

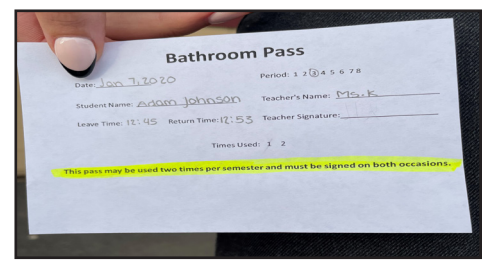
In this Issue...



LHS Construction Update Page 2



Student Non-profits Page 3



Bathroom Privileges Page 7

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The Lion's Roar

The voice of Liberty High School students

Liberty High School
850 Second Street
Room T-13
Brentwood, CA 94513

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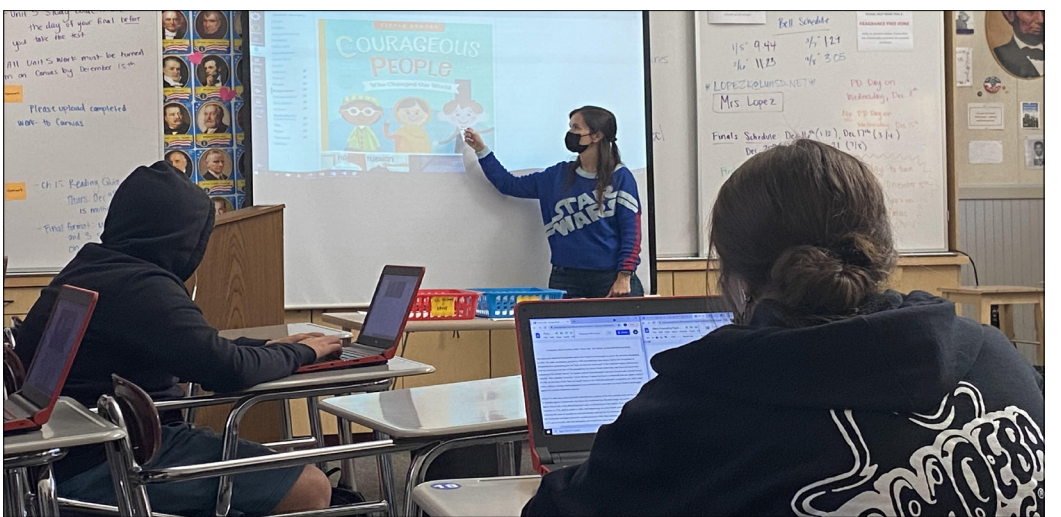
New California grad requirement: Ethnic Studies

By Kylie Dourgarian
Staff Writer

Gone are the days of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Now, students across the state of California will be required to take an ethnic studies course as a graduation requirement. Governor Gavin Newsom hopes to push for a complete semester of ethnic studies in order to graduate high school, starting with the class of 2030. Liberty High School will integrate a required ethnic studies course for freshmen in the near future. "My hope is even people who are reluctant will get a glimpse of other cultures and take something from that," said LHS Social Studies teacher, Mrs. Thigpen. Currently, Liberty High School offers this as an elective course for all grade levels taught by Mrs. Foehr. There are two periods of this class with about twenty five people each, and this is the

first year it has been offered. Opponents of ethnic studies claim the class promotes divisive, anti-white rhetoric. They wrote, "These courses are filled with hate for America and all America stands for," in an article published in the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition, they're saying the class, "Teaches children that America is based on white supremacy and that white people are racists, even if they don't know it." The state Board of Education approved a model curriculum for an ethnic studies course that is optional for teachers to use. It offers suggested lesson plans and approaches for certain topics teachers can choose from; however, since its use is not mandatory, some are worried about what schools might choose in its place. "A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state, and align

with Governor Newsom's vision of a California for all," said state Board of Education President, Linda Darling-Hammond. Currently, the district Curriculum Council is in the process of reviewing several different textbooks, but have yet to make a choice on which will be used for the course. "I think it's incredibly beneficial to be educated about other cultures, and



Liberty's current ethnic studies course is open to grades 10, 11, and 12. As course selection nears, the number of sign-ups will reflect its' popularity.

Photo by Kylie Dourgarian

ethnic studies provides that for me. I think everyone should have to take it," said Kai Cummins, a student taking Ethnic Studies. "The education ethnic

studies provides eliminates a lot of disrespectful comments because ignorance is no longer an excuse and it creates a more friendly environment in the classroom."



Despite COVID restrictions, cast members rehearse dance routines outside, wearing masks, and with social distancing. Photo by Gabrielle Gilmore

Playmakers fill the air with *Hairspray*: Timeless musical arrives at Liberty

By Aiyana White
Staff Writer

The cast and crew of Liberty High School Playmakers' production of *Hairspray* are gearing up for opening night on February 24th. The energetic musical is fast approaching, and the cast and crew are reeling with excitement. *Hairspray*, set in 1962 Baltimore, Maryland, follows the story of 16 year old Tracy Turnblad and her challenges with sizeism and fighting racial segregation. As she gets the chance to dance on her favorite T.V. show with teen heartthrob, Link Larkin, Tracy becomes an overnight celebrity, and she learns to navigate the responsibilities of her newfound stardom and her fight for equality. Adapted from John Waters' 1988 movie of the same name, *Hairspray* opened on Broadway on August 15, 2002. After winning 8 Tony Awards the show was soon adapted into the hit 2007 musical film, "Hairspray," starring Nicki Blonsky, Zac Efron, and John Travolta. The mu-

sical ran for 6 years on Broadway and has become a fan-favorite musical, among Broadway fanatics and regular theatre-goers alike. This spring, Liberty's own Nicest Kids in Town are taking the stage and tackling the challenge of bringing the iconic musical to life. Leading the team is theatre teacher and Playmakers director, Mr. Roman. When asked why he thinks *Hairspray* is such an important show in today's sociopolitical climate, Mr. Roman shared that it "presents not only the historical context around the early 60's and the Equal Rights Amendment, but it also presents situations in which characters from the White dominant cultural group act as allies for the Black minority population." He feels it is important for White audiences to see, and hopefully be inspired by. Mr. Roman is excited at the thought of finally getting to put on this production. He describes the journey to *Hairspray* as long, but falling into place at

