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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

Tardy sweeps cleaning the halls of Liberty High

By Rylee Marcelino
Staff Writer

You're walking to class with your friends, when all of a sudden, frantic music is played over the intercom. A wave of students rush past the already crowded hallways, just in time for teachers to close their doors at the bell. This is a tardy sweep, where late students are locked outside and rounded up by campus supervisors. Many students and staff at Liberty are posing the same question: are tardy sweeps necessary?

"It's stupid," sophomore Brooke Durden says. "People end up missing more class time and more important instruction." She continues on, wondering if students end up missing more class, is the tardy sweep even worth it? The concept of the tardy sweep was invented to find kids who are chronically late to class and bring them to a place staff could intervene. Students who get brought to these meetings are told that they can't continue the cycle of being late, and the whole process takes about twenty minutes. Critics of the tardy sweep concept say that the faculty cause more problems by keeping the kids for almost half an hour longer. Sophomore Sidy Keita states that, "If you're late by even a second you'll get swept up, it's no help to the students." Others point out that teachers should



In a tardy sweep, teachers are instructed to lock their doors once the bell has sounded.

Photo courtesy of Titan Nation

want to help students be on time, rather than penalize for being late. Sophomore Mareli Gonzalez says that, "My

seventh period teacher smiled at us before closing the door in our face before the bell even rang. We would've

been on time." Mareli testifies that they were about to be grabbed by campus supervisors, before a teacher across the hall vouched for them, saying they were in fact on time and the teacher shut the door too early. At other schools, though, the tardy sweep system seems to be working. Suhey Basi, a senior at Freedom High School, admits that, "While we might not like it, it does work. We have tardy sweeps pretty much every day here. Kids are almost never late." If it works for other schools, perhaps it could work for Liberty in the future. Being on time to class is important, and tardy sweeps are done in order to mitigate the tardy crisis at Liberty.

Grupo L takes the stage

By Kayla Murcay
Staff Writer

Imagine going to a new school and not only do you not know anybody there, but you also don't speak the same language. That's what many students at LHS struggle with. Thankfully, Mrs. Gonzalez and Officer Rucker decided to take charge and provide a way for the students to feel more comfortable. "He (Officer Rucker) had seen or known that at least one of the boys had played guitar before... out of nowhere he calls me, and his idea was to start a mariachi band," shared Mrs. Gonzalez. Mrs. Gonzalez shared the idea of the band with the boys and, surprisingly, they loved it. Each member contributed to the band as they continued to grow. "Where do they get to decompress? Where do they get to vent? Where do they get to just chill," xpressed Mrs. Gonzalez. She shared and explained that every teenager has things they deal with, but these students must deal with the fact that they are unable to speak the language around them. They have

regular teenager stresses, with the inability to speak English on top of that. "All of the gigs that they perform, whenever we get donations, it goes back to them in the scholarship. So, when these boys graduate high school, they all have a guaranteed scholarship," explained Mrs. Gonzales. These musicians are not only having fun, but they are also earning money towards their future in honor of their hard work. Being in a band is not easy and they

have schoolwork to keep up with on top of rehearsals, learning music, and performing. This requires a lot of dedication, commitment, and passion. Grupo L has come a long way and the performers have worked so hard, and Mrs. Gonzalez has made such a difference in their lives. Their dedication has paid off as Grupo L has gained a large following. They have performed at many events, such as the County Teacher of the Year ceremony, and the Brentwood Dia de los Muertos celebration.



Grupo L has performed at many events, all of which can be found on their Instagram.

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Gonzalez

LHS Wellness Center offers peace and calm

By Valeria Gonzalez
Staff Writer

"Stress creates mess," and Liberty High School has opened their Wellness Center to help many students deal with it. "I felt relaxed because it is very calming there and the counselor Mrs. Silva is someone to talk to. You can also color with coloring pages and play word games," expressed Liberty High School junior Angella Mari Mejia. She described how comfortable she felt while in the Wellness Center. This quiet space lets students who have any struggles or worries relax, and gives them time to disconnect from all their problems. Mrs. Silva, the counselor in the Wellness Center, is there to support students who feel like they need someone to talk to. "The Wellness Center is for students and staff to take a breather and have a quiet place to relax at," Mrs. Silva shared. "My hope for the wellness

center is to provide space for students who need to chill." Additionally, Mrs. Silva explained further about what purpose the Wellness Center has. The hope Liberty High School and Mrs. Silva have is for students to feel comfortable enough to take a break in the quiet space they provide for students and staff. There are many activities in the Center, as well as ways for students to practice healthy coping mechanisms. One half of the room has a couch with a blanket so students can chill, as well as having some stuffed animals for support. The other half of the room has a table with a bookshelf by the side having activities for students to enjoy. When students first come in, they would need to log into 5STAR and complete a survey of their use of the space. Students can come in for 15 minutes per day, but cannot repeat the same period in a week. The Wellness Center is always available for those who need to relax for a while.

Unveiling excellence: Behind the scenes of the National Honor Society

By Nicholas Howard
Staff Writer

Behind the scenes, student's silent impacts resonate, shaping a legacy of excellence through unspoken gestures, and a dedication to making a difference that speaks louder than any accolade. The National Honor Society, or NHS, is a nationwide organization that emphasizes uplifting students who display strong leadership, responsibility, and academic success. Here at Liberty High School, it's no different. In its dedication to promoting responsible leadership among students, NHS places a strong emphasis on specific criteria that must be fulfilled. For ex-

ample, to maintain active membership, individuals are required to accomplish a minimum of 20 community service hours per semester, while sustaining a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Furthermore, adhering to the requirements of the "four pillars of excellence" is essential. Embracing proficiency in scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Character is defined as consistently choosing ethical actions and demonstrating responsibility, respect, and honesty. Valuing service more than scholarships means prioritizing giving back to the community more than personal academic achievements. Ms. Marquart, Advisor of the National Honors Society, states, "If they write things down saying I want to be a part

of NHS because it's going to get me scholarships, like that's good, but that's not really a reason why you should join a club because we're going to be asking you to donate your time." She adds, "Even though payment doesn't come in monetary form, there's so many more payments because you brought a smile to someone's face, or you made a big difference." Throughout the semester, NHS members will volunteer at the farmers market, senior centers, food banks, tutoring, fundraising, and so much more, making the lives of people in their community easier and better. Lorenzo Cee, Assistant Manager at the Brentwood Farmer's Market commented, "It's great to have students come from school and volunteer their

time to help us out, it makes our job easier on us." At the same time, the National Honor Society is also providing opportunities that members can take advantage of and learn from. They get to know a difference is being made through their actions, getting a chance to make connections with others, and providing a sense of purpose. According to Giana Sweeney, a senior in NHS, "NHS has helped me realize that volunteering is not just to fulfill requirements, but it's actually fulfilling. Mia Taylor, a sophomore in NHS, reveals, "Personally, it allows me to open up to others and communicate and meet new people." Explaining her viewpoint, Cheyenna

Wright, a junior in NHS, explains, "It's taught me that doing community service is actually quite fun, and you feel like you're helping in a lot of ways. It makes you feel like you have a purpose." As a result, the efforts of the National Honor Society's officers and members will reward them with something positive to add to college resumes, such as a distinctive regalia for graduation, and scholarships sourced from a substantial \$2 million fund distributed by the national organization to senior members who have showed a commitment to the four pillars of NHS. Yet, beyond these tangible rewards, the experiences and leadership skills gained will aid these young adults to excel in their future endeavors.

Hear us roar some more!



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Upcoming events:

- 1/24 - 1/25 Liberty Idol Auditions
- 2/7 Leadership Applications Open
- 2/3 Winter Review for Percussion/Guard
- 3/16 Spring Break Starts

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The educator exodus: an epidemic of quitting teachers

By *Jiro de Jesus*
Staff Writer

Across America, teachers are quitting, and schools are having a difficult time hiring staff. But why is this happening? The causes are mainly teacher burnout, low salaries, long hours, and rising school violence. When a teacher leaves the teaching field, it negatively affects those who need assistance, the community, and funding. Some schools in America are seeing the effects of this “academic exodus.”

