing invention? The reusable Stanley Cup.

Lately, there's been a huge uprise in the popularity of Stanley Cups. While the net sales were around \$73 million in 2019, in 2023 they skyrocketed to \$750 million. That's over ten times the sales from 2019.

"If you have a Stanley water bottle, you're kind of signaling that you're very in, and you've got your finger on the pulse," consumer psychologist Matt Johnson explained. "People buy water bottles for all sorts of reasons, but I think one of the big reasons it let to such a social contagion it because it allowed people to be able to engage and create videos in a way they wouldn't be able to if they were just

talking about the product.

Johnson also described how carrying around water bottles can signal that the buyer is good at taking care of themselves. By drinking lots of water, they are following wellness trends.

Consumerism, just like in fashion and clothing trends, has had an enormous effect on the rise of the Stanley Cup.

"It seems odd to me how people are collecting these. Buying one is a thing itself, but a collection? It sort of defeats the purpose of a reusable water bottle, I just don't get the hype." Erin Chandler, a 10th grader at Liberty, acknowledged.

Some Stanley fans do raise a large collection of cups. One woman went as far as to steal over \$2,500 worth of Stanley cups from a Sacramento Target. That's around 60 cups, as they can range from \$20 to \$50 a cup, depending on size.

"While Stanley Quenchers are all the rage, we strongly advise against turning to crime to fulfill your hydration habits," Sacramento police said.

In the eyes of many, the Stanley Cup is a status symbol; for others, it's just a water bottle.



As Stanley cups line the shelves, customers fight for the product. Fans have been known to wait in line hours before stores open in order to grab the cup of their dreams.

Photo by Emily Lazaro

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## “Teamwork makes the dream work” when working with a spouse

By Samantha Benson  
Staff Writer

Usually, couples choose to work in different fields, but what happens when they choose to work together is a different story. Many would dream about sharing the same career with their partner: figuring out how to accomplish goals together, spending free time together, it sounds like a scene out of a romantic movie. What some may not know is that the “movie” scenario is playing out in real-life, as there are various married couples who work together at Liberty.

Social Science teacher Mr. Dodson, and math teacher Mrs. Dodson, a married couple at Liberty, have shared how working together has enriched their lives.

“I like seeing Mrs. Dodson at lunch and seeing each other around campus (and giving each other support and giving

each other a hard time too).” He says that one challenging aspect of working together is that they usually bring work issues home, though it is nice to have someone to vent to who will truly understand what he’s going through.

Working together in the same industry brings couples together and even improves their well-being (LSE). Working alongside one’s partner results in a positive working environment which increases productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the relatability between the two people increases; it makes sense considering the amount of time spent together at work.

While growing up, one hears about the basic hierarchy of needs; physiological needs, the need to feel loved and accepted, and the need to feel like one has a place in the world. Part of accomplishing these goals involves relationships and what people choose to do for work. Math teacher Mr. Griffin and science teacher Mrs. Spainhower

are married and work together here at Liberty. From various experiences they have shared, it is evident that they love working together and it improves their bond.

“It’s great to be able to share stories about our day and have our partner understand,” says Mrs. Spainhower. However, she says it’s unfortunate when they both get sick because they need subs for the same day.

“Working together has made us closer in so many ways: not only does teaching at Liberty mean we get to be near each other every day,” remarks Mr. Griffin, but he also believes that working together with his wife is an entirely positive experience that improves their relationship and brings them even closer.

Other married couples who work at Liberty include English teacher Mrs. Call and math teacher Mr. Call, as well as Athletic Director Mr. Heinz, and Sports Med teacher Mrs. Heinz.

Activities Director Mrs. Seipel and PE teacher Mr. Seipel are also a wedded couple.

Although some may argue that working together offers little time apart from each other, and a lack of ability to form a separate identity, couples working together comes with a plethora of benefits; you better understand each other, and the problems faced in the workplace, you share an improved line of communication, and understand the demands that come with the job.



Married December 31st, 2021, LHS couple Mr. Griffin and Ms. Spainhower happily embrace each other in front of E-8. Photo by Samantha Benson

## Against the grain: How “modern” woodworking takes a classic cut

By Michael Davidson Jr.  
Copy Editor

In today’s world, most of the wooden furniture and wooden products that people are used to are mass produced, created with particle board, and are often made as a cheap piece that is not meant to last lifetimes, or even pass a few years. Modern wood items are generally of poor quality and often lack pride of craftsmanship.

However, in recent months, the trend of older woodworking craft tips have skyrocketed on social media and interest has peaked. One of the many forms of woodworking content is the restoration of real wood furniture. Typically, the real wood furniture was previously painted over to match an aesthetic rather than suit an actual piece. These restorations are usually done in a sped-up or time lapse format with narration over the top to fully explain every part of the vital process to the viewer. These videos are usually short for content on platforms like Tiktok and Instagram,

for the purposes of entertainment and education. The tools used in these videos are almost exclusively sanding

and refinishing related and are generally all power tools.

While modern tools are often popular, a large group of enthusiasts have gathered around the re-handling of old tools, such as axes, saws, or hatchets. These videos are often shorter than restoration videos, but tend to not be time-lapsed.

They typically have many cuts and are done to show the steps and process of using the tools, but not necessarily to show the repetitive steps that only

need to be shown a handful of times to grasp the general form of how to use the tool. These videos are usually root-



Often starting with only a block of wood, Eoin Reardon, pictured above, creates handles or refinishes parts of old tools for his content. He has amassed a Tiktok following of 3.2 million.

as they are often heirloom pieces that have been restored. These videos have a small portion directed to restoring

the metal aspects of tools before affixing a new handle (i.e. honing the edge of a blade, rust removal, and sharpening the tool). This has led into a sub genre that focuses more on the metal aspect of restorations, with wooden parts like antique kitchen gadgets (such as walnut crushers and

graters). An honorary mention of a restoration account is the channel of Thoren Bradley. Bradley lives on wooded property

and cuts firewood for people in his community who are unable to cut the amount of wood needed for the winter months. He records himself chopping cut logs (often referred to as rounds), wearing suspenders and no safety equipment. The main bulk of his content is solely him cutting logs, but the other two types of content he produces are reactions he gets from viewers for chopping wood and testing wood cutting gadgets and interesting axes. While this is not exactly woodworking, it is a notable channel that brings viewers to other ‘true’ woodworkers.

While many say that woodworking is a lost art due to the mass producible furniture we all consume, it can be said that they are just not looking in the right place. Woodworkers have never left, for all those kids who play with tanbark by sharpening it on the ground they are woodworkers. Amateur woodcarvers whose only tool is a cheap pocket knife are woodworkers, too. To the artisanal crafters and restorers: Woodworking is not lost.



When skies are blue and sunny, Photo by Kayla Murcra violence and hostility across campus increase.

By Kayla Murcra  
Staff Writer

School fights aren’t an unusual occurrence; they happen rather often. Some being over rumors spread, others over unkind words, but could weather play

## Thermo-aggression Does weather affect school fights?

a part in this hostility? Surprisingly, different sources point to yes.

As shown from “PsychCentral : Can Weather Affect Your Mood?,” higher temperatures are shown to influence and mold tempers. “Hsiang et al. (2013) found a link between human aggression and higher temperatures... intergroup conflicts also tended to jump by 14%.” However, rain also affects character. “PsychCentral: Can Weather Affect Your Mood?” also mentioned that, “The more it rained (especially in areas where high rainfall is not expected), the more aggressive people seemed to get.” Weather, whether it was hot or rainy, has shown to be a factor leading to aggression.