HATE ENTERS CHAT AT LHS

By Rià Sanghera
Editor

Anonymous accounts are not new to Liberty; since 2020, accounts have been "exposing" students for negative, discriminatory behavior. Though now, use seems to be moving away from a crusading tone, and instead, towards hate. The phenomenon has forced students to ask themselves: How can they be "globally-responsible, collaborative individuals, equipped for post-secondary excellence" when they cyberbully others online? Instagram is a daily habit youth partake in, whether it's personal accounts to pet accounts, to now anonymous, Liberty-affiliated accounts capturing students asleep, in the bathroom, eating, parking (poorly), and now, directing hate toward others. The first two anonymous accounts to populate Liberty students' Instagram feeds were "@lhs_badparking" and "@lhs_confessions925." "@lhs_badparking" posts pictures of students' cars in the student parking lot (with the license plates colored out) alongside captions mocking the students' parking job. The account named "LHS confessions" features sent-in responses via story and posts responses to

prompts they create. "At first I found these accounts funny, or at least amusing," senior at Liberty, Kailyn Ashby responded, "I like almost all of "@lhs_badparking" posts and follow them on my finsta (a secondary Instagram account for more casual use) and I used to DM "@lhs_confessions925" until they made a racist comment." Ultimately, the accounts are student-ran and without provision of school administration or adults, which too is because they are often posted after school hours. Similar to Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L., the Supreme Court case testing school control outside of the gates—ending with a reinforcement of the First Amendment—there is no mandated action required for schools to take. Though, as hate accounts have been born, this is once again questioned. "Certain accounts post with mean-spirited intentions like with "@lib-highshade;" an exchange has to be made of an embarrassing picture before a post is taken down," Ashby furthered, likening the interaction to blackmail. However, the motives behind the accounts cannot be known without di-

rect contact with the account owners themselves. Considering the popularity of these accounts and the connections to hate pages—with explicit photos without consent being shared, and "anonymous" insults to individuals—there is certainly a line crossed. "I started this account about a month and a half ago because I had a huge hole in my life I was trying to fill with something not self-destructive," the owner of "@lhs_confessions925" shared over Instagram message. While not necessarily destructive to the account owner, one must question if this comes at the cost of other students' well-being. The response from the account reinforces that it is students who run these accounts, and students at Liberty using the accounts as an outlet for themselves. Though, account owners derive other believed benefits too. "I've had the chance to share, bond, and advise some really great people I would've never known" "@lhs_confessions925" continued. Due to an increasingly online world, Instagram has become essential for students to connect with one another, and healthy interaction should not be halted. However, negative behavior and/or cyberbullying should never be excused.

a perfect time. "I feel great about opening, there's been so much energy behind this show, even before we started the audition process," he shared. Playing the role of Baltimore's newest celebrity, senior Celeste Pacheco shared that she has been "singing and dancing [her] entire life, so relating to Tracy's interests isn't really a problem."

Celeste is hopeful that even 20 years after its Broadway opening, audiences will want to get up and dance with the cast, because, "At its core, *Hairspray* is about celebrating love and bringing everyone together. In today's society, that is something that is still being fought for, so *Hairspray* is a reminder of what we should forever and always be doing." If the audience takes away anything

from the show, she hopes they learn to spread kindness and positivity in a world full of hate. *Hairspray* opens at the Allen E. Jones Performing Arts Center on February 24th, with a closing night on March 12th. Tickets are available at LHSPlaymakers.com, with updates and show information posted to the Playmakers Instagram, @LHSPlaymakers.

Hear us roar some more!



Follow us on Twitter!
@LHSLionsRoar



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Upcoming events:

- CSF/NHS application deadline: January 31st
- No school, Lincoln's birthday: February 11th
- No school, President's Day: February 21st

January 27, 2022

Hammering through the details in Liberty's construction

By Eeman Dela Torre
Staff Writer

Liberty High School has been in the process of building a new cafeteria, office, and a baseball field. With the construction of the cafeteria ongoing, it affects students by changing the locations where they eat and gather which forms the question, "How is the progress going?"

While people passing by can see the progress, Principal Huckaby had this to say in his newsletter for LHS teachers: "At the interior of the cafeteria building, electrical trim work at the ceiling grid and walls is ongoing. Ductwork at the acoustical ceilings is ongoing and final connections to the rooftop cafeteria area HVAC equipment has started. FRP paneling in the kitchen is scheduled to start on Monday."

Fiberglass reinforced panels, or FRPs, are thin, flexible plastic panels rein-

forced with fiberglass and constructed of a strong polyester resin. They can be put directly over drywall, wood, concrete block, and a variety of other solid surfaces on walls and ceilings. HVAC stands for heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. This system is responsible for heating and cooling buildings and includes products like furnaces, air conditioners, heat pumps as well as ductwork, thermostats and other home comfort controls.

He also explained the further steps which were, at the time, "Following the completion of the connections to the cafeteria area HVAC equipment, their startup will occur (planned for next week). Flooring in the kitchen area will follow the startup of the HVAC equipment. Aluminum windows are now scheduled for delivery this week with installation starting next week."

The roadway erection work on the west end of the Administration Building is

about finished, and the wood framing is still going on. Fire sprinkler piping, ducting, and plumbing piping work has begun on the inside of the East end of the Administration Building.