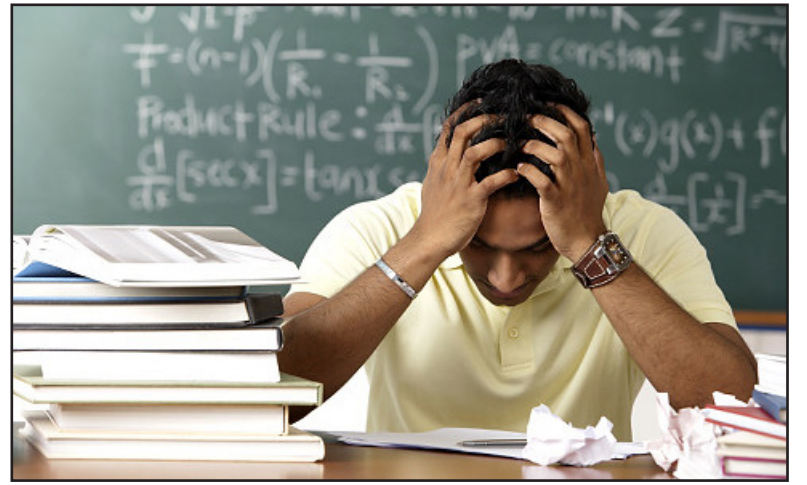
Burnout is one of the main reasons why teachers are leaving. Based on a survey in the *New York Times*, more than 50% of teachers want to quit. Emotional and physical exhaustion and mood changes as a result of grading work and regu-

lating the class are the most common symptoms of teacher burnout.

According to *USA Today*, 45% of public schools in the US claim that they are experiencing a shortage of staff entering the academic 2023-2024 school year, while 86% of schools were struggling to hire staff for this academic school year. In all of the US states, Maine is facing the highest number of teacher vacancies. School districts in Maine raised the salaries from \$30,000 to \$40,000 for at least 3 years in order to fix the problem and financial assistance was created for teachers with more expertise in 2019. The average teacher works about 53 hours per week, while the average American adult works 7 less hours than that.

In most schools across the US, there are minimum days called “Professional Development Day” or “PDD” when students go to school later or leave earlier than the standard school time. The purpose of these days is to enhance and promote the growth of a professional school environment. While students may have the advantage of sleeping more or being able to rest throughout the day, PD days play a role in stress amongst teachers because attending professional meetings before or after school is required.

What are schools doing to fix this problem? In recent months, school districts in Southern California are demanding other staff such as coaches and principals help substitute classes and cope with the teacher vacancies.



44%, or one-third of teachers quit within the first five years of being hired.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

It's been in the news for the last six months; But many confused teens may be wondering: What exactly is HAMAS?

By *Michael Davidson*
Copy Editor

While many have equated Palestinians to the militant political group HAMAS, that is false; the people of Gaza are not all terrorists and the continuation of that narrative is damaging to a resolution of peace and extremely hurtful to those civilians who experience violence, bigotry, and hatred daily. To equate all peoples in an area who share basic commonalities as one is more often than not a leap taken in bad faith to pass an agenda.

To understand generalizations and what the real issue is and what is going on. HAMAS comes from a movement started in 1987 to resist the Israeli occupation as an establishment of the Palestinian state. The name of that movement, Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya, was turned into the acronym HAMAS. While many see HAMAS as a solely militant group, in 2006 they

won the legislative elections in the Gaza strip which gave them prominence as a political group as well. However, HAMAS has since been accused of being an authoritarian government and a group that commits human rights violations. They have shown a repeated history of unprompted rocket attacks against Israeli military and civilian installations, but

they have shown to target civilian areas more exclusively. Many say because of that and Hamas' unwillingness to come to a cease fire or treaty that it is more interested in violence than stability or order in that region of the middle east. On October 10th of 2023 President Biden said, “The brutality of Hamas — this bloodthirstiness — brings to mind the worst — the worst rampages of ISIS.”

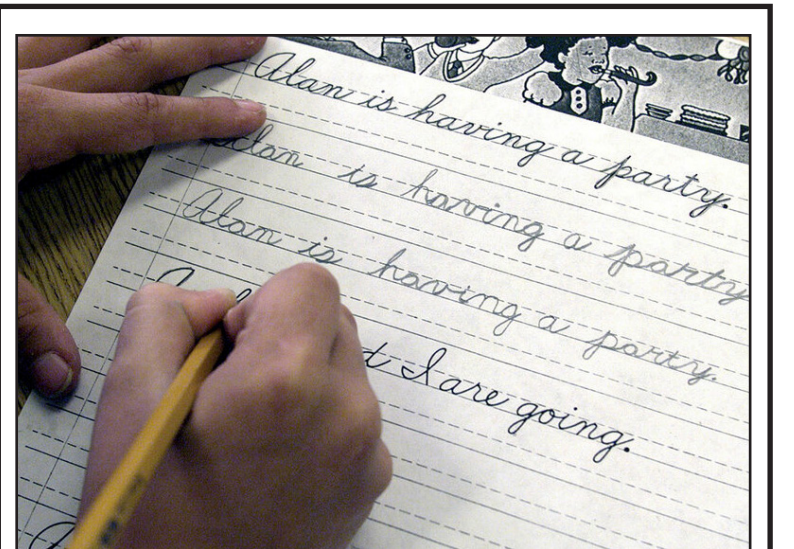
Hamas has been designated as a terror-

ist group by the European Union and other countries. According to Senator Collins, a United States senator, “Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, Israel, the Organization of American States, Paraguay, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.” Senator Collins is leading an effort to have the United Nations designate Hamas as a terrorist group as well, in order to obtain more resources to stop the atrocities committed.



Since October 7, 2023, over 24,000 people have been killed in Gaza by Israel.

Photo courtesy of Mohamed Alostaz



Only 37% of people in the US can read cursive, and even fewer can write it.

Photo courtesy of Robert Harbinson

Get out the erasers: Cursive to be revived in schools

By *Ryann Griggs*
Staff Writer

Cursive may be a long-gone writing system but soon, California students and teachers may have to learn something new.

Bill 446 has just been signed by Governor Gavin Newsom, mandating that handwriting in cursive must be taught to students between first and sixth grade. Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk Silva said, “Learning such a skill can have lasting benefits.” She also shared, “The goal would be that they could read and write it by the time there entering Junor high.”

The law will be in effect next year,

meaning that teachers will have something new to teach next year. Abigail Sorino Letz, an English Language Arts curriculum coordinator explains that “Handwriting actually activates different parts of the brain that don't get activated when printing blocks letters or typing.”

Most current high school students cannot write in cursive due to the fact that most schools have not been required to teach it since 2010. 45 states have adopted common core standards which do not require cursive to be taught by the schools or teachers.

Instead, they leave it up to districts and states to decide if they want to teach it.

Liberty's improving environmental impact

By *Evan Thomson*
Staff Writer

In a world under the constant threat of climate change, every institution must do its part to alleviate its impact; and some might be surprised by the impact

schools can have.

Altogether, public schools in the United States consume enough power to emit 72 million tons of carbon per year, which is roughly equivalent to the emissions of 18 coal power plants. A huge portion of these emissions could be eliminated with basic upgrades

of things such as lighting and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems to newer, more energy efficient systems. These new systems aren't installed, not because of a lack of demand, but because of a larger, more systemic issue.

“Currently, there is no significant school facilities funding stream at the national level. School districts in nearly every state have to pay for new buildings or renovations independently, relying almost exclusively on bonds to be paid back with property taxes.” says the Hechinger Report.

But what impact does this have on Liberty? While the school does get a large portion of its power from solar panels over the student parking lot, conserving power is always a good idea. The new construction on campus is confirmed by the Liberty director of facilities, Paul Melloni, to feature new electric heat pumps, advanced economizers, and advanced lighting control systems. Additionally, transportation emissions make up roughly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions within the United States, 83% of which are from private motor vehicles, according to the EPA and the Congressional Budget Office. Seeing as most Liberty students get driven

to school in a private motor vehicle, there is a lot of work to be done here. Improved bus service, zero emissions buses, and lower pricing for bus passes would go a long way to getting more students out of cars and onto the bus. Many Liberty students also live within walking or biking distance to the school. An event along the lines of a “spare the air day” where students are encouraged to take alternative methods of transportation to school could go a long way to creating a more environmentally friendly transportation culture within the student body. Improved cycling infrastructure within the vicinity of the school could also lead more students to bike to school, as safety is a major concern, but that kind of change may be outside of the scope of the school's influence on the city.