Another factor is a disorder known as S.A.D. (Seasonal Affective Disorder). This is when a person experiences a depressive episode due to the weather, which can also be linked to antagonistic behaviors. However, this does not mean that everybody with S.A.D. or depression is aggressive and/

or hostile. But some studies do show a link between depressive symptoms in various disorders and hostility.

“Psychiatric Times notes that there is a correlation between depressive symptoms in disorders and violence or hostility, “Violence is not usually considered to be related to depression, yet findings suggest an association between violent behavior and depression or depressive symptoms in many disorders.”

From “bjs.ojp.gov: Seasonal Patterns in Criminal Victimization Trends,” the aggression tends to connect back to summer, when heat can be extreme, “For violent victimization, seasonal patterns also vary depending on the type of crime... aggravated assault rates are higher in the summer than in most other seasons.” Restating what was said earlier, people tend to act more hostile and aggressive when in extreme heat for a period of time, with the amount of hostility and aggressiveness varying from person to person.

According to Psychiatry.org, “Heat waves and extreme heat have been associated with a range of mental health impacts in research. Extreme heat is associated with increases in irritability and symptoms of depression and with an increase in suicide. It can also affect behavior, contributing to increased aggression and incidence of domestic

violence and increased substance use.” Research has shown a clear connection between aggression and heat, thus demonstrating the clear correlation.

This is an interesting correlation as most instinctively associate depression with winter. However, according to Marc Shapiro, suicide rates spike higher in the springtime than winter. “Overwhelming evidence suggests that inflammation from various sources, including allergic reactions, can cause or worsen depression.” Adding on to that, “The chances of depression were 42% higher in people with rhinitis (both allergic and nonallergic) than those without.” Thus, summer is not the only season with increased depression rates. Nationwide, the suicide rate increased by 33% from 1999-2017. In “Suicide Rates Spike in Spring, Not Winter,” Marc Shapiro stated, “For the most part, the peak is in the spring and summer and then it goes down and down until December, when it’s the lowest. We see the fewest reported attempts and fewest new psychiatric appointments in December.” The myth of higher depression and suicide rates being in the wintertime has been proven wrong.

Additionally, “It’s always been a myth. People often do get the blues in the winter, but that does not equate to a higher suicide rate,” says Ron Samarian, M.D., from “Beaumont.org, For

Suicides, Spring and Summer are the Cruellest Months – Not Winter.” It is shown that the winter blues are not uncommon, however, the rate in suicide is drastically lower than in the spring and summertime.

Again from Beaumont.org, “Some researchers have even suggested there may be a link between seasonal allergies and suicide because they trigger anxiety-producing chemicals and reduce social interaction.”

But how does this relate to school violence? Forty-four percent of students suffer from depression. This can be caused by many factors, such as academic pressure, family issues, social problems, breakups, hormone changes, lack of rest, and more. The Mayo Clinic explained how, “Teen depression is a serious mental health problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. It affects how your teenager thinks, feels and behaves, and it can cause emotional, functional and physical problems.” Some emotional changes that one can experience from depression include: Frustration, hopelessness, irritation, etc.

School fights are more common than ever. According to the CDC, “8% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.”

March 15, 2024

# Male eating disorders Is “Be A Man” killing men?

By Hannah Grossetete  
Copy Editor

“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you,” rings in a shaky harmony as a little boy grins from ear to ear over his three-layered cake. He blows out the candles, making his birthday wish. His father, proud and in the moment, states “Alright son it’s time to bulk up, time to be a man.” The little boy grins, his chest filling with warmth at the thought of making his father proud. On his next birthday, he doesn’t grin over a three-layered cake, he doesn’t have a cake at all. His mind is full of numbers, calories, and guilt. He did exactly what he was told, but at what cost?

Male eating disorders have been notoriously under diagnosed, under treated, and misunderstood due to stigma placed upon them. Young boys are told they must carry the weight on their

shoulders, but “don’t let them see you sweat.” They are told to perform, be the best. That’s just what a “man” is, right?

Health reports have estimated that at least 25 to 40% of anorexia and bulimia nervosa cases are male. Yet, according to the National Eating Disorders Association, “Only one in three men with eating disorders seek treatment or get professional help”. The normalization of eating disorders, specifically among men, has been normalized within sports, modeling, the entertainment industry, and fitness culture. Many young men entering or interested in fitness culture are often met with harsh advice and stereotypes that reinforce the idea that men must be “strong,” which gets to the extent that they will take extreme measures to achieve this goal. This can range anywhere from food restrictions, steroids, water deprivation, and more.

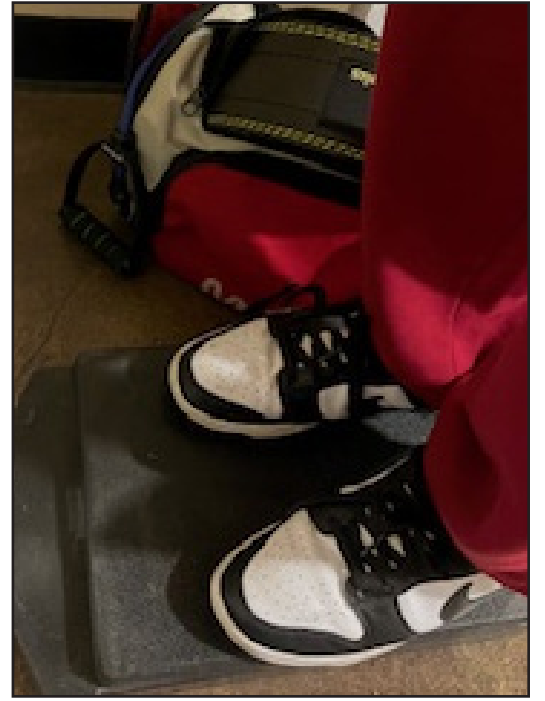
These measures are very similar to the symptoms of eating disorders, or disordered eating. This can include obsessive or restrictive eating, over-exercising, distorted body image, feeling guilt surrounding food. Many of these symptoms are overlooked due to the language in which it is discussed. Such as, “don’t be weak” and “be a man.” This language can cause shame, depression, loneliness, and ultimately cause potential disorder from going untreated.

During last year’s Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW), the *Mental Health Foundation* had men who had experienced an eating disorder share their experience to help spread awareness. James (last name withheld) states, “I kept telling them I was fine. I thought I was. I just wanted to be left alone, and the more they told me to eat, the less I wanted to...I pushed

those thoughts and feelings down and carried on. There were moments during those months, before my diagnosis, when I was feeling a lot of tension. When you’re malnourished, it plays havoc with your emotions.”

Stories like his have shown the progress that has already been made in reducing the stigma surrounding this topic.

Open dialogue is vital in destigmatizing eating disorders and allowing victims to find the treatment that works best for them. Ending the normalization of male eating disorders will always be the first step in getting treatment for



Young men all over the world struggle with the negative impact of gym culture. As a result, men make up 67% of people with restrictive food intake disorder. Photo by Hannah Grossetete

those it effects, and ultimately creating a kinder and more welcoming place for the future generations of men.