Lastly, this is what Principal Huckaby had to say: "At the east end of the cafeteria site area the concrete has been poured at the bioretention basins/planters. Backfill and grading around these structures will follow as soon as the concrete work is completed. At the South end of the cafeteria near the trash compactor yard, the fencing work has started. At the west end of the cafeteria, the site concrete flatwork is scheduled to start in the coming weeks."

Meanwhile, a campus supervisor by the name of Esteban was asked what changes will be made to his pathway when construction is finished and when he's driving around campus; he responded, "It'll just give me another area to cover at the front basically, to



Although construction was expected to be completed December, 2021, it still continues but is nearing completion. Photo by Eeman Dela Torre

make the front more accessible because it's blocked off."

When a construction worker named Joe Baron was asked about the construction, he answered there would be

a couple more months of construction. When asked what changes will it do to the students on campus, he replied, "It's gonna make it bigger, more sitting area and more shade."

Governor Gavin Newsom calls for vaccine mandate in schools

By Lokesh Singh
Staff Writer

The division between two partisan who are either for or opposed to the COVID-19 vaccines could grow deeper as the possibility of a vaccine mandate in California K-12 schools is increasingly closer to becoming a reality, according to a statement by Governor Gavin Newsom.

In an informative announcement by Gov. Newsom, he expressed his pronounced beliefs on California's public health measures, "The state already requires that students are vaccinated against viruses that cause

measles, mumps, and rubella – there's no reason why we wouldn't do the same for COVID-19."

Evidently, the state government's stance on the vaccine has a tremendous effect on the public health operations at schools. However, this vaccine policy will only go into effect if the Federal Drug Administration approves the vaccine for persons under sixteen. Gov. Newsom compared COVID-19 to other infectious diseases that have put the student population at risk before, creating a parallel between school mandated vaccines that prevent against other notorious diseases to the

COVID-19 vaccine. Gov. Newsom declares vaccine mandates at school as the only logical resolution to the endangerment caused by the virus.

Gov. Newsom further built upon minimizing virus-related risks by stating, "Today's measure, just like our first-in-the-nation school masking and staff vaccination requirements, is about protecting our children and school staff, and keeping them in the classroom."

Keeping children safe throughout their return to in-person schooling seems to be a central incentive of the state's decision to mandate vaccination. Gov. Newsom's statement is supplemented

by vaccine coverage research from the Center of Disease Control, which concludes that the high rate of vaccination is essential for the safety of students and staff in school.

Vaccination against COVID-19 for children in school is believed to be a crucial step towards sealing off the terror reaked by the virus for years, as it provides protection against severe illness, long term complications, and further spread of the virus.

A common uncertainty about the vaccine is its speedy development, leading many in our community to question the safety of the medicine itself, and

the impact it will have on their bodies. These suspicions of the fast production of the vaccine can be traced to the simple genetic makeup of the COVID-19 virus. SARS-CoV-2, the official name for COVID-19, which is a strand of previous SARS (highly-infectious respiratory illness) viruses. The genetic information vaccine developers initially had about SARS allowed for the quick design of a new, effective vaccine that aligns with previous SARS research within a much more compact time frame. Though, it is still uncertain whether this vaccine will become mandated or not.

The dark truth about fast fashion

By Renee Bedard
Staff Writer

As more and more people shop in person or online everyday, there have been many questions on whether some brands are considered "fast fashion" or not.

Now, what exactly is fast fashion? Fast fashion is cheap and trendy clothing that is focused on producing high volumes of clothing.

According to goodonyou.eco, "The idea is to get the newest styles on the

history, due to high amounts of chemical loads, it has high consumption of water and harmful chemicals.

"Fast fashion's negative impact includes its use of cheap, toxic textile dyes—making the fashion industry the second largest polluter of clean water globally after agriculture." (goodonyou.eco)

While there's an environmental cost towards fast fashion, there is also a human cost. At the moment, there are workers who are currently working in



Photo courtesy of Karen Cailotto

Community provides interview experience for TLC

The holiday season brought more than gifts from Santa; the TLC Academy at Liberty was given the gift of experience through their yearly job fair on December 16th. Professionals from East County volunteered their time to conduct mock job interviews with the seniors in the Academy. Above, Valley Guild Past President Leslie Earnest interviews TLC student Brooke H.



Fast fashion is extremely profitable; larger businesses such as Forever 21 generate over \$500 million/year. Photo by Renee Bedard

market as fast as possible, so shoppers can snap them up while they are still at the height of their popularity and then, sadly, discard them after a few years." When shopping, it's important to know some of the key factors that are common to fast fashion brands. One of the most important factors is "cheap, low quality materials like polyester, causing clothes to degrade after just a few wears and get thrown away." (goodonyou.eco)

Currently, its impact on the planet is immense. The most popular fabric, polyester, is derived from fossil fuels which as a result, contributes to global warming. Also, with its textile dyeing

very dangerous environments that get paid less. As well as farmers that have to deal with toxic chemicals which can have a big impact on both their physical and mental health.

"Further down the supply chain, the farmers may work with toxic chemicals and brutal practices that can have devastating impacts on their physical and mental health." (goodonyou.eco) Maribel Becerra, a senior from Liberty High School stated, "Yeah I do wear clothes from Shein because it's cheap. But I also found out that it pollutes a lot and that brands that are fast fashion are bad for the environment."