While there is always work to be done, it's important to recognize the progress that Liberty has made. The solar panels over the student parking lot are a huge improvement over what would most likely be natural gas power. The school has also made huge strides in reducing food waste. In addition to a tight first in first out system to ensure food is consumed before it expires, any food that is not consumed is do-

nated to a local women's shelter, and organic waste is donated to a cafeteria employee's farm to be composted or fed to their animals.

The steps Liberty has taken to reduce its environmental impact have been helpful so far, but it is important to not get complacent; this is an ongoing process and our efforts to better serve the community and environment need to continue into the following years.



Photo courtesy of Kevin Schafer

Scientists believe that by 2050, climate change could become irreversible.



Over 914 school districts in the United States have switched to electric school buses, making the ride to school more environmentally friendly.

Photo courtesy of Briana Schmid

January 23, 2024

Pay it by ear

Hearing aids aren't covered by insurance, affecting students everywhere

By Marina Hernandez Rodriguez
Staff Writer

School days begin to repeat, for a typical teenager they must listen to the teacher, work on assignments, and go home. Students with hearing loss can be challenged and placed in confusing situations during this repetition. These situations are not helped by the lack of aiding or insurance coverage for medical necessities.

A sophomore at Liberty High School named Jaden Hartwell is like an ordinary teenager, but what sets him apart from the rest is his love for shooting and golfing. He also happens to have

mild hearing loss. Hartwell expressed the costly price of hearing aids, he himself having Phonak hearing aids, which are typically between one thousand to four thousand dollars. He continued that some hearing aids may cost six hundred dollars to about seven thousand dollars.

To further illustrate the cost, Medical News Today states that "Hearing aids range significantly in cost, starting from about \$1,000 and going up to as much as \$6,000." And that, "Often, additional expenses include hearing test, follow-ups, and ongoing support from healthcare professionals..."



LHS teacher Mr. Mundy works during class time with Jaden Hartwell.

Photo by Marina Hernandez Rodriguez

Despite this costly expense, insurance companies do not cover hearing aids. They may cover the first examination, but after that, people are financially on their own. Sadly, up to four out of a thousand children are born with hearing loss, and by the age of 12, over

20% of them have some kind of hearing loss whether that is severe, mild or moderate. Compared to the 3% of children who are born with visual impairment, hearing aids should be considered as standard healthcare just like glasses and be covered by insur-

ance plans. Hartwell mentioned, "The government doesn't look at covering standard healthcare."

Additionally, the difficulties of the expenses are accompanied by the difficulties of being in a classroom. Students who suffer from a type of hearing loss can have difficulty paying attention to the teachers, especially when there is background noise. The act of watching a movie during class excites students, but Hartwell reported that when the teacher does play something over the class speakers, he has trouble picking up on some of the sounds coming from it. He also said that people may need to change their hearing aids once every three to four years, the cost of which quickly adds up.

Hearing aids aren't an option for people who suffer from hearing loss, they are a necessity and should be covered by insurance.



Young children, in particular girls, are easily influenced by romantic stories portrayed in the media.

Photo by Mandy Moore

Prince not-so-charming

How depictions of "romance" in movies and TV are harmful

By Hannah Grossette
Copy Editor

The television hums throughout the room as a little girl soaks in the information in front of her. As she learns the phrase "happily ever after" for the first time, she in turn views not so subtle instances of domestic violence, painted with stage makeup and highlighted in shiny lights.

The romance movie industry has taken the world by storm since the early 1800s and has been demonstrating toxic behaviors and patterns to its young viewers for just as long. Many popular romance movies have depicted these harmful situations but with a heavily romanticized perspective, often where the couple lives "happily ever after" despite the toxic and abusive behavior that is demonstrated. For instance, in the Oscar winning movie *The Notebook*, the main characters Allie and Noah are shown committing physical violence, emotional manipulation, and infidelity. This can also be seen in movies such as *Twilight*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Titanic*, and many more.

A Liberty English teacher and mother of two, who has spent an extensive amount of time around today's youth, Susan MacDonald shares her thoughts and perceptions on the negative impacts of these movies. She said, "It's very sad to normalize that level of physical and emotional abuse."

Moreover, she explains that these movies allow people to avoid taking responsibility for their own lives. The impact of these movies normalizing toxic relationships is that perpetrators of domestic manipulation and violence have a justification for their decisions, and the victims have a justification for staying in that toxic situation.

Mrs. MacDonald further explains the harmful influence that these movies have on young women, "Media can be so persuasive...It's so damaging, the idea that whatever you are isn't good enough".

In addition, Mrs. MacDonald illustrates that a healthy dynamic between oneself and partner should be based on respect above all else. She believes that romance movies do a disservice

to the reality of true relationships by not demonstrating respect and sound boundaries. MacDonald continues to explain that most people view sound relationships as boring because of the over glamorized relationships in the media today.

Psychology Today shares this belief and adds, "If you don't have a healthy role model for a romantic relationship... a consistent relationship may feel boring to you or as if there is no spark."

This demonstrates that the romance genre is highly influential and in turn is the highest earning movie genre today. On average this industry makes 28 million U.S. dollars in box office revenue per year and is continuing to push a highly harmful agenda which is heavily contributing to how young people view relationships and their own lives. This encapsulates the vitality of providing all demographics with a positive and healthy model for what sound love looks like, and above all else, preventing more young people from entering toxic or abusive relationships.

Curly hair? Don't care

By Mia Ramirez
Staff Writer

A floral scent of curl creams, mousse, and gel, or the burning smell from a flat iron. Society has taught people that the ideal beauty is pin straight hair, but now society is also accepting curly hair as beautiful.

Before curly hair was frowned upon as "natty" or "untamed hair." Straight hair is considered neat and well-presented. But why do people think it is the most common when curly hair is genetically dominant in the world? People are born with curly hair every day, so why has curly hair been seen as a bad thing for so many years? Social media portrays that the perfect hair is straight, especially for younger audiences. On

ed that one time someone told her she "looked like Hagrid" from *Harry Potter* because, at the time, she did not know how to take care of her wavy hair. After that, "Messy hair made me feel singled out," Salazar continued. She agreed that society and social media have affected beauty standards of hair. Salazar explained, "Yes, it has affected beauty standards with influencers. In middle school people straightened their hair, and that was the thing." She has been straightening her hair for 4 years. She prefers to have straight hair to fit in.

An article from the *New York Times* about curly hair, written by Marisa Meltzer, "your so brave to wear your curly hair" is mistaken as a compliment. For someone who has curly hair, it can be taken as a compliment, or it

can make them feel lazy or sloppy.

Sidon Samuel, a sophomore at Liberty with short curly hair, says his hair is his "most prized possession." Micrah Conley, a sophomore at Liberty with medium curly hair. Explained that it takes her around an hour to two hours to style her natural hair. She admitted

her hair "was frustrating and irritating at a young age. But never desired a different hair type." She concluded that "Curly hair is beautiful, and being naturally born with it should be appreciated." On the other hand people can give a better experience with their curly hair.

Furthermore, people around the world may have difficulty or no difficulty with their hair.



Curly hair is an inherited trait that many LHS students possess.

Photo by Mia Ramirez

the other hand, some influencers help people learn how to take care of and help them learn to love their natural hair. While curly hair is viewed as beautiful, it takes a long time to style and maintain.

For instance, not everyone has a positive experience with their curly hair journey. Sophia Salazar, a sophomore student at Liberty with wavy hair, straightens her hair every day. She stat-

Legacies: Golden ticket to college admissions?