## Service over self: What does it mean to be in LHS Leadership?

By Jenny Dzul  
Staff Writer

Time is ticking, the sun is beating, it’s the middle of September, and everyone is running around in chaos. During this long homecoming week, every aspect of this parade has to be perfect; securing cars, arranging floats and performers, and organizing traffic. As the stress builds, so do the floats, and leaders stress.

Naturally, the leadership students on campus are always making sure these events are perfect. But are people aware of all of the hard work they do on campus?

Surprisingly, not many know about our leadership program, and even less about its structure. It’s astonishing how leadership is made up of students from

all across campus. The Leadership class takes place during the school day, and it is divided into various “departments” in which students work.

The athletics department is in charge of sports recognition and sports events on campus, and works with the athletic director.

The clubs and activities department coordinates dances like homecoming, and club events. The fundraising and class culture department work on budgeting and creating monthly bonding activities for leadership.

The publicity and tech department are in charge of publicizing events and making announcements. The group in charge of rallies coordinate and plan rallies, and announces at them.

The spirit squad is in charge of the

student section at sports games and events. The class officers are voted by LHS students and are in charge of proms and fundraising for their class.

The teacher relations department organizes the recognition of teachers, and the teacher appreciation week.

Some committees don’t just focus on their specific section, but contribute to leadership as a whole, ensuring it stays organized.

Hadley Kemper joined leadership as the freshman class treasurer and has continued to do leadership along with her other activities.

“I learned how to work better with others and become more organized. These skills have helped me to manage my time and all my activities,” she said. Overall, joining leadership can provide



LHS leadership students work hard to prepare upcoming events. Photo by Jenny Dzul

future strategic skills and allow students to be in a unified, collaborative

community that is focused on creating a positive environment.

## Disney Channel actors: Where are they now?

By Addysan Ambrus  
Staff Writer

In the world of entertainment, Disney Channel was the launch pad for talented young actors, boosting them into their acting career with iconic roles in famous TV shows and movies. As they grew older, some actors continued acting while others diverged into different paths in their career.

Some Disney Channel actors stuck to acting while exploring other interests. Ross Lynch, who played Austin Moon in the 2011 Disney show “Austin and Ally,” is in the band “The Drivers Era.” Zendaya, who is well known for the Disney shows “Shake it up” and “KC undercover” and Disney movie “Zapped,” has also continued acting while pursuing other passions. She has starred as MJ in Spider-Man, and Rue Bennett in the HBO Max show “Euphoria.” Zendaya also sings, has her own book, and a clothing line called *Daya*.

Some Disney Channel actors shifted away from acting to other careers in the entertainment industry. Dove Cameron, who is known for the 2013 Disney show “Liv and Maddie” and the 2015 movie “Descendants,” has shifted from acting to singing and songwriting. She has one full album, sixteen singles, and twenty-three music videos.

However, the lives of Disney Channel actors are not as glamorous as they

may seem.

In the Outlook article “Zendaya Reveals She Had To ‘Protect’ Herself As A Child Star,” Zendaya shared that, “It’s a lesson you have to learn young. I was a kid thrown into an adult industry, where if you do have something to say, it’s like ‘Well they’re a kid.’”

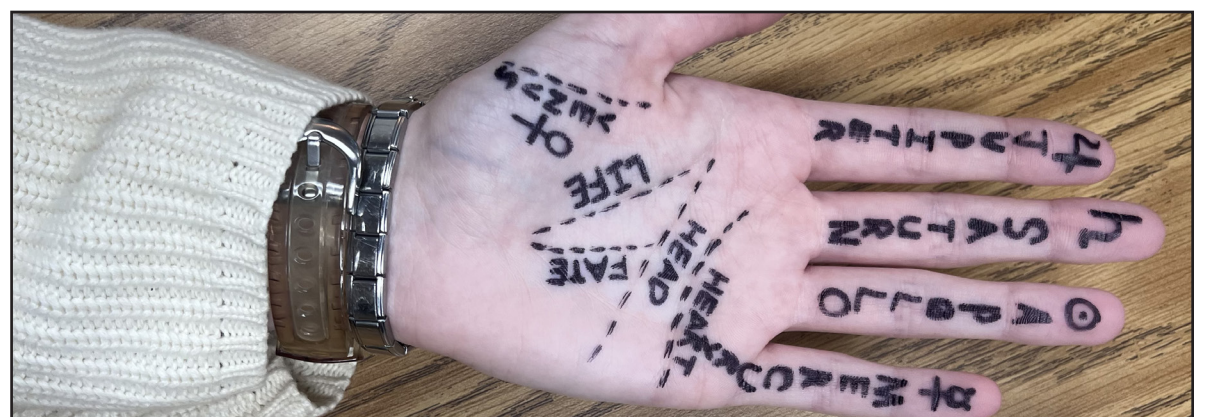
Zendaya continued that she felt like she was not heard by her peers.

Cameron also expressed the pressures of being a child star in the Nicki Swift article, “How Dove Cameron Really Felt About Being A Disney Channel Star” when she said, “I never felt like Miley Cyrus, or Demi Levato, or even Selena Gomez. I felt like an outcast to them. I knew when I was acting, I never thought of myself as a Disney kid that these other Disney actors were feeling.”

Disney Channel actors such as Sabrina Carpenter and Olivia Rodrigo are performing on stage as singer-songwriters, Zack Effron and Peyton List are still acting, but they are all pursuing the career they want to pursue.

Some actors found success in acting, others in music, and others still in different passions. But some Disney Channel actors just wanted to live a “normal” life, go to school, have a family, and have a “normal” job.

Sarah Adina, a sophomore at Liberty, said, “I miss the old Disney Channel actors from when I was a kid, but I’m glad to see they are successful and doing well with their lives.”



Students have experimented with palm reading as a new hobby. They look at the heart line, as is pointed it above, to determine romantic compatibility and how they may view the concept of romance. Photo by Loujain Habibi

## Chiromancy: A look into the mystic art of palm reading

By Kristiana Zaste  
Staff Writer

Many people have questions about who they are and the different aspects of their life, and some believe these answers could be in the palm of your hand.

Chiromancy, more commonly known as palm reading, is a popular mystic art used by many people around the world to determine many things about their lives, such as a person’s overall wellbeing, how they learn, and even elements such as an individual’s emotional stability.

Palmistry is an art believed to have originated in India, and while there is no official time of when this art was founded, books on the topic began appearing in the early 1600s in England. Many people believed that palm reading was a tactic to deceive because of King Henry VIII. He believed people who practiced chiromancy just wanted to trick others, thus he spread that

misinformation. Regardless of this, palmistry was used in many cultures to determine one’s time on Earth, for self-reflection, and to work through their current issues.

A research article by Dr. Sonika Sandhu states, “One of the objectives of this practice is to evaluate a person’s character besides his or her’s future and this has had important connotations in the imperial and royal courts of the past.” So how does palm reading work? When choosing which hand to read someone first needs to determine what they want to know. The dominant hand reveals your future while the non dominant hand can help to determine the past. Each line on the palms represents something different, the primary lines are heart line, life line, head line, and fate line. The heart line indicates emotional stability, romantic perspectives, and even cardiac health. Head lines provide insight to many aspects of life such as communication and learning style. A person’s life line is indicative

of general well being and physical health. The fate line tells an individual about circumstances beyond their control.