Job positions available like never before

By Norah Simmons
Staff Writer

It is the year 2020. People's voices echoed across the room. Feet rushing to leave the building to get to their next stop. And the sound of employees washing their hands as they get ready to start their shift; but then their boss slowly walks up and asks to speak to an employee in private. The boss regrets informing them due to the new lock down that had just been put out that day that they could no longer keep them as an employee. 1 year later business started to open, and they need more employees. "10 million job openings with about

a million fewer workers than there are positions available."-Jeff Cox

But what positions are available? Who is hiring in Bentwood? After doing some research, I found 15 jobs looking for hire. Some of those jobs are sprouts, Chipotle, Camp Bow Wow, Grocery Outlet, CVS, McDonald, Water Works Aquatics, KFC/ANW, Riley's, Taco Bell, Burger King, etc.

Chipotle States that they are looking for, "A friendly, enthusiastic attitude, Passion for helping and serving others (both customers and team members), Desire to learn how to cook (a lot), Be at least 16 years old, Ability to communicate in the primary language(s) of the

work location" Communication and enthusiasm are very important to show Businesses when sending in an application. One student that worked at Amecis and Round Table shared the troubles of working 2 jobs.

"Practicing 4 days a week and double shifts on the weekend from Amecis to Round Table got to be to mentally exhausting to keep up with." said Zaden Reeser

Despite this student's determination to make money he put his mental health and school first. Which is very important to remember when juggling a job and school at the same time.

January 27, 2022

Liberty students start non-profits while gaining initiative

By Ella Bracken
Copy Editor

For many, high school can be an extreme emotional rollercoaster. For students, it can put an unhealthy amount of stress on the body and mind. Imagine trying to balance high school and extracurriculars while running your own non-profit organization. For three students at Liberty, that's a reality. "Giving Gratitude", founded by Liberty senior Kira Logan on Valentine's day of 2021, is a non-profit that strives to give back to frontline workers through cards with kind and affirmative messages. What simply started as a "shower thought" has now become an international organization.

Furthermore, Logan explained how the pandemic really initiated the start of her non-profit.

"I had been reading the news and seeing how beat down and tired most of our front line workers were from the pandemic and decided I could figure out a way to let them know that their community still values their work."

The non-profit sends messages to hospital patients as well.

"I had my grandfather in a nursing home and my dad in the hospital at



Logan and her team collected items for a Christmas toy drive, alongside Liberty's Key Club. Photo courtesy of Kira Logan

one point, and I heard firsthand how isolating it was," she admitted. "I wanted to connect with not only the workers but also the patients themselves to let them know that they have people rooting for them."

With over 2,000 cards sent, 50 volunteers, and 100 members involved, Logan plans to continue "Giving Gratitude" throughout her college career at her dream college - UC Berkeley. Although Logan has hit huge milestones for the non-profit during her

senior year, such as being featured in the *Brentwood Press* and organizing multiple donation events, she has expressed how running this at her age has come with plenty of advantages and disadvantages.

"I understand I'm young, but that shouldn't mean I'm not intelligent or diligent enough to run my own organization," she affirmed. "School has always been a priority for me," she added. "So trying to keep up with homework and running my organiza-

tion, in the beginning, was difficult." Claiming the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, Logan revealed, "I have fostered a community of kindness...[and] being able to see that my idea has become a reality, not only for my community but those across the world has been beautiful."

Similarly, Liberty juniors Sophie Stewart and Alexa Whitaker founded "Dreaming Green" in July, a non-profit blog dedicated to intersectional environmentalism while focusing on stopping climate change. After watching "Chasing Coral", a documentary about the disappearance of coral reefs, the two wanted to do everything in their power to help protect the environment. Serving as an eye-opener to climate change, "Dreaming Green" differs from other environmental organizations by taking a more intersectional approach.

"As two white individuals, we're lucky we aren't affected by climate change the way many BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) and disabled people are," the pair stated. "Traditional environmentalism ignores the ways in which many BIPOC and disabled people are affected by climate change, and we hope to boost those communi-

ties' voices as well as allow anyone who wants to write on these issues a space to do so."

Becoming more aware of the power they hold even as high school students, Stewart and Whitaker expressed how anyone can start their own non-profit and have a local and global impact. The two aim to organize Delta cleanups alongside collaborations with other organizations. Eventually, they hope to hold interviews with environmentalists. Currently, "Dreaming Green" consists of a group of Liberty student volunteers alongside the founders. Agreeing with "Giving Gratitude" founder Kira Logan, the pair stressed how hard it is to be taken seriously in the non-profit industry.

Whitaker stated, "At our age, it is more difficult to be taken seriously and we already have workloads that are at times hard to handle." On the other hand, Stewart added how the time commitment can also be a huge disadvantage. Looking on the bright side, the girls mentioned how they have access to so much of the information they cover, and it's something they're extremely passionate about.

Fabulous five of Calculus BC

By Mary Grace Contreras
Online Editor

Classes with only five students are usually unheard of in Liberty High School, but the AP Calculus BC course was offered to five students. It isn't common for a class to consist of less than ten people, but a special case was presented.

During 2021-2022 course selection, AP Calculus BC was planned to be removed from the curriculum, since there weren't many students scheduled to take the course. A group of two students, who are now in the class, decided to take action regarding this. They emailed the school administration, the principal, and the superintendent about offering the course back to the five seniors that were determined to take it.

Right before the school year began, the five seniors had their AP Calculus BC class added back to their schedules. The students were eager to take this class since they previously took

AP Calculus AB the year before. All of them wanted to continue the next-level math class to learn more about calculus.

AP Calculus BC is both similar and different from AP Calculus AB. AP Calculus BC branches off of AP Calculus AB since it includes all of the AB content. It differs through more detailed lessons that weren't taught in AB. During the end-of-year AP exam, taking the AP Calculus BC test will give two separate scores for the AB section and the BC section. It allows students to replace the AB score they got the year before.

"It's the only AP test that provides double units," states Amy Marquardt, the current AP Calculus BC teacher. "The AB component and the BC component requires students to know they want to take BC calculus when they're in middle schools."