By Loujain Habibi
Co-Editor

A last name may give someone the boost they need to get into the college of their dreams. That boost may turn into a soft push when they enter the workforce with their shiny diploma, and a shove when they begin building their career. But how could a last name have such a long-lasting effect? And what does this mean for everybody else? Although it has many different meanings, when one hears the word "legacy," they think of someone or something from the past who is remembered to this day. Hence, the term "legacy admissions" came about. In a *U.S. News* article, called "Legacy Admissions: What It Is and Why Colleges Are Reconsidering It", Shane LaGessee explained that legacy admissions are when, "colleges give students who are related to alumni preferential treatment in admissions."

When asked who is the most affected by legacy admissions, Eduardo Saldana, Liberty sophomore, mentioned minorities, peo-

ple with financial disadvantages, and immigrants. This contrasts to most legacy's coming from wealthy families, which is supported by experts who say that colleges may use legacy admissions due to its economic benefits. For instance, wealthier students are more likely to pay full tuition, not require financial aid, and related alumni - plus the student after graduation - would be more inclined to donate. What's more, the family's wealth could increase the students chances of getting in since they would have the finances for a private tutor, extracurriculars, retaking a college admissions test, etc. Nonetheless, being part of a legacy still benefits them since it helps them get in, mentioned Chelsea Sanchez, a junior at Liberty.

Some defend the use of legacy admissions by arguing it fosters a strong sense of community. Based on personal experience, Jamie Beaton stated in her article "Legacy admissions are crucial to America's higher education dominance," published by *The Hill*, that Harvard creates a life-long, active and engaging alumni community. She



The road to success is paved with privilege for some, but is long and winding for others.

explained that legacy admissions foster a sense of community and open up opportunities for yourself, your family, and your children.

A consequence legacy admissions are commonly criticized for is robbing highly-qualified students of a place at their dream school. In a *Washington Post* opinion piece, titled "Why legacy admissions are a good thing", Steven B. Gerrard refuted a common critique of legacy admissions when he stated, "...no legacy is admitted

at the expense of a first-generation student; they are admitted at the expense of other privileged students who have other excellent options." This analysis only applies to colleges Gerrard attended (Amherst College) or works for (Williams College), since universities like Harvard may work differ-

ently. But a pressing question remains: do students who come from a legacy know that it is unfair?

Hannah Rivers, a junior at Liberty, remarked that some may not know since, "They're born privileged, and I think they're blinded by how they grew up." Sofia Henderson, Liberty junior, added that they might realize it is unfair and may not even like it themselves.

Sarah Enelow-Snyder, opinion contributor to *USA Today*, is an example of a legacy who dislikes legacy admissions. In her article "Legacy admissions helped me get into college. They should be abolished," she explained how she applied to a prestigious college in New York, hoping to become a fifth-generation alum, and was accepted through early decision. Looking back, Enelow-Snyder believes, "I took a spot at my college from someone else, and I took scholarship money from someone else." Whether or not legacy admissions interfere with one's acceptance into their dream college, students should not place their worth into schools.

January 23, 2024

Science program to die for: A career at The Body Farm

By Emily Lazaro
Staff Writer



Normally, human bones found in a forest would be an unwanted sight. But at the Body Farm, it is just what they hope for.

Students around the world are becoming more interested in true crime and forensic science. With this, there has become a growing curiosity in crime scene investigations, evidence handling, and DNA preservation for the younger generation. But, with a closer look at what goes on in Tennessee University's Anthropology Center, students are not so sure about the job of forensics any-

more. "I can't give people back their loved ones. I can't restore their happiness or innocence, can't give back their lives the way they were. But I can give them the truth," voiced Bill Bass, creator and author of The Body Farm.

The University of Tennessee's Anthropology Center, also known as the Forensics Center, was created for the purpose of providing the necessary information of decomposition to forensics students. To provide this information, the center has developed a Body Farm. With this Body Farm, the scientists in charge collect bodies of the deceased to place in a forest to study the decomposition.

"After hearing about a body farm, it seems sort of unethical to me, I mean, imagine running across a random forest filled with bodies," stated Gavin

Gelao, tenth grade Liberty High School student.

While the Body Farm has great value, not everyone is in favor. Some community members find it disturbing and unethical. The University of Tennessee reports complaints from residents regarding concerns that the bodies will attract insects and scavenging animals. To combat the public concerns, the body farm is closed off to the public and the body donations process is arduous. "When you leave here with a BA (bachelor's degree), you have had more hands-on opportunities at the outdoor research facility than people in grad programs at other institutions," explained one of the women in charge of the body farm, Joanne Devlin.

The University of Tennessee has created a good balance between furthering science and being respectful of the

community's concerns. The strict rules with a closed off area, monitoring, and governance ensure the bodies are treated with respect and for the intended purpose.

With these body donations, some people are nervous to say goodbye to their fellow loved ones. "They may be scared or curious or they just need someone to talk to, if somebody is giving us the gift of their body, the least I can do is give a half a hour, 45 minutes of my time," shared Mary Davis, another woman in charge of the body farm.

A body farm is found to be one of the most sufficient ways to study the decomposition of the human body. While there is controversy, there is a clear value and purpose; to further forensics science, solve crimes, and provide truth to families in need of closure.

Chill of the winter season, heat of the win: Liberty's winter percussion

By Toby Bartling
Staff Writer

The sound of drums and the strum of the guitar resonate through the gym as the 2024 band season fast approaches. As the excitement of the fall marching season comes to an end, students prepare for winter percussion to take flight. This thrilling new season takes marching band to the next level as the demanding work hours and rigorous music challenges students from Liberty, Heritage and Freedom to test the limits of their skills.

Students are expected to exhibit higher skills for the music and showmanship levels are raised as well. Students are to maintain a GPA of at least a 2.0 throughout the season, December through April. They are to practice on their own time outside of designated practice times.

Drumline member and sophomore at Liberty High School, Andrew Giles, explains that despite the tough challenges, reaping the rewards of competitions will always be worth it. "The success of the program is very personal and emotional, when we compete and win it feels like nothing else matters," he says.

Last year's percus-

sion season set a standard for Liberty that requires students to take their skills above and beyond. The group ended last season undefeated, going to four Bay Area competitions and coming home first place champions at each one. This raises the stakes exponentially, and Liberty has the goals to not only continue their new reputation but increase their scores ten fold. While the competition levels are higher this year, so are the students' ambitions. Abigail Schmidt, piano and trumpet player, talks about how even after the set standard, they're ready to dominate once again. "We're all going to need to work harder, but I think, in return, we'll get another very rewarding season."

As Liberty starts to host a third season of winter percussion, Freedom and Heritage students begin to prepare their skills for the heavy competition ahead. Students from these schools are held to expectations like never before, as their schools don't host activities like this, and their experiences are limited to in class band rehearsals and concerts.

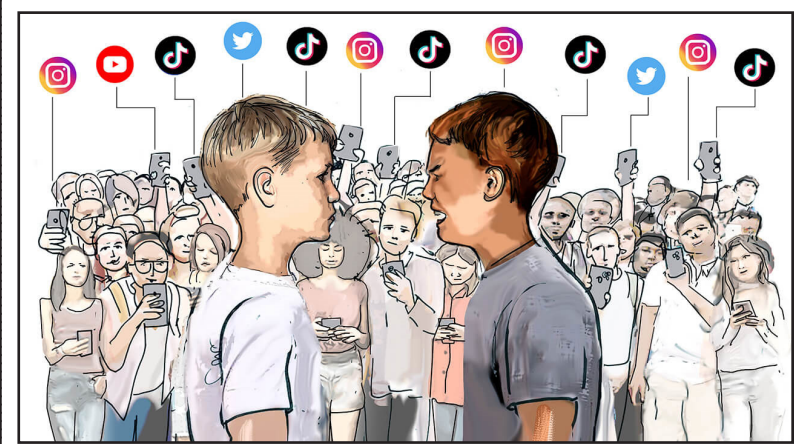
Luca Parenti, Heritage varsity drumline snare drummer, expresses his excitement for a new season of band to take off. "It's nice to have a program to continue drumming during the off season of fall drumline."

Ultimately, a new season is fast approaching Liberty and the students are more prepared than ever to make it great.



Saturdays are typically a day to sleep-in, but not for members of Winter Percussion, who spend additional hours on practice and competition.