Palm reading has become such a popular practice in modern times because many people fear for their future. Life Positive, a website for palm reading, mentioned, “It is important for people to understand that palmistry is not direct fortune-telling. The events of the future are not firm and can change according to events and situations in life.”

Palm reading is popular in many cultures and can be very informative. Although it was commonly used to determine the success of rulers and their people, it is now common among everyday people who want to know more about their past, themselves, or what their future holds for them. Chiromancy is not a fortune telling trick, but rather a way to work through whatever may have happened or what may be happening in one’s life now or later.

March 15, 2024

# Rugby royale- the danger zone of sports?

## A look at Liberty Union's Rugby Club



Liberty Union Rugby Club celebrates a victory over their rival. Rugby wasn't considered a professional sport until 1995.

Photo courtesy of Liberty Union Rugby Facebook

By Ayden Curameng  
Staff Writer

Picture the game is tied with only thirty seconds left in the half and your teammate launches the ball at you for the winning drive.

Now imagine yourself running for your life from fifteen massive men who all have one sole objective: strip-

ping the brown leather from your tight grasp. This is just a regular possession of a rugby game. Even though it is most popular in Europe, the sport has managed to find its way onto the fields of Brentwood, California. Founded in 2018, the Liberty Lions Rugby Club hosts the district-wide team where they combine forces with the players of Heritage and Freedom to compete against

other clubs in the NorCal league. From an outside standpoint, rugby can be difficult to understand until you recognize its similarities with other sports. It resembles soccer where play doesn't stop and there are two forty-minute halves. While the players can only pass the ball backward or perpendicular with the goal of scoring a touchdown, or what they call a "try." Additionally, it mir-

rors football in which players full-on tackle opponents for the ball. Then like every other sport, at the end of the time, the team with the most points wins the game. Among the long list of rules for rugby, one stands out like no other, "1. No shoulder pads or helmets." Which translates to having no way to protect yourself but with your conditioned body. This can prove to be very dangerous especially when players are rushing you at full speed. Senior player Nate McCarthy had this perspective, "I feel like rugby is made out to be such a dangerous sport but it's really not. The coaches put such an emphasis on how to do things safely that it's around the same as football for injuries. The thing that makes it extremely dangerous is people playing dirty." McCarthy along with other players, have this similar outlook that rugby can only be very dangerous if a player does not know what they are doing. McCarthy recounts the worst injury he has seen was a twisted broken leg. Although these injuries may be rare, he had this advice for new players, "You might get a few bruises and scratches, but you will recover, just don't be afraid of the ball." Rugby is ranked as the fifth most dangerous sport in the world, amounting to about 1,200 injuries per year in the professional league (SportsBrief).

From this, there is even a term for injured players called "blood bin," a temporary substitution for when a player sustains a cut and is bleeding badly. Although this may sound alarming, it is important to note that rugby's reputation as "bonebreaker ball" is the opposite of what players describe. While many people may think it is too dangerous for them, senior player Andres Rodriguez had this to say, "Don't think about it too much, just stick to trying to get your form correct and go 100% into it because if you go soft then it could cause some issues." Diving into his game-day experience he also states, "At first when you see that the other team is stacked with a bunch of huge dudes it's a little nerve-racking but once you start playing you forget about it fast." Aside from the clashes and scrapes, rugby forms tight binds with players that are hard to break. Whether tackling an opponent so your teammate can score or celebrating with each other after a hard-fought win, rugby is a fun sport that has family written all over it. While concussions and other injuries may not be guaranteed, rest assured that if a player gets hit, teammates will be there to back that person up.

## Soaring beyond limits: A skydiving journey with LHS teacher Eli Swanberg

By Nicholas Howard  
Staff Writer

Descending rapidly through the boundless sky, the wind roars, veins are pumping with a rush of adrenaline, and the earth below is shrinking. Skydiving is more than just an activity; it's an immersive journey into a place of pure exhilaration. LHS teacher, Eli Swanberg, a seasoned skydiver with 550 jumps under her belt, shares her exhilarating journey, including moments of fear, freedom, and pure joy. Swanberg's journey began like many others - with a leap of faith, literally. "I did a couple tandem's initially [...] and then I did it again, and I was like wait, that whole "scary scary" is gone. Maybe I can do this," she recalls with a grin. Her story mirrors the experiences of many first-time jumpers who, despite initial fears, found a passion that goes beyond fear. "I believe the risks I take are justified by the sheer love of the life I lead," reflects American aviator and military officer, Charles Lindbergh. Swanberg shares a similar philosophy, explaining how the thrill of skydiving is not

just a pursuit of adrenaline but a profound expression of love for the extraordinary life she has chosen to live. The risks, she believes, diminish when compared to the rewards of living on the edge. The first few jumps, as Ms. Swanberg describes, are a rollercoaster of adrenaline mixed with fear. Yet, this fear serves a purpose, serving as a guiding force for bringing about safety checks. "The fear keeps you safe," she notes, highlighting the importance of the balance between thrill and caution that defines the skydiving experience. "It's freedom, it's intoxicating, it's enough to mess with your mind," reveals Inside the Travel Lab. Ms. Swanberg coincides, describing the captivating thrill of free fall makes skydivers eagerly look forward to their next jump into the vast sky. The Washington Post captures the surreal nature of the experience, detailing the rapid change in temperature as the air rushes past during descent, making every second feel like a journey through the seasons. And then comes the free fall - a pure, pristine joy that resonates with the child-like imagination of falling. Swanberg articulates, 'It's the exact same feeling

because you can use your body to steer, and the better you get, you can learn how to do tricks." Soaring through the sky becomes a dance, a graceful performance guided by the wind and the body's movements. Skydiving, Swanberg explains, is not just a one-time experience. There are different disciplines to explore, each offering a new dimension to the thrill. From the foundational belly flying to the graceful vertical style of free flying. Skydivers continuously evolve, mastering new tricks and techniques that elevate their passion. "On the big poofy cloud days, it's pretty awesome to be able to jump through a cloud," Eli shares, giving a poetic feel to the already mesmerizing adventure. The idea of flying through clouds creates a picture of endless possibilities, making the experience not just exciting but really magical. However, it's not all about the adrenaline rush. Skydiving is a mental challenge, especially when standing at the edge of an open airplane door. Eli's perspective on overcoming fear resonates, "I think the scariest part for people is when they approach the door (of the plane), and the part of me getting over my fear was instead of



LHS art teacher, Eli Swanberg, falls at a speed of 120 mph directly above Tracy, California. Photo courtesy of Eli Swanberg

looking straight down, I actually looked up at the sky." As Swanberg glides through the sky, her experience invites the idea of letting go of fears and enjoying the excitement of free fall. Skydiving isn't just an adventure; it's a change, a sense of freedom, and a reminder that

the most meaningful moments in life often wait just outside our comfort zone. The sky is ready, holding the commitment of an experience that goes beyond the usual, unveiling wings people never realized they could spread.