It takes early planning and deciding to be in AP Calculus BC. In order to be in the class, one must complete five math courses before taking BC.

For the five students, they see it as an advantage to improve their scores and earn a higher score than they did the year before.

Rià Sanghera, a senior that is currently taking the class expresses, "I really like Calculus BC because I enjoy the fact that I don't understand things. Even though it makes me want to scream and cry it is a challenge no other class offers me. I think the class is a good learning opportunity though and a chance to meet higher math practical for any stem career or just for learning and the ability to say you know calculus."

Although the subject is rigorous and time-consuming, as Sanghera shares, it allowed the class of five to develop new learning skills and friendships. The class of five has learned to keep close contact with each other, helping one another with homework and preparing for upcoming tests. The class has kept track of a group chat through Instagram called "#Wo(men)InStem", where they often collaborate and help



AP Calculus BC is equivalent to the first two semesters of college calculus. Ms. Marquardt's five students will be exempt from these courses. Photo courtesy of Alyah Koya

one another with any confusing problems.

Problems that are faced in and out-

side of the AP Calculus BC class have helped the class grow throughout the first semester of their senior year.

Odd jobs: Ever considered being a flavorist?

By Anushka Bhogal
Staff Writer

There are millions of jobs people have the option of pursuing in the world. People consider several jobs in order to pick the perfect job for their career, such as a lawyer, doctor, engineer, and more. But, have most people ever considered being a flavorist?

At first, a flavorist might sound like a fun job where a person tastes different types of flavors and provides their

opinions on it, but this is not all that they do. A flavorist, also known as a food scientist, is a type of chemist that also creates natural and artificial flavors for food and other products by combining essential oils, plant extracts, aroma chemicals, and more. Flavorists create products that billions of people around the world use today in their daily lives, such as food, beverages, toothpaste, lip balm, medications, vitamins, and more. In order to become a flavorist, a minimum of a bachelor's

degree in food science, biology, chemistry, or a related field, is required.

However, many people pursue their education in this career by earning a master's degree. Before becoming a certified flavorist, it is required to spend at least 5 years working as a lab assistant and spend at least another two years working as an apprentice in order to gain certification. However, a future flavorist must also be creative, have an above-average sense of taste and smell, have patience, have motiva-

tion, have the ability to work in a team environment, and have a good memory of scents. This may sound like a lot of work, but if anyone has a passion for this career, it would be the ideal career for anyone, considering the pleasure of trying all sorts of new, different, and unique flavors, with an average salary of \$80,190 in the United States. According to the article, "You're a what? Flavorist," Carol, an American flavorist, states, "It's very rewarding. I really enjoy what I'm doing."

Why crying may be beneficial for students' health

By Kayden Watts
Staff Writer

When people think about ways to release endorphins to make them happy many people think of activities such as exercise, however this isn't the only way. Crying is also believed to be a very beneficial way to release brain chemicals such as endorphins and oxytocin.

Endorphins and oxytocin are extremely helpful to the body because endorphins make the brain "happy" and oxytocin is good for pain relief, so if someone is injured crying helps to

relieve pain. According to Leo Newhouse from Harvard Medical school, when someone cries it automatically activates the systems to release those chemicals into the brain.

The system that gets activated during this process is the PNS system which stands for Parasympathetic Nervous system which controls the resting and digesting and gets the body to calm down.

Many people feel relieved after a good cry which can be seen with Graham Bevil a student of Liberty High School when he states "I feel relieved after I cry, almost like a weight has

been lifted off of my shoulders" This can be common with people and shows that crying is good for peoples' mental health.

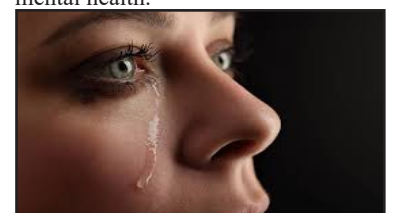
Another benefit to crying is that it detoxifies the body according to pennmedicine.org. When crying it releases toxins and hormones that contribute to elevated stress levels meaning that when someone is stressed a good cry could be good for them to help release those toxins. Crying can also improve someone's mood because when they sob they are taking in short gasps of cold air which actually reduces the temperature of the brain which makes

people happier.

Graham also states that "After a good cry I feel that I'm ready to process the situation that I'm in and can help me move on from the previous emotion that I was feeling." And this can also be seen with many other people.

Despite the negative opinions many people have of crying because of reasons such as they believe it makes them appear weak and vulnerable, crying is actually a common process that many people use to deal with emotions that are too overwhelming. The process can help bring clarity to a situation and help people overcome problems that

are weighing them down, such as the stress of an upcoming test or an issue with friends or family. Overall, crying can be very beneficial to a person's mental health.



Crying helps improve vision, as the tears moisturize eyes and clear debris. Photo courtesy of istockphoto.com

January 27, 2022

Teens take on Europe: Planning a European vacation on a budget

By Keira McIlvenna-Davis
Editor

As people all over the globe may be traveling back and forth between their bedrooms and kitchens this upcoming year, get ready to ditch the sweatpants and prepare to embark on the European trip of a lifetime, which now may be more feasible than ever before.

A majority of people may feel that only adults can afford to embark on a journey to a different continent, but YouTuber Belle Kingsbury explains that “once you start breaking it down, I promise you it’s not going to be as expensive as you thought.”

Upon making the decision to travel to Europe, there are different approaches one could choose. A person can plan and embark on the journey individually, or utilize a program through which they will be assisted. One such com-

pany is EF Tours which focuses on helping students throughout the world travel. These institutions will help plan out a trip, find ways to help with costs, and organize groups of other students to travel with.

Many individuals may only want to travel to the most popular countries, such as Italy and France; however, according to the Rearview Mirror Travel Blog, the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are some of the cheapest to visit while still offering sights and attractions for everyone.