Photo by Toby Bartling



A common sight at school fights are cell phones all set to record.

Photo courtesy of Severiano del Castillo Galvân

Campus crime

Will recording school fights become illegal?

By Frankie Brown
Editor-in-Chief

Social media allows us to share crucial moments of our lives, but all too often, those moments can include fights and criminal activity. It's almost impossible to see a fight at school without a sea of phones recording the event. Because of this, California lawmakers are attempting to make it a crime to record violent offenses at school.

If passed into law, it would become illegal to willfully record a video or conspire to record a video of a fight at school. If you are the one committing the act, and conspire with another person to have the act recorded, it could add another year to your sentence.

Many critics of the law argue that it could become hard for prosecutors to find evidence to charge people of crimes if people are too scared to record them. However, the law is not designed to persecute innocent bystanders, but instead to prosecute those who knew a crime would happen, or who

encouraged it to happen.

Not only could it become illegal to record fights at school, but the act already violates California School Code. It is illegal to "aid or abet" the infliction of physical injury on another student, and recording a fight is seen as "aiding and abetting" in the eyes of the California school board. When a student is recorded, they are put on a metaphorical stage, and can feel like they need to "perform" for the cameras.

California is also a two-party consent state, meaning it is illegal to film another party without their consent. At school, these rules are much more strict, because many students are minors or are on no-film lists for private reasons.

The aim of the law is to stop people from committing violent crimes for entertainment purposes, and to put a stop to premeditated violence. However, it still begs the question: should people be charged with a felony just for recording felonies?

How household income impacts social life

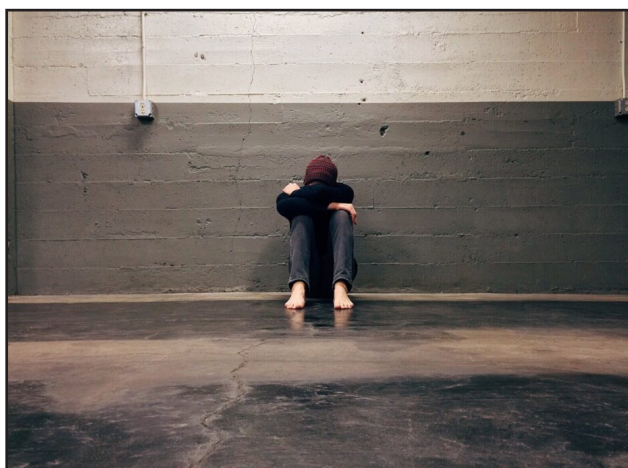
By Kristiana Zaste
Staff Writer

High school is a very crucial time in mental and social development, but sometimes these things are interrupted by situations out of people's control. The poverty rate of children under 18 has risen to nearly 17%. This was the result of a one year jump where child poverty was raised by 138%. When families have money problems this prohibits students from going out with friends, participating in big school events such as prom which often costs students upwards of 200 dollars, or even little events or celebrations like candy grams.

"When prom season came around I was super excited to dress up and go out with my friends like I had seen in a lot of movies, but when the time came

my parents told me we couldn't afford any of that because we were short on money. I was so upset because this was supposed to be a magical event I could spend with all my friends but I couldn't just because of money," an anonymous student from Liberty revealed.

Based on a study by medical professionals, students from low income households commonly have lower test scores, less communication skills, and have a harder time staying focused. Due to all these factors many low income students also receive lower grades which causes them to get in trouble at school. Schools



Circumstances outside of someone's control could impact many aspects of life.

often have punishments for situations like these such as restore times which can lead to the isolation of the child.

In addition to having hard times at school because of something out of their control, the social isolation that results from it can be very damaging to teens in general. Students who do not have an active social life have much higher risks of anxiety and depression which only worsens their situation. An article by the National Library of Medicine states "Social isolation leads to higher levels of cortisol and worse cognitive development."

Schools can already see the developmental effects of students who came out of quarantine already showing signs of lower test scores overall and an inability to focus

on the tasks given in the classroom. The isolation not only stunted mental growth the rate of mental illness such as depression have exponentially grown in adolescents. These types of illnesses not only affect people when they're young but also when they're much older.

Mental illness has been shown to compromise the physical health of an individual as well. Overall low income students can miss out on a lot of crucial events and education that can help with physical and mental development. Students in this situation require extra support and will ultimately end up underdeveloped and uneducated. They miss out on social outings, school events and many more. With the increase in child poverty it is quite likely this pattern will continue unless something is done.

January 23, 2024

Preview of the 2024 stunt season: How has stunt shaped the lives of LHS students?



A heel-stretch performed on solid ground can't be achieved by most, let alone a heel stretch done six feet up in the air, but the stunt team can do it with ease.

Photo courtesy of LHS Stunt Instagram

By Dilrabo Absadikova
Staff Writer

In the world of stunt, this thrilling pursuit propels the stunt team at Liberty High School towards newfound confidence, strength, and coordination. The sport of stunt revolutionizes the lives of young athletes, it shapes their holistic health, and opens their full potential. Stunt building is a sport that typically involves performing jumps and tumbling routines. Stunt is based on cheerleading and they both apply similar traits like teamwork, coordination, and athleticism. The stunt team at Liberty High school works hard to perfect their skills and create excitement among the crowd. Like cheerleading, athletes on the stunt team are commonly at football games, and themed occasions like Christmas events. They also compete against other high school stunt athletes, according to

their level, from different schools. LHS head coach, coach Kelly said, "I hope the program and culture continues to grow and to continue to get athletes college scholarships that are interested in continuing the sport." Coach Kelly has 20+ years of coaching experience and training and gets her athletes to practice up to 18 hours a week, plus games on Wednesdays. The stunt team has won several BVALS throughout the years. However, Coach Kelly says, "The injury rates of the stunt sport are low." The growing popularity in stunt lays in the culture growth amongst the sport. Stunting is a rare sport that lots of young teenagers do not engage in. There are tryouts and many get qualified to join the team and reach higher levels of stunting. For example, several girls on the team have reached national levels. This is achieved by their diligent practicing after school in the gym or near the pool quad.

Get ready with me: 10-year-old edition

How the "skincare" trend among tweens may not be as healthy as it sounds

By Samantha Benson
Staff Writer

When shopping through Sephora, one encounters a mother and a very unhappy child. "But mom! I need this! I need to take care of my skin!" she cries, reaching for an expensive beauty product. Her mom sighs and grabs the product to avoid further upsetting her young daughter. Where is this need coming from? None other than social media's skincare trends. Although intended to help teens and adults better take care of their skin, when viewed by the wrong audience, it can become harmful. Social media has a convincing nature and can especially manipulate the young and vulnerable. New trends arise and spread rapidly around the world, and it is evident how effective they are when it comes to appealing to people. The new viral trend is skincare, which does not seem harmful but the impact it has on children is concerning. 'Skincare' is a recently popularized term that encourages you to take care of your skin by using specific products on your face and body. Doesn't sound harmful yet, right? It may even sound beneficial and fun. "Doing your skincare" can consist of beauty products like cleanser, moisturizer, toner, and serums and many people on apps like TikTok and Instagram share their skincare routines with the public. These videos easily pop up on the feed and are accessible to everyone. However, young children are also watching these videos and they even



Retinol, salicylic acid, and hyaluronic acid are just a few of the ingredients in the popular products tweens buy that can damage their skin.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

become inspired to do their skincare exactly how influencers are doing it. Many skincare products are specifically meant for teens and adults, so young children are more likely to get irritated by skincare products because they have thinner and more sensitive skin. Videos related to skincare can easily make children feel insecure; this is where the urge to buy prod-

ucts to improve their skin starts. "Girls compare themselves while they think about how beautiful someone else is, so it makes us want to do our skincare," states Jamie Dowell, a 6th grader from Edna Hill Middle School. Dowell is an active user of TikTok and follows many popular creators; including those who participate in this tricky trend. She worries for her classmates

and close friends because many of them also use social media. She is concerned because she cannot tell her friends what to do, and she is worried about their well-being and mental health. Knowing that this is such a sensitive and relatable topic for small children, it is apparent that skincare is much more than applying products to your face, this trend stems from insecurity which stems

from social media's high beauty standards. These standards have an astonishing effect on women and can create conflict and jealousy in relationships. Humans naturally compare themselves to others and are consistently trying to improve themselves; young people especially do this when viewing someone they envy online. 6th grader Jamie says that social media apps like TikTok are always trying to appeal to young people and cater their mature videos to kids. This is because of how they market and advertise products and other influences; young people may even start to idolize these products and their creators online. Dowell says that prolonged time watching these videos can be very tempting and even makes her want to copy her favorite influencers online; social media is choosing the role model for young children. Although the trend of skincare can be harmful to young children, it can be safe to participate in if you are aware of what you are buying. Parents can limit their children's screen time and be conscious of the products they buy for their kids. There are beauty products out there that are specifically for the sensitive skin that children have; being attentive is the first step in tackling this obstacle. Taking care of your child's skin mindfully is a beneficial way to confront this problem; checking the ingredients label and limiting how much product is used can balance their desire to do skincare while also keeping their skin healthy.