## Trust the process: The business of coaching as a Gen Z

By Jiro De Jesus  
Staff Writer

It's a freezing night, you're sitting in metallic bleachers heavily packed with spectators at a football game. As the football player tries to score just to earn a point, the spectators swiftly stand up, boomerangingly scream "MVP!", and enthusiastically show excitement. The coach quietly pulls their whistle out as he observes all the football players from their team aiming for the net and blowing it with a thundering blow to signal victory. Later, their team playing against the opponents wins the game since the players have a coach, a high school student who effectively trains their players. For teens who want to be involved in the business of coaching, being a teen coach would be a great experience. However, it's not just about watching a game or controlling it. In fact,



On the left stands the coach, Tristan Acuna, a senior at Liberty, next to his team who were 7th grade National League Champions in youth basketball. Photo courtesy of Melinda Carreon

these coaches play an important role in helping young athletes be optimistic, engage in physical and strenuous activities, and collaborate with their

peers to call it teamwork. Moreover, teen coaches are known for creating a balance between socializing with others and working hard, while show-

ing their players that everyone can develop through practice. Just like creating amazing memories with family and friends, they are looking for teachable moments and opportunities both on and off the field.

Despite the benefits of being a teen coach, what is it like to be one? Sage Robertson, a junior and football player at Liberty High School, shares his perspective and experience of being a teen coach. Being a teen coach inspired him to teach children how to have fun but compete at the same time. But when it comes to certain challenges, Robertson claims that children easily misunderstand the rules they're given and getting them to fully understand it is the hardest part of being a teen coach. To help the kids set and achieve their goals, Robertson tries to reward them by saying something like "I'll buy you guys some cupcakes if we win this game," before winning a match. "Being able to have fun like running around, joining the

drills during practice, and playing with them. Talking to the players and telling them that if they're having a bad day, we can always have fun at practice, whatever they've been going through it'll be all good, and I've always got their back," stated Robertson since he tries to create a better environment and use strategies to help the kids. "I think it's good, giving teenagers like myself an opportunity to get into the business of coaching because I want to coach when I'm older. A lot of games are changing the way that they're played, and teenagers can express themselves and get closer with younger kids because they're closer in age. I just think that having a good teen coach is something that's good for the kids and they love it." The fun part of being a teen coach according to Robertson is engaging with the kids, celebrating, and having handshakes.

March 15, 2024

# Safety concerns spark push to ban youth tackle football in CA

By David Leon  
Staff Writer

Youth sports are a well-loved activity that can benefit a child's physical health, personal growth and a good source of entertainment, and offer having parents and a community involved to help them grow socially. But what if the opposite were to occur? This is a question that many parents and officials propose when youth football is thrown into the picture.

Assembly Bill No. 734 presented by assembly member Kevin McCarty would "Prohibit youth sports organization that conducts a tackle football program or a youth tackle football league from allowing kids 6 year or older to be tackle football participant through the organization or league." Many people who support the bill say the risks of keeping youth tackle football

are too big to have it stay, claiming that it exposes children's developing brains to unnecessary repeated head injuries that could lead to potential brain damage and psychological disorders that increase the longer a child is exposed to these repeated head injuries. Sadly, these are not just hollow claims; in a separate article by Sharon Reynolds called "How Football raises the risk for chronic traumatic encephalopathy" goes over football's rising connection with CTE cases and its effect on youth football players. Passing this bill would also make California the first state in the nation to set a minimum age for tackle football.

Although these are seen as valid concerns, many parents are against the bill as they see youth tackle football as a good outlet for many young players and having many benefits too. Some benefits parents say that tackle football teaches their children teamwork,

instills sportsmanship, generates discipline, promotes fitness, builds resilience, inspires parent child bonds, and offers long term options for players. Parents creating a Facebook group called "Save Youth Football" a private group consisting of 6.9k members who describe themselves as "A group of volunteers, parents and players who love the sport of football. We represent a diverse group of people from all ethnic and economic backgrounds to form a bond that is as strong as any family could be. The "We will save youth football" group hopes to bring more awareness to McCarty's bill in hopes that it won't be passed.

Even Gavin Newsom is hoping to extinguish any efforts to get rid of youth football, stating, "I will not sign legislation that bans youth tackle football." I am deeply concerned about the health and safety of our young athletes, but an outright ban is not the answer."



Two players in the PYFCO tackle each other in a game between the Poquoson Bulls and the Williamsburg Green Hornets. Photo courtesy of Flickr contributor C. Watts

Furthermore, there is no guarantee Kevin McCarty's bill on youth tackle

football will advance beyond the state assembly.

## Rise of nicotine pouches presents new challenge for schools

By Evan Thomson  
Staff Writer

High school cigarette and nicotine use had been steadily declining until around 2011, until the advent of E-cigarettes, and now a worrying new trend in nicotine products may allow students to consume nicotine completely discreetly, even in class. Nicotine pouches, most commonly sold under the brand name "Zyn," are pouches filled with nicotine powder that are placed in between the lip and gum for up to one hour, allowing them to be used, as Zyn claims, "conveniently and discreetly" to provide "the ultimate in nicotine satisfaction."

Since the nicotine powder contained within the pouch does not contain tobacco, they are not classified by the FDA as a smokeless tobacco product



Zyn is a brand of nicotine pouches, a smokeless product. Photo courtesy of TruthInitiative.org

and therefore do not incur the regulations that come along with that classification. While there has been no long-

term studies on the health effects of nicotine pouches, it is safe to assume that they will have a similar impact

to other popular nicotine products. Addiction, interrupted brain development, heart problems, and even cancer are all possible medical issues that nicotine users put themselves at risk for when consuming nicotine products of any kind. Some may recommend nicotine pouches as a "healthier" alternative to help quit cigarettes or E-cigarettes, but currently there is no concrete data showing that nicotine pouches are a safe or effective way to quit other nicotine products. Despite claiming to be firmly against underage use of nicotine pouches, Zyn and other nicotine pouch manufacturers still sell their products in containers resembling mint or candy containers, and with flavors such as citrus and cinnamon, clearly targeting a younger demographic. "I've never tried them myself, but I have friends who have. It's sad to see but I prefer it to them smoking while I'm with them." said an anonymous LHS

student. In the CDC's 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey, roughly 1.5% of U.S. middle and high school students reported using nicotine pouches in the 30 days prior to the survey, placing them as the 4th most popular nicotine product with students, behind E-cigarettes (7.7%), Cigars (1.6%), and cigarettes (1.6%). This is a worrying increase from previous years data, with nicotine pouches being the 6th most popular nicotine product among students in just 2021, behind hookah. While it may be tempting to immediately advocate for a ban on nicotine pouches, and that may not be a bad idea, it is important to remember that they are just a symptom of a greater problem. Nicotine use among adolescents has always, and will continue to be a problem until effective regulations and strategies are used to limit and prevent it.

## Damaging intensity of youth sports: When does it become too much?

By Maddie Banchieri  
Staff Writer

Imagine bright lights shining down on a baseball field, zooming in on a player with nerves like that of a skittish dog. With a nervous look, he hones in on the stands and sees his dad cheering him on. Then a gaze to his coach, who is glaring at him like the game is on his shoulders.

He saunters up to the plate, the pitcher unwinds, releases the ball, and... he strikes out. Knowing what happens next, he begins recalling previous experiences. His coaches

will tell him it is fine, his dad will yell at him in the car, and he'll spend the rest of the night cursing himself for messing up, thinking of all the things he could've done differently. He's only 13, at which age most believe he should be spending his Friday nights making positive memories, not losing sleep over one bad game. This is the damaging intensity of youth sports.

Sports medicine specialists claim that youth sports "predispose young athletes to social isolation, poor academic performance, increased anxiety, inadequate sleep, decreased family time,

and burnout". Not only do youth sports have a mental effect, but also physical effects.