One of the largest ways to save money on such a journey is to stay in hostels rather than hotels. Hostels offer rooms that are shared with other travelers, and often times include amenities. The Elephant & Castle Hostel in London, England offers rooms for \$60 a night, while the Pfefferbett Youth Hostel in Berlin, Germany has shared dorm rooms for

\$30 and private rooms for \$130.

In addition to cheap boarding, these places also offer chances to connect with other travelers of similar age ranges.

Eating like a local and taking the train are two ways to preserve money while traveling, as many may find that “tourist traps” tend to have higher costs. By using these methods, it is possible to spend as little as \$70 a day in Western European countries, or \$40 a day in Eastern Europe. Traveling lightly may also provide an advantage as it will cost less to check luggage and a person will not find themselves weighed down by the material possessions accompanying them.

Once situated in a city, researching attractions before going may aid in saving money as many museums and sites are free throughout the continent. As explained by Sama Abdi of Days



The Vatican City in Italy, which became a nation in 1929, is the world's smallest country, spanning a mere 1,000 acres. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

To Come Travel Blog, a person could wander the Venice canals, view an outdoor movie in Austria, visit one of many free museums in Dublin, Ireland, and much more without paying a cent. With different options for trips, lodg-

ing, activities, and more, individuals may begin finding that once they get the itch for travel, it never leaves their side. Now, they are simply realizing it is possible that the logistics of it can be easier than ever before.

Rise of female rappers in Hip-Hop

By Josh Buenaflor
Staff Writer

When people think of Hip-Hop, they usually think of its male counterparts, such as artists like Playboi Carti, Pop Smoke, Travis Scott, and Eminem. However, a new generation of artists have been making headlines and even winning awards over their peers; that generation, being female..

In the eighties, nineties, and naughties it was almost impossible for women

to make a successful career as a rapper. Some successful female rappers like Missy Elliot, Mary J. Blige, and Lauryn Hill would come, make their impact, then imminently fall off the radar. However, this would all change in 2007 when a rapper from New York changed the rap game forever.

Nicki Minaj is often regarded as the “Queen of Rap” and opening the door for newer female artists. Minaj ruptured the pop charts in 2010 with her track “Superbass,” and once again in

2012 with “Starships.” To this day, Nicki remains the most awarded female rapper in history.

“She showed these little black girls that you don’t have to be hard and prove your streetness,” said controversial rapper Azealia Banks on an Instagram story. “When she dropped Starships, she proved that not every black girl from the hood has to specifically do rap just to make it out [of the hood].” Owing up to her title, the Queen of Rap, many believe that without Nicki

Minaj, most modern female rappers simply wouldn’t exist.

“Without Nicki, most of these girls in rap wouldn’t be here. She truly revolutionized the rap game for women,” said Liberty senior Mahal Williams.

In an interview with Liberty’s new gender equality club, the A.G.E. (Advocates for Gender Equality), vice president Courtney Wieland proclaimed that “Nicki reintroduced rap for women and brought a new light of music into the industry, and even with

her rough past, she proved through her numerous accomplishments that women can be successful in rap and the music industry.”

In addition to Nicki, other female rappers like Rico Nasty, Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, Doja Cat, and Flo Milli have all influenced the rap game in their own ways. Rico Nasty, a 24-year-old rapper from Washington D.C has also been making headlines, even opening for famed rapper Playboi Carti’s Narcissist Tour.

Lion’s Cafe: A review of Brentwood’s Boondoggies

By Shelby Smith
Staff Writer

A food shack serving the city of Brentwood since 2018 has opened a restaurant downtown to expand its food services among the community. Boondoggies offers a range of savory food, such as Polish hot dogs and nachos to sweets like soft-serve ice cream cones and candy.

The restaurant is clean and welcoming to its customers. The walls are painted a vibrant red and the chalk written menu provides the atmosphere with a very modern look. The decor puts people in the scene of a concession stand, like at a summer baseball game. The prices are reasonable, with hot dogs and nachos starting at \$5. Boondoggies serves quality food, using Casper’s Hot Dogs to fill their customers hunger and provide satisfaction.

The restaurant made their grand opening in September 2021, located in the First Street Plaza. However, they have been serving food since 2018 from a cart and shack.

“The restaurant offers workers and customers a sense of stability,” says employee, Dylan Baptista. Baptista

is a Liberty High School student and athlete, who has been working at Boondoggies since March of 2021. He enjoys his job because it fits well within his chaotic school schedule. He explained, “The expansion from the shack offers employees to see more customers that have since become regulars”.

Whether you want to grab a quick bite or are craving a good meal, Boondoggies provides just that.



Photo by Shelby Smith

Boondoggies offers both indoor and outdoor seating to meet the needs of all of its customers.

Is homework truly necessary?

By Xavier Dollente
Staff Writer

It’s 11:30 pm, homework is due in 30 minutes, and stress is building up as the time is crunching and the pressure is filling up like a balloon. These moments are frequent within many students’ lives, which makes one wonder if homework is truly helpful. This debate has been around for quite awhile with different opinions from different experts.

Is this factor changing students’ lives for the better or is it only causing harm? Homework can cause many students to experience physical and mental problems as the mix between outside life and homework collides. The feeling of just not having time to do homework causes many kids to have stress, sleep loss, and anxiety. These problems can lead to a chain of negative events that can cause a student to not have much interest in school or learning in general. According to research done by Clifton B. Parker, “High-achieving high school students say too much homework leads to sleep deprivation and other health problems such as headaches, exhaustion, weight loss, and stomach problems”.

Liberty High School student, Zaki Herawi, feels stress while doing homework due to the heavy amounts given stating,

“There are so many classes with homework to the point that the stress builds up”.

Outside life can be seen as an important factor in a student’s life as they can have that time to relax and do different activities.