OPINION:

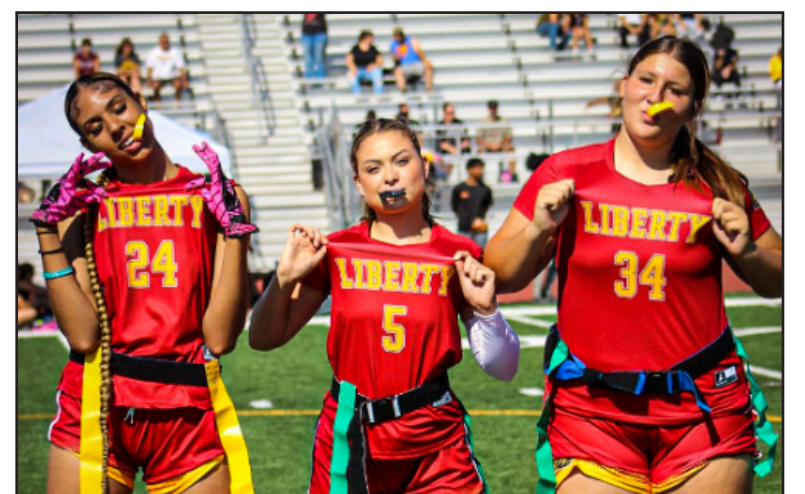
The lack of respect for female athletes

By Ayden Curameng
Staff Writer

Over the course of history, athletics have remained separated by the sexes: boys and girls. Although they play the same sports, they differ in performance and interest. This idea that women's sports are a "joke" however, is an ironically foolish outlook. For the first time in Brentwood history, a girl's flag football league has been created. On February 3 2023, "the California Interscholastic Federation's (CIF) Federated Council voted unanimously to add girls' flag football as a statewide sanctioned sport for the upcoming 2023-24 school year (CSBA)." However, there are still many people who dismiss women's sports entirely.

From hate comments under sports-related posts about them, to the lower engagement at games, reflecting a lack of interest in the sport. The main argument presented is that boys play with much more intensity than girls, therefore it is much more interesting, and why some people don't even bother watching women's sports. However, this argument lacks validity. Since the start of time, it has been acknowledged that men and women have distinct biological differences, enabling men to develop more muscle than women. Additionally, due to enforced gender roles over time, males are often perceived as "stronger" and "tougher" than females. BVAL All-League senior, Suzie Banchieri, had to say this about the issue; "Girls in women's sports work

just as hard as boys in men's sports and should be taken just as seriously." Men and women are two distinct beings, and it is unfair to make this comparison when they play at different level standards. People need to understand that both boys and girls compete at the highest level within their respective genders. So, before people draw conclusions on girls sports, as a whole, it is strongly suggested for those to watch a single game to see for themselves. By doing this, they will see that girls compete with the same level of ferocity and competition as in boys' sports. Just like Banchieri stated, they should be taken with the same amount of seriousness, and the introduction of this new girl's flag football will undoubtedly reinforce that sentiment.



These Liberty High School students will go down in history as some of the first official female flag football players in California. Photo by Kyle Cook

January 23, 2024

Let's recharge after winter break

By Ella Follett
Co-Editor

From the enjoyment students and teachers have with holiday celebration, to the expectations of the new year, is the recovery after winter break easy? The majority of California schools all have the schedule of a two week winter break. These public schools get the chance to celebrate holidays and join together with loved ones, but does anyone consider the possible stress of going back to school afterwards? Schools give the winter break for students and staff to reconnect with families without the stress of an essay due the next day. It also gives a chance for people to rest to maintain mental healthiness and to get relieved of the work that might have stressed out students and staff. Having extra time can also help students

who may be behind and they get the chance to improve their academics. A senior at Liberty High School, Inara Baker-Lauer expresses her excitement for winter break when mentioning that the two weeks Liberty gets is enough to once again reconnect with family and friends after going through the stress of school work. Baker-Lauer even references the stress that can surround the holidays, but states that winter break is "Overall more uplifting." With the upbringings of winter break, the stress of the holidays is still there. Winter break can bring more responsibilities, stressful events, and financial worries. A survey conducted by MedStar Health concluded that 74% of Americans considered this season to be stressful. Laura Weise, a teacher at Liberty High School comments on the fact that family gets stressful during break and that it is not always the break

it should be; but then she further explains that everyone needs the time to reset, making the winter break worth it. Getting back into rhythm after winter break might be challenging because people go from sleeping in, zero work pressure to waking up early with loads of school work piling up again. But preparing for school afterwards might be the answer. Prepare by gaining a sleep routine once again, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine states that a lack of sleep connects with "attention, behavior, and learning problems." After regaining a healthy sleep schedule start to get back into the mood of school to gain motivation by reviewing your work before school starts up, and to remember your end goal. Winter break may not end up perfect for everyone, but with the benefits it is intended to provide, it is best to spend the time wisely.



Winter break gives students and staff a chance to get their energy and motivation back. But that first day back can be a rough one for some. Photo courtesy of The Billings Gazette

Caught in the act...of being sick

Why is the culture of "sick role" spreading?



The sick role is a concept that states someone suffering from any sickness has their own set of "rights" and some people will fake an illness in order to get those rights.

Photo courtesy of MilamPhotos

By Maddie Banchieri
Staff Writer

Picture a dark room, a bright screen, and a girl scrolling through TikTok. She comes across a video with

someone explaining their disability, the girl begins to relate to the person in the video. And she starts acting like she has the same disability. This is called "Sick Role", and it's

more common than people think. This "Sick Role" is common amongst teenage girls who, just like everyone, probably had too much time on their hands during the pandemic. It

consists of girls who relate to content creators whose whole social media page is based around their mental disorder. These girls see themselves in these influencers and conclude that they have the same disorder. They start to present symptoms related to the disorder that they didn't have before. They make having this rare disease their whole image online and seek positive feedback from others to validate their actions. These girls are seeking to be a part of an exclusive community. When asked about how they feel about the subject, a 10th grade female Liberty student stated that she feels it is unnecessary which create invalid feelings within people with disorders. In addition, the glamorization of these illnesses makes teens think that they can be special if they have it too. They seek affirmation and attention from others. In most cases, pretending to have something uncommon is masking feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. They think that they will get more attention from their peers if they have something to be fussed over. These teens possibly feel the need for attention due to the lack of attention given to them as children.