Sports burnout has a two-fold increase in injury risk among adolescent athletes, according to the Journal of Athletic Training. Although youth sports are viewed as incredibly fun to most,



About 60 million children and teens from age 6-18 participate in organized sports each year.

Photo by Maddie Banchieri

when a child zeros in on one sport it become harmful to their life, specialization in a sport leads to stress levels rising, and sleep dwindling. The need to be perfect within the sport takes over the child's brain and damages their self-confidence. Neither the parents nor the kid realizes what is happening, until school becomes so draining, and practice isn't something that is looked forward to anymore. According to New York University review, 45% of youth athletes quit sports because of burnout. "Being involved in youth sports has been a constant shadow over my life,

mostly good, but with something so prominent in one's life there are always negative aspects. I have played competitive soccer for six days a week since I was six, and I love it, but I feel like I'm missing out on normal teenage experience. Keeping on top of schoolwork and grades is hard both physically and mentally. Although soccer has its unfavorable moments, is also helped shape me and allowed me to have an outlet of influence and something personal away from school that I can look forward to," explained Bella Woods, a sophomore here at Liberty. In contrast, not all adolescents involved in youth

sports are affected negatively. Most have fond experiences and memories connected to sports. Still, this is a large problem that affects most of the youth everywhere. Children and teens already have a tremendous amount of pressure put on them regarding school and academic success, and adding the stress and anxiety that specialization in youth sports create might just be too much. Create a balance, try to recognize when it becomes too much to handle, or something that was once cherished and loved might become resent and dreaded.

## Tradwives: Are traditional roles harmful or helpful?



"Tradwife" is becoming a rising lifestyle being popularized by influencers broadcasting their daily lives. Photo courtesy of Getty Images

By Frankie Brown  
Editor-in-Chief

The feminist movement has taken over the internet in recent decades, but in the last few months another women's movement has emerged: the Trad Wife.

Over the decades, there's been a shift from women being homemakers to breadwinners. In modern times, women can choose whether they want to settle down at home, live in a two-income household, or if they even want to marry at all. The tradwife trend, however, can be viewed as a step back for women and a harmful example for younger girls. Tradwives, short for "traditional wives," are women who believe that women should act like they did in the 1930s: docile, obedient homemakers. While being a stay at home mother is a great option for women, these women take it a step farther, and broadcast it on social media.

TikToker @esteecwilliams was quoted in a post saying, "Well, look at it this way. You go to the office to be abused by your boss just to get paid, but as a housewife you get to relax and spend

your husband's money." Many tradwives- or social media influencers, as they've become- have stated that it's a very "feminist thing" to stay at home. After all, they're making the choice not to work. Some argue, however, that they are working. By broadcasting their daily lives-cooking, cleaning, baby raising, household chores- they're monetizing their lifestyle.

Sociologist Michelle Janning argued that social media influencing is in fact a career, saying that, "It could be that they're not selling a product, but a version of themselves, and their husband will be getting the sponsorship. But it's a contradiction: their job is to tell people they don't have a job." While some tradwife influencers outwardly preach feminism, some aren't so secretive about their message. Many tradwife TikTokers are extremely conservative, and a lot of tradwife videos have been picked up by ultra-conservative news sites, encouraging women to stay home and wait on their husbands instead of entering the workforce.

# OPINION

March 15, 2024

## FAFSA: Equitable...to an extent

By Loujain Habibi  
Editor

Student financial aid programs may provide more than money for college; they could make new opportunities accessible. But such programs are not foolproof, which raises the pressing question: Are they equitable?

One student financial aid program is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, better known as FAFSA. Created in 1992 by the Higher Education Act, according to the Lumina Foundation, FAFSA provides various types of financial aid for colleges or career/trade schools.

The Federal Student Aid, an Office of the Department of Education, explained on their website that the aid FAFSA provides includes federal grants, work-study funds and loans, which could be used for tuition, housing, transportation, and other expenses.

Hannah Bareham, a personal finance writer with Bankrate, explained how FAFSA opens up for the upcoming academic year on October first and closes on June thirtieth. Students have to apply for FAFSA every year, and most students say the application takes about an hour to complete.

Angelica Gonzalez, the Liberty College and Career Center Coordinator, explained how students apply to FAFSA by submitting their taxes from two years prior, and FAFSA sends that information to the schools the students applied to.

Marie Bouso, a senior at Liberty, mentioned that the FAFSA application also includes parent/guardians marital

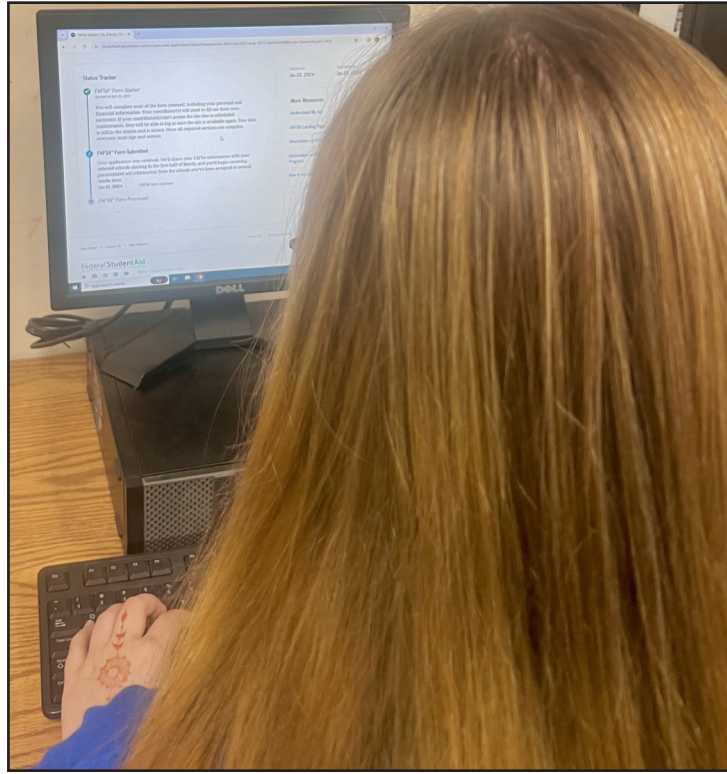


Photo by Loujain Habibi

*In the 2022-2023 school year alone, undergraduate and graduate students received \$240.7 billion in aid, according to College Board Research. According to the Education Data Initiative, 83.8% of first-time, first-year undergraduate students receive financial aid in some form.*

status, tax forms, and other personal information. The information is used by colleges and universities to determine how much a student could be awarded if they attended their school.

Bouso has a positive perception of FAFSA because she believes it gives students access to higher education by helping them pay for college.

"We need it to move up in society,"

Bouso said.

On the contrary, Gonzalez noted that seniors have an overall more negative perception of FAFSA due to changes made this year, which have resulted in delays.

The changes include the 2024-25 FAFSA form launching in December 2023 and a different formula used to determine financial aid eligibility.

More information about the changes are available on the Federal Student Aid website in their "7 Key Changes Coming to the 2024-25 FAFSA Experience" article.

Gonzalez explained that, "While the changes are to hopefully help streamline the application, students are finding that they're running into a lot of technical errors, which is really setting them back. So students are starting to get stressed out and overwhelmed." Brianna Schmid, a senior at Liberty, has a negative perception of FAFSA because of the delays the changes have caused.