However, homework can get in the way of this free time which doesn’t give students chances to go do something besides more schoolwork. With teenagers, homework can also conflict with sports, jobs, and extracurriculars which can lead to doing homework all day or having no time at all.

Liberty High School baseball player, Jake Hyland, feels as if homework conflicts with his sport and his overall time to do things outside of school. “I’m always up at night as right after sports I do homework which is difficult since I’m tired and I’m not able to get rest”. Hyland also brings up how homework, “Feels like a chore” and “Classwork should be done instead of homework because you have a teacher to help whereas at home you’re by yourself.” Although these problems can occur, homework can also be beneficial for students and their academics. Some studies that have been conducted show how homework can make a student more successful within school as they understand the topic better.

According to research done by the

Institute for the Study of Labor, “increased homework led to better GPAs and higher probability of college attendance for high school boys. In fact, boys who attended college did more than three hours of additional homework per week in high school”.

Duke University psychologist professor Harris Cooper did a 2006 analysis which found, “a positive correlation between homework and student achievement, meaning students who did homework performed better in school”.

This idea is believed to be beneficial when the homework is not an overload but rather a proper amount. This can be better rather than giving out too much homework to a student. Proper amounts of homework is seen as the way to go because it may provide benefits while not causing problems. Liberty High School student, Jessica Wouters, says, “There has to be a balance between teachers and students on the amount of homework to where it is beneficial”.

Liberty High School teacher, Mr. Gonzalez, relates to this statement as, “Homework should only be given if it reinforces what the student learned that day and not for it to be busy work”.

He believes that it should help “master the skill or standard” which can lead to better test outputs.

The benefits of time blocking

By Madden Rios
Staff Writer

The clock begins to move, but many people will not follow it

Many people often struggle with the idea of creating a schedule for events they will do throughout the day and sticking to it.

Other people who seem to be easily motivated to get work done seem to have a plan for the day knowing when they will do certain things throughout the day. Recent studies have shown that about eighty percent of people’s

productivity improve when using this method

“The single task nature of time blocking can improve productivity by as much as 80%. You can really focus for an hour or two at a time and do deep work. With time blocking, your schedule becomes your touchstone and eliminates the need to decide on what you should focus on.” -Robert Carroll With the majority of productivity being done by people who are using time blocking it should be proven that using this method will help you with getting work or homework done better

throughout the day. There are many people who are currently working that are complaining that the amount of work leaves them with no “Me-Time” “Whether it’s five minutes or an hour, time blocking forces you to add that much-needed “me time” into your calendar so that you can reflect, exercise, read, or do whatever else makes you happy. This helps us recharge when running on fumes and gives us the time to enjoy life.” - John rampton There aren’t just “random people” who seem to use this method either, there are also some really famous and suc-

cessful people

who use the time blocking method to help organize their day and get work done to help themselves.

“While some people use tricks like the 10-minute timer technique, Musk resorts to a different, and obviously highly effective, method. This is a method called time blocking, which has been used by other CEO’s; and productivity experts including Bill Gates and Cal Newport.” - Mayo Oshin

Time blocking isn’t all good and easy, and it can actually cause long term damage by making it so the person us-

ing it becomes

unable to multitask at the same skill as they once used to, and rely deeply on the time blocking method.

“Time blocking is the opposite of multitasking, a cool-sounding term that, in reality, can cause long term damage to your productivity — and happiness.” - Chris Smith

There is no clear answer to if time blocking is something that is good or bad, it all depends on the person and how they approach the strategy. the strategy.

January 27, 2022

Sports after quarantine

How Covid-19 has affected Liberty basketball

By Lexie Thomason
Staff Writer

Covid-19 has brought many changes to our lives, but it struck Liberty's basketball teams with struggles that hurt the seasons.

Megan Kane, a varsity Liberty basketball player states, "It was hard to adjust to the season coming back from being quarantined." During quarantine, the basketball teams did not have opportunities to practice regularly or play in normal games. "Last year there were only league games, so there wasn't much of a season last year," said Kane.

In addition, the season was short last year which left many players unprepared for this year's basketball season.

Covid-19 prevented the Liberty High School Basketball teams from having a normal season due to outbreaks and new restrictions people had to follow. Another struggle Liberty faced was wearing masks inside the gyms while practicing. The players struggled with breathing while playing with the masks on. Thankfully, the players do not have to wear masks in practices anymore because of the Covid-19 testing available at Liberty.

Returning to school this year, the Liberty High School basketball teams are now able to have a more normal season due to availability of resources such as Covid-19 testing, with regular practices, tournaments, and league games. However, tickets for games are only sold online, and not at the door to the game, so that the number of people attending can be controlled.



By purchasing tickets online, people can support Liberty's Girls and Boys, Frosh, JV, and Varsity basketball teams on Friday, January 28th.

Photo courtesy of Megan Kane



You can see Ms. Toeaina in action at the next JV and Varsity girls soccer game, taking place on January 28th.

Photo by Nia Green

New leadership poised to take Liberty girls soccer team to victories

By Nia Green
Staff Writer

With this spring season of Liberty sports approaching, opportunities have been springing up for new leadership. Liberty Lions have welcomed a new coach for the girls soccer team, meet Nicole Toeaina

Toeaina was hired by Liberty's former coach Tony Martins, who has worked as Liberty's (girls) soccer coach for the past 25 years. With many contributions to his work and what he has done, Toeaina is more than happy to take

up this opportunity. Toeaina has been playing soccer since she was six years old and has grown up with a dream of coaching. When asked about why she wanted to coach at Liberty, Toeaina answered with, "Wanting to share my experience and what I know about the sport with the younger generations coming and being able to touch lives and make a difference in the younger generations' lives."