According to psychoanalysts "Identifying with and glamorizing rare disorders has become a way for teenagers to express extreme negative emotions in a way, rather than stigmatizing them, makes them feel a part of a community and even feel unique and special." Meanwhile, this doesn't just affect the teens participating in the "sick role," but it also affects the teens all around the world who do struggle with mental illnesses. These teens must endure seeing others pretend to have what they have. The glamorized situation these teenage girls put themselves in created a negative environment for the ones who don't think what they have is "cool" or "fun". A 10th grade Liberty student with anxiety responds, when seeing somebody have an anxiety attack that seems obviously fake, its sickening, because actually they deal with it whilst in school, and during sports. In the meantime, for the teens participating in this "Sick Role", options are available for them to seek help. Such as talking with a friend, trusted adult, or even seeking professional help. Rather than pretending to have mental disorders, they have the choice to get better.



announces bold expansion plans

By David Leon
Staff Writer

With the NFL's constant growth in popularity the thought of expanding into foreign markets is not much of a shock to fans and officials alike. Introducing the NFL to new fans and increases the global brand and the abundance of money that comes with it. With an excited fanbase waiting in Europe it began in 2007 with the first international series at Wembley Stadium hosted by the Miami Dolphins in a game against the New York Giants. The United Kingdom and Germany being key players in hosting these couple of games in their cities with London and Frankfurt being the most popular locations to host these games. This year having the expansion into Frankfurt and allowing more fans and money to mix, there is no doubt that fans and officials would have something to say. In an interview with NFL News, Peter O'Reilly, the NFL executive vice president and club business



The NFL is expanding over to Europe for the sake of promoting the sport and to widen the appeal worldwide.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

major with major events and international, stated, "Expansion demonstrates not only the momentum of the

Global Markets Program as we head into year two, but the value the participating clubs are already seeing from

this important initiative." After asking NFL fan Lucas Leon from Liberty High School, he shared, "I think its intriguing,

I wonder if we could potentially get new teams and where those would be located. I also wonder if we could see the NFL expand to other places like Asia or maybe Africa" In a separate interview with Jayden Verduco another Liberty High School sophomore, he added, "I think it's positive because its adding more fans and encouraging more people outside of the United States to play professionally and the thought that the NFL could expand to more places in the future." The announced games in order were the Atlanta Falcons vs. Jacksonville Jaguars on October 1st 2023 in Wembley Stadium in London U.K. The Jacksonville Jaguars vs. Buffalo Bills on October 8th 2023 and the Baltimore Ravens vs. Tennessee Titans on October 15th 2023 both games taking place in Hotspur Stadium in London. The last international games of 2023 were the Miami Dolphins vs. Kansas City Chiefs on November 5th and the Indianapolis Colts vs. New England Patriots on November 12th. Both games took place in Frankfurt Stadium in Frankfurt, Germany.

January 23, 2024

Crossing the line

Having a closed campus creates the temptation to leave

By Jenny Dzul
Staff Writer

“Do not touch the red button,” they said; this makes you want to do the very opposite, finding yourself in a world that dictates what people should and should not do in life. Almost feeling caged when a young person’s clear purpose is to be free to explore the aspects of life. Many teenagers find themselves wanting to break free from the consistent chains of school. Recently, with some students leaving campus during lunch at Liberty, even though the school is strictly a closed campus, it strikes a bigger question on what is causing this desire to leave. Students should be able to come and go during lunch, in order to eliminate the temptation of wanting to leave? The majority of Liberty students request an open campus, but there is still a percentage of others who believe the opposite is beneficial. Like sophomore Jaedan Pohlman, who believes Liberty having an open campus could lead students into making poor decisions. “I believe it should be closed because not enough people make good decisions...a small minority will make the right decisions, but not enough to be safe,” she explains. And same opinion is true with LHS junior, Aliana Motomura; she said an open campus could lead to people receiving low grades for not attending school the following period. In the past, both students made a promise to their parents that they would not leave campus just to get in trouble. Addition-

ally, other people may argue that Liberty should be closed, since it is not safe for teens to go out and make decisions. Yet students need to be given the opportunity to lead their own responsibilities, in order for them to mature and know how to handle a situation. Before transferring schools, America Zavala, currently a junior at Independence High School, felt the urge to always leave during lunch throughout at her time as a former student at Liberty. She said that Liberty became a place of stress and anxiety. “In Independence, the schedules are more flexible and free, the teachers are nice, and we can leave during lunch,” she states. Since America was given the decision to leave campus during lunch, it has become a resting time for her. She does not see school as a chore anymore and is relaxed to go. Additionally, the students in Mrs. Fernandez’s AP Spanish class were asked if they ever left campus during lunch, with the majority stating that they have. Most did not care if the rules stated they were allowed to or not. Instead, some seem not to trust many adults since they are the ones setting the rules. On the other hand, students who have never left are mostly afraid of adults and their parents. Maybe there needs to be a closer trust bond between adults and teens; if relationships were stronger, maybe lighter rules could be put into place, such as the ability to leave campus during lunch. Then, the temptation to leave would be removed completely.



“Don’t cross that line!” As teenagers, some LHS students almost see leaving campus as a challenge, since they know they are not supposed to do so.

Photo by Jenny Dzul

New year, new you?

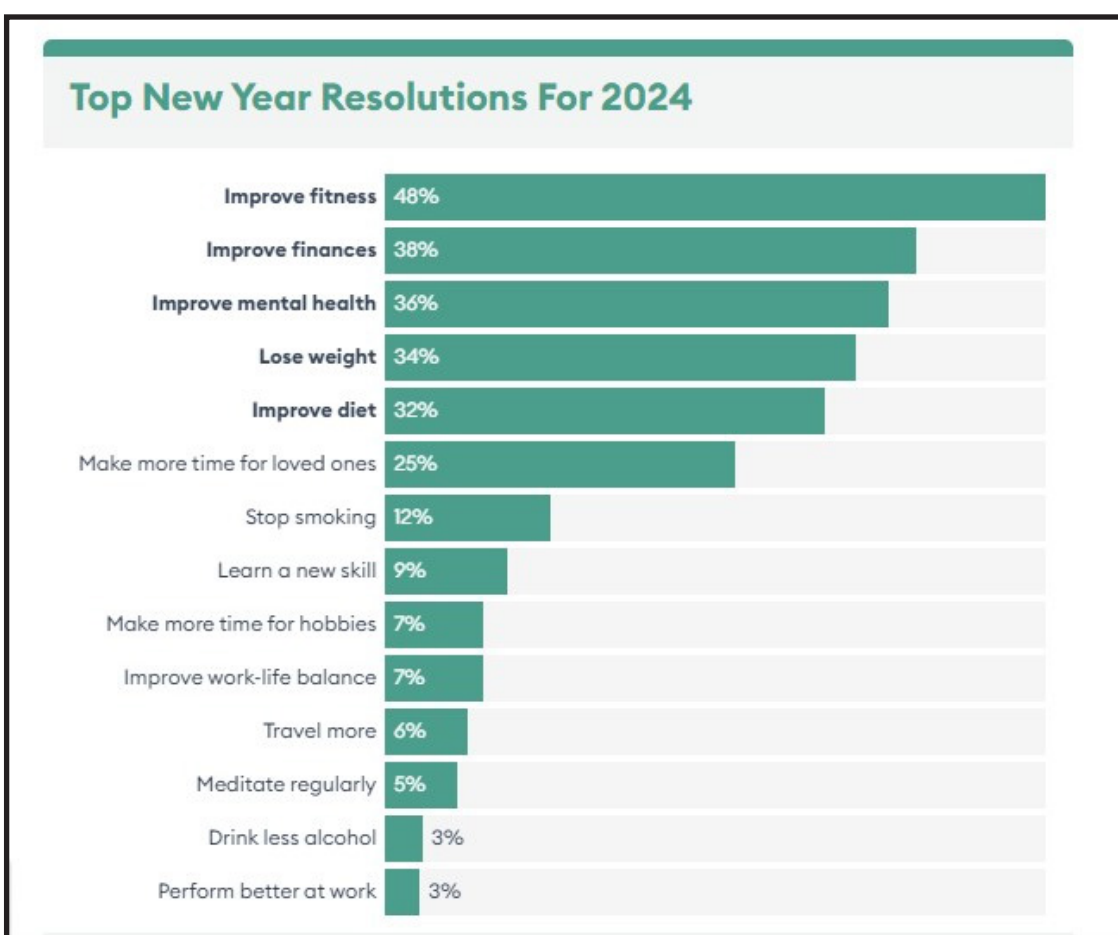
Does making resolutions truly set up teens for success?