They explained how FAFSA has been postponed until mid-March, which has left them wondering, "How am I gonna pay for college?"

Beyond the delays, students may be discouraged from applying because they think their parents make too much for them to be eligible.

Gonzalez explained, "The advice I always give students is, even if you think your parents make too much money, you should let FAFSA decide that because you never know what kind of financial aid you'll get."

Although it is indirect, FAFSA is not equitable because of racial disparities. In a working paper by Phil Levine and Dubravka Ritter, titled "The Racial Wealth Gap, Financial Aid, and College Access," it is brought to light how excluding home equity and retirement savings from financial aid calculations (based on the notion that families should not have to borrow from their homes or savings to pay for college) causes racial disparities.

Levine and Ritter explained how,

for families with an income between \$75,000-\$125,000 and \$125,000-\$200,000, "...median asset holdings are much higher for white families; and most of these assets are not counted by the financial aid system."

While Levine and Ritter noted that this does not affect all students, they estimated that, "...about 850,000 students each year are likely to be affected by the preferential treatment of uncounted assets...[and] the aggregate value of the implicit subsidy for those students amounts to \$2.3 billion per year."

Even though FAFSA is not completely fair, there are still other financial aid options.

For instance, Gonzalez provides the Local Scholarship Packet, which has over 100 scholarships in it and is primarily for seniors, and sends out information about scholarships through the school website, over the announcements, on the College and Career Center Remind, and posts on the bulletin board in the College and Career Center (room A-02).

Gonzalez also recommends saving every essay a student has written, since some scholarship applications ask for a personal statement or writing sample, and to apply for scholarships throughout colleges.

"I am trying to tell students not to get discouraged and ask for help," Gonzalez finished.

Even though FAFSA is not entirely equitable, it is still worth it to apply. And because of the numerous resources Gonzalez provides through the College and Career Center, Liberty students have many financial aid options and opportunities.

## LION'S CAFE:

### A review of Brentwood Boba Corner, where refreshment meets creativity

By Joy Mariano  
Staff Writer

After many hours of activities or work, and after suppressing the want of a drink, you need a place to rest. The sudden yearn for something special other than water has also been on your mind. It's usually difficult to find a place meeting up to these requirements. But you can explore the world of bubble tea at the cozy cafe, Brentwood Boba Corner, just near LHS in Downtown Brentwood.

Before walking into the establishment, you'd have to admire the appealing art on the windows of the building, somewhat pulling customers in to see what's inside. Entering the cafe, I was welcomed with a comfy, lived-in setting. Boba Corner is truly a well-kept environment,

from expanded tables that look out to the ongoing streets to the cute, themed banners and chalkboards put out for display. Don't be fooled by the small look of the place, it's area has a generous amount of walking space for you to move around. Boba Corner is divided into two sections: first, the entrance and seating for the customers. Then, there's the cashier's corner, which is where the bubble teas are made, furnished with snacks for customers to take a closer look, like their Maven macaron ice creams and cookies. Above that is the full menu of what they have other than boba, like their mochi waffles with multiple flavors to choose from, for \$6.50 each. But if one's not interested in solid nourishment, their menu is attached in front of their register, containing only the drinks.

The place is family-owned and I was greeted by one of the members, named

Lakshmi; she was polite even when I stuttered and thought about what to buy for a long time, even giving me extra information about the boba shop. For my drink of choice, I had decided to try out their Oreo boba, a combination of taro and Oreo. For this refreshment, you can get it as snow or milk tea, both for only 6.50 as a large, and I gave the Oreo snow version a try. Then I wanted to take a snack for the road, so I bought their freshly baked cookie, snickerdoodle.

I had only waited for about 15 minutes for my drink to be ready then I took a seat. The first sip was aromatic, flavorful and exceedingly delicious. It was not too sweet, but the flavor was just right. After taking a few more sips of my milk tea I took a bite of my favorite flavored cookie. The taste was simple but very heavenly and I wolfed it all down with the drink included. My or-



Photo by Joy Mariano

*In search of refreshment, students can relax at Brentwood Boba Corner with a Brown Sugar Tea for only \$4.57.*

Brentwood Boba Corner is located at 761 Second Street in Brentwood



der, one Oreo snow for 4.50 plus 0.75 for the tapioca balls, and the cookie for 3.00 totaled \$9.05 (including tax). My experience in this location was truly pleasant and I'd recommend this great place to take a break with friends and

consume low-priced drinks, or study by yourself. Not only were their beverages and food outstanding, but the family owners are great people; they would love to have students there to lounge about the place after school.

## Facing freshman fears

### As 8th graders register as incoming students at Liberty, what are their worries about high school?

By Dilrabo Absadikova  
Staff Writer

From being the upperclassmen all the way back down to being the youngest of the school, incoming freshmen enter a new part of their life going into high school. Incoming freshmen students often have "fears" entering high school, such as academic pressures and social barriers. Students leave their previous school and step into a new setting; they develop these worries about creating new friends, fitting in, and succeeding academically. Teenagers are commonly known for trying to fit in with society and they strive to perfect their social status amongst their new and older peers, and

that triggers a button in them to worry about what is awaiting for them in high school. Delfina R. a freshman at Liberty High School, describes her first day of school and reflects on her thoughts:

"All my friends were going into a different high school, and I was a little bit nervous about going into high school"

One of the freshman fears of incoming underclassmen is struggling to fit in with everybody else and being judged by others. There's this high school

myth where everything is super complicated and that if people do not make friends quickly enough it will become



Photo courtesy of embracingyourtherapy.com

*Balancing academics while trying to fit in to a brand-new environment can be overwhelming for freshman students.*

a struggle. Delfina R. also mentions the academic pressure from all of the stereotypes created in middle school

about high school.

"My teachers in middle school always told us that high school will be extremely hard and high school teachers are extremely strict."

Another freshmen fear students face is failing their academics and struggling to get through with all their homework and class work. Middle school teachers and society often create this unrealistic stereotype towards high school and it being the hardest challenge to overcome. Delfina R. talks about how she was worried about getting along with her peers and perfecting her social status to blend in with the rest of the people in high school.

"I saw movies, sometimes they would show older students like 11-12th grade

bullying and picking on the 9th graders so I tried to not stand out to avoid that" Starting high school is a frightening experience for the new 9th graders. The 9th graders usually see the videos on the internet of how "scary" high school is, and if someone is different from others, they could be picked on and bullied by upperclassmen. That's one of the reasons incoming underclassmen try to perfect their personality, identity, and physical appearance before stepping into a new setting. Moving into a new part of their life, incoming 9th grade students fear high school; it's a new environment and they commonly worry about how to strive in their academics and conform into the social hierarchy of high school.

March 15, 2024

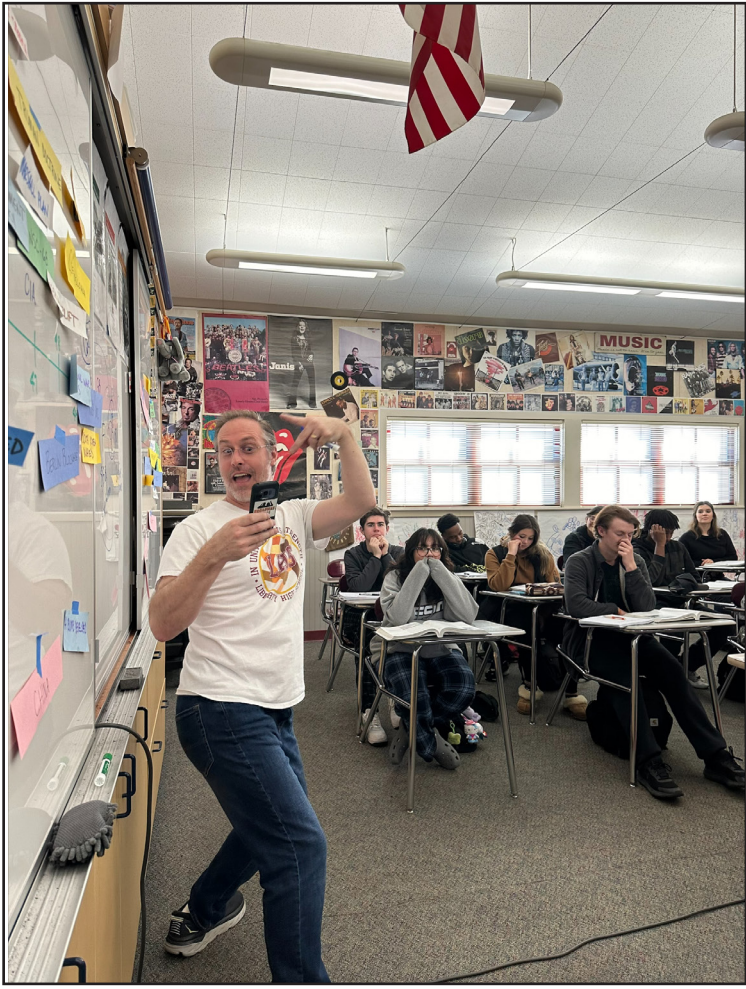


Photo by Romy Williams

Dedication to social media over students is a growing epidemic in the world of education. However, Social Science teacher Mr. Taylor prioritizes his students first, and simply provides a re-enactment of what other teachers across the country may be doing.

# TikTok Teachers

Why using social media to show off teaching skills should not have a place in schools

By Romy Williams  
Copy Editor

Finally relaxing after a tiresome day at school, a student opens their phone and checks their various social media apps. Only, something makes them pause; they hear... their own voice? Upon further investigation, they realize that their 3rd period teacher posted a video made while recording their class. It already has hundreds of thousands of likes, hundreds of thousands of total strangers have heard their voice, witnessing goofing-off with their friends when they thought no one was listening. Imagine the complete and utter vulnerability and lack of privacy when someone realizes that their teacher, an authority figure, has recorded them without their permission, and shared it with everyone on the internet. This is what happens when men and women in influential positions get addicted to at-

attention and prioritize their like count over their students.

As the world develops into a constantly changing technological age, it's important to think about how the increased interactions social media provides can impact minors. It has become more and more successful for teachers around the globe to share daily stories and occurrences from their classrooms. But when casual videos sharing funny stories evolves into kids feeling violated and uncomfortable in their places of learning, its important to re-evaluate priorities.

Some people may argue that posting content online is harmless fun, and even in extreme cases, just an easy way for teachers to make a couple extra bucks. Any video willing posted publicly by a teacher will only depict an appropriate, entertaining interaction. From this point of view, any video seems like a carefree, comfortable situation. Some teachers even go the extra mile, com-

pletely avoiding posting their students, by recreating conversations from that day's class. Giving off the impression that there are no ties between the minors they're teaching and the content they're posting.

Contrary to these beliefs, there is absolutely no way for a teacher to post something related to their students without in one way or another impacting the student.

Molly Meyokovich, a Junior at Liberty High School, affirms, "I don't think it's necessary to post a funny interaction because you're not friends with your teacher. They're your teacher"

These thoughts are shared by students everywhere who do not wish to have their privacy invaded and posted online. To combat this growing relationship between teachers and the internet, the verifications for posting content need to be more thorough and explicit in making sure that the students involved are comfortable and safe.

# Abolishing letter grades: A healthy alternative to tradition?

By Marwa Majeed  
Staff Writer

Many think letter grades are important for students, parents, and potential colleges, in order to know if students have mastered the required skills and curriculum. However, abolishing letter grades could benefit the students in many ways, as well as the school staff.

Professors and researchers indicate that letter grades cause undue stress in students, who become competitive and miss the joy of education all together. Stress can then cause students to resort to measures like cheating in order to be successful.

Tamim Majeed, a dad of a Liberty High School student noted that, "I have mixed feelings about this. Overall, abolishing letter grades could shift focus towards understanding and mastery rather than just grades; it is beneficial as it emphasizes learning over grades, fostering a deeper un-

derstanding of subjects. Others may be concerned about the impact on college admissions or assessing academic progress."

As for the argument that it would benefit the school staff, LHS English teacher Summer Rodriguez stated, "I wonder what the purpose in abolishing letter grades would be. Would they be replaced by something else, like a percentage? A rubric ranking? UC Santa Cruz used to allow students to request a written evaluation rather than a letter grade and I see benefit in something like that. However, until I see what the "other" looks like, I cannot say whether I would be for or against abolishing letter grades."

To answer Rodriguez's questions, researchers and schools who want to abolish grades say there are alternatives to letter grades, such as standards-based grading. To get more information on this, Yale Law School, Harvard Law School, and Stanford Law School, professors give "honors", "pass", or "low pass" as grades, instead

of traditional letter grades A/B/C/D/F. As alternatives are important, a student stated the important effects the abolishing has on students:

"I think it's great that schools want to abolish letter grades because you could still teach students things and have say, a pass or fail system, so that it takes the pressure off of everyone to be the best or to do things just for the grade and makes it so teachers give students things just to teach them and not just to have something in the gradebook," said Zoe Villaroman, a senior at Liberty High School.

However, a junior at West Park High School, Sana Amirzada, also noted, "I believe that abolishing letter grades is completely wrong because grades help students be more competitive and try harder, while if you have no grades, you won't try and there will be no motivation to do your schoolwork."

Grades can sometimes stand in the way of learning, and some educators are questioning the need for good grades at all.

“Overall, abolishing letter grades could shift focus towards understanding and mastery rather than just grades...”

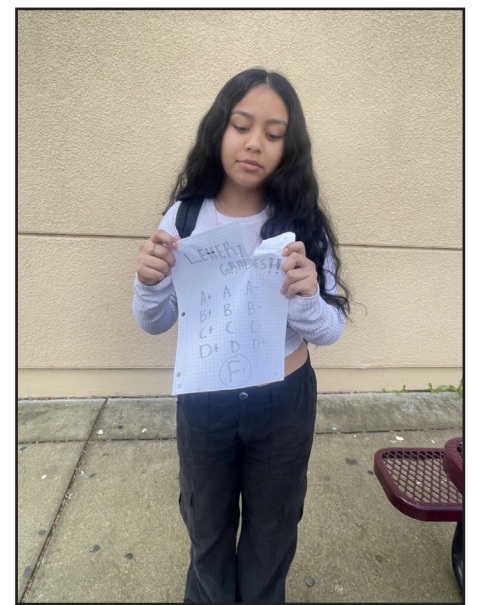


Photo by Marwa Majeed

Although the A-F grade scale has existed for more than 100 years, many question whether or not it actually measures student learning. British Columbia, Canada, has already replaced letter grades in all their public schools.

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