By Marwa Majeed
Staff Writer

Teens often use New Years resolutions to set goals for themselves. But what exactly are the goals those teens set? Zoe Villaroman, a senior at Liberty, stated that, “I never really stick to resolutions, I’m terrible at them, so I always just set something small.” Teens like Villaroman tend to keep their resolutions simple because they are worried that they might lose motivation and quit. Out of the 59% of teens who write resolutions, about 23% quit in the first week and only 36% make it past the first month. Mareli Gonzalez, sophomore, admitted, “I think New Year’s resolutions are useless because most people who make them don’t complete them.” Many teens think like Gonzalez, and know that they might quit because they could get lazy. Many just write their resolutions due to a sense of obligation, or to make others happy. Although many students are forced to write resolutions in their English classes, many do it in their free time, and some even succeed. “I think New Years resolutions are truly personal things,” said English

teacher Ms. Rodriguez. “For some people, they give them a focus, a goal, and something to look forward to; for others, I think it’s just something that they think they need to do as it is socially encouraged.” Many teachers assign New Years resolutions as assignments and track how their students do, and support them through it. This can give many teens the courage to not give up on their goals. This can give many teens the courage to keep going and not give up. Kaitlynn Ellis, sophomore, stated that “My opinion on New Year’s resolutions is that if you really set a good goal that you think you can accomplish, then you can do it. It really depends on the person and how much they care about it. Research shows that people who write resolutions about something they’re passionate about are more likely to complete it. This is the missing element that teens need in order to write and set meaningful resolutions for themselves. Rather than simply setting resolutions at school with teachers, parents can use the opportunity of the new year to help teach their kids about setting goals that they feel passionate about. This would allow teens to feel success throughout the year, which is something they deeply need to feel.



A Forbes Health/OnePoll survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted for 2024 resolutions showed a major shift compared to last year’s resolutions: Improving mental health topped last year’s list, with 45% of respondents making it their New Year’s priority.

Graphic courtesy of Forbes Magazine

January 23, 2024

The over-the-counter debate

Should school nurses be able to provide OTC medicines to students?

By Romy Williams
Copy Editor

A student is being rushed to the office from his PE class, with blood everywhere, the jagged bone of his fibula has ripped through his shin and the nurse provides him...an ice pack. Many wonder, "Why couldn't the nurse give him something more to stop the pain until the ambulance arrives?" The answer is that schools are extremely limited in what they can provide to students medically, causing frustration for many. Parents and students alike in California feel that the strict requirement of a licensed physician's signature for over-the-counter medication like Tylenol is a bit over the top, and would prefer if just a parent's signature would do. But the serious nature of distribution meds on such a large scale makes this debate much more complex than what meets the eye.

California is very strict about medication administration in schools, and its Education Code stresses that neither prescription nor over-the-counter medication can be given to students without both parental and a licensed Healthcare Provider's approval. Liberty's very own district nurse Christina Mashore agrees with this: "It's something we have to follow, otherwise it would jeopardize our license," and affirming that any sort of permission without a physician's signature would be completely invalid. Being a nurse, especially one for multiple schools, is a lot of work, and handing out medication willy-nilly is unacceptable.

But several states, including Alabama, Wisconsin, Texas, and Oregon authorize school nurses to administer non-prescription medication to students with only parental permission and don't require anything from a healthcare provider.

If other states allow it, why doesn't California? Is a doctor's signature really required for period cramps? Or a bad headache? Sometimes pain from everyday occurrences can distract a student from learning, and keep them from applying themselves, but don't necessarily require a trip to the doctor. In response to this, many students secretly carry painkillers or allergy medication on their person anyway, and many students lend each other Advil in schools every day.

So instead of passing shady plastic baggies of meds under desks, wouldn't it be worth it to allow school nurses to give out over-the-counter medications to students in a safe, clean environment?

Only requiring a parent's signature for simple over-the-counter meds would make acquiring useful pain relief much quicker. So without undermining the fact that administering medication is a huge task, maybe fewer requirements



Giving a fellow student some ibuprofen for a headache is technically not allowed in school, yet some students may continue to do it out of desperation.

Photo by Romy Williams

for common medications would be a more successful route in bringing comfort to students in schools throughout the state of California.

Lion's Cafe:

A review of Chelsea Fusion



Located on First Street in downtown Brentwood, Chelsea Fusion offers a taste of Japan without having to leave town.

By Tanner Wieland
Staff Writer

Sushi and Japanese cuisine can be found in many places around Brentwood, but Chelsea Fusion on 1st Street of Downtown Brentwood is where everything great happens with foods and communities.

Upon my arrival I was greeted by the owner, who is a very nice and polite man. I had taken a seat on one of the many outside tables provided with a roof covering, great dim lighting, and heaters, which were ideal for the cold and rainy weather. I had ordered a California roll, which has crab, avocado, and cucumber, and the chicken teriyaki which came with miso soup, a small bowl of rice, and broccoli, all for about \$25. I only waited for about 5 to 10 minutes before food arrived. During the wait I had gotten my water

almost immediately upon asking for one, the workers and owner had always come by to ask how everything was going. The service for everything was always done quickly and efficiently. Not once did I ever feel I was waiting too long for an order or request.

The food was exceedingly good, fresh, and hot from the kitchen. The food was also extremely filling, as I had to take home leftovers. After I had finished most of my meal the plates and other empty dishes were taken and I had paid along with a great tip for the services and experience. My final review and opinion is to recommend this place to not only the people who love sushi and Japanese cuisine but also for the amazing service and experience you will leave with by the end of your eating session. This would be the perfect spot if the prices were slightly lower, but is still a great price for the quality of the overall experience and food.

Roses are red, violets are blue, Valentine's Day can be stressful too

By Addie Homer
Staff Writer

Love is in the air this Valentine's Day, but there is more to it than meets the eye. Stress, heartbreak, and isolation lie under the surface of this "affectionate" holiday.

Like many, this romantic holiday has grown into one of underlying concerns and conflict, Gen Z being in the direct line of fire. Teens already face day-to-day pressures from peers and teachers, but on top of that, Valentine's Day emphasizes the pressure to be in a relationship.

When asked how she feels about Valentine's Day, LHS Freshman Molly Redman responded, "It's cute but I think it should be about love in general and not about relationships... I consider it daunting because it makes me feel like there's expectations to be

in a relationship." It is reasonable to be offset by a holiday so focused on unrealistic social expectations, and these feelings of stress only amplify a teen's mental response to all the love in the air. This is only where it begins.

At most schools, gift-giving is a regular occurrence on Valentine's Day. It can be thoughtful and sweet; however, some may claim that it is the stem of many issues. Deciding on an affordable and yet thoughtful gift for your partner is another spark of a teen's stress. LHS Sophomore Mareli Guzman claimed that it could be stressful to find the "perfect gift" for your partner, but that the gift shouldn't be what matters. She continued that it matters more how your partner treats you and what they do for you every day, not just on Valentine's Day. No matter the stress that people face, no matter gifts or social pressures, it is important to remember

the true meaning of Valentine's Day. People may have different ideas, but the true meaning at heart is setting aside a day of celebration for the family, friends, and other loved ones in people's lives which is so incredibly important and special.

LHS Junior Tanner Andersen said it best: "I think it should be an enjoyable day that should never have negative feelings tied to it... there is definitely always pressure to find the perfect gift but I always look at it as the person you are with likes you as much as you like them so they are going to love whatever you get them."

The focus on the negative connotations of Valentine's Day is one that has no place in a positive celebration of affection. According to an article from the South West News Service, four in five Americans look forward to celebrating Valentine's Day. If anyone feels lonely on this holiday, there are many alternatives to celebrating with a partner.

Rather than feeling lonesome, individuals can celebrate something else instead. One way to distract could be turning Valentine's into the widely celebrated "Galentine's" in which people get together with female friends ("gals") and throw either an anti-Valentine's Day party or a time to gather and have fun. More alternatives could include spending time with pets at home, going out with family, or using the day as a time to celebrate self-love. So, Valentine's Day should not necessarily be about dating or about antagonistic ideas, but rather about the love in people's lives and celebrating the connections that people have to each other.



Sometimes, a crafty, homemade gift is better than anything purchased at the store, and also takes away the pressure of spending large amounts of money.

Photo by Addie Homer

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