With no prior information about the program that Liberty sports offered; Toeaina knew the community that surrounded this sport and the dedication that every

young soccer player had was enough for her to take on this leadership role. Although, when becoming a new coach to a new surrounding, some challenges may vary.

When asked about some challenges that may be faced, Toeaina responded, "There will always be challenges and with all different girls coming together and they're all playing at different clubs and then they all have to come together and figure out how to be successful for one season." Toeaina wants these girls to give their all towards the team and the sport.

Bye-bye, Buster:

Effect of Posey's retirement on the Giants and the league

By Juan Cebreiros
Staff Writer

It was time for the 2008 MLB draft and the San Francisco Giants held the 5th overall pick after another disheartening season in 2007. With this pick the Giants were looking to not only hit, but hit big and start to change the culture since the Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958. With that 5th overall pick they would take highly praised catcher Gerald Dempsey Posey III, Known as Buster, from Florida State University. The impact of his rookie season in 2010 helped guide the Giants to an NL West Division title, NL Pennant, and most importantly, the Giants first World Series championship.

The young star was living up to the hype and Giants broadcaster Mike

Krukow during the 2010 season explained, "We knew what we were dealing with very early on. The players in that clubhouse knew it. They knew this guy was special".

Buster wasn't just a leader in the clubhouse however; on the field he was the same leader, just in a non-flashy way. That meant doing all the little things right in his career and limiting his mistakes. He was a former rookie of the year and MVP, five time Silver Slugger for catchers in the National League, six time all-star, and the winningest catcher in San Francisco Giants history.

Bruce Bochy was Buster's manager for 10 years and at his retirement press conference he spoke to the media and said the retirement is, "a little bittersweet: The bitter is he's devoted his life to playing this game, he's saying goodbye to playing it". It wasn't yet known what Buster Posey's deci-



Photo courtesy of D. Ross Cameron

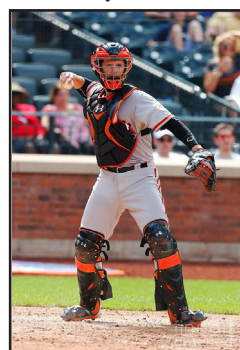


Photo courtesy of Mike Stobe

sion on retirement would come after season's end, but many speculated he would retire due to major injuries he's had in his career. In 2011, Buster Posey fractured his fibula and torn ligaments in his ankle after a hard collision at home plate, and in 2018 he had a torn labrum in his right hip which required surgery later that same year.

Mike Krukow would go on to say after Posey's retirement, "Buster didn't feel great. There's a lot of pain in his game right now, and understandably so. You play in a squat position for 12 years like he has, and you have the kind of injuries that he's had, there's going to be some residue". Adding onto it he would also go on to say, "For Buster, he was spending two hours before every game to get ready to play a game. When you spend more time in the training room than you are on the field; that starts to wear on you."

And wear on Posey it did, as down the stretch of the Giants 2021 play-off run he started every game, something he hadn't done all season, since throughout the year the team was giving him frequent rest games usually once per series. This in itself symbolizes Buster Posey as a player, him giving everything he had left before calling in retirement.

With all of this going on for Buster, it was clear the end was near for his Hall of Fame caliber career. As much as Buster's retirement hurts, not all hope is lost for the catcher position for the Giants. Young top catcher prospect Joey Bart is slated to take over duties behind the plate, but things won't be the same without number 28 being the signal caller behind the plate in the uniform of the orange and black.

January 27, 2022

East County Shred: The future of mountain biking is here

By Jonathan Cervera
Staff Writer

The East County Shred mountain biking team offers spots for kids from high school to middle school. Riders can be from Brentwood, Antioch or Oakley, everyone is welcome. They are encouraging everyone to sign up. It doesn't matter if you know anything about the sport or not.

"The purpose of the team is to get the kids out there to learn something new, to have fun," said team director Jared Willbergh. The purpose of the East County Shred team is to get kids active and have fun doing something new. The kids really seem to enjoy being a part of this team. They all love the environment and the challenges.

"I love being on the team because it lets me know there's always something I can be working towards, and it's great to feel like you're a part of such a notable thing with such unique experiences," stated sophomore Au-

brey McNabb. Many students are able to experience the outdoors, and team work along with making new friends. The team is not just for learning and competing but also to make new friends, see nature firsthand, and explore different mountain terrains that maybe the riders have never seen.

"There is a lot of opportunity for our youth, not only to learn a new skill," stated Willbergh "but to get out there and ride". Although mountain biking may seem easy, it is a sport that requires a lot of fundamentals. Many things that can be difficult about mountain biking are the steep uphill terrains. "It's phenomenal to see these kids ride," Willbergh stated.

The team started because Willbergh had a riding partner then his son would start coming along and had mentioned that he had a lot of friends who were interested in mountain biking. Willbergh then sent around an email, after that email 8 riders showed up to the first practice. The league is run by three NorCal Interscholastic Cycling League certified coaches.



Venues such as Round Valley Regional Preserve provide the landscape the Shred needs to learn the fundamentals of mountain biking.

Photo courtesy of Jared Willbergh



Photo courtesy of www.thehollywoodreporter.com

The Olympic Village is where all the competing athletes are required to stay; they must follow strict COVID guidelines and are not allowed any visitors.

The 2022 Winter Olympics swimming in controversy amid COVID-19 concerns

By Edgar Ortiz & Gabriella Munoz
Staff Writer/Editor

A competition held once every four years with winter sports, country's have their best athletes to compete for a medal, respect and for the experience. With all the covid restrictions athletes are even more concerned or nervous about competing in the Olympics. The Olympics are being held in Beijing China where they have rules they must abide by to participate.

"Olympic athletes, team staff and journalists who arrive in Beijing at the 2022 Winter Games in February will be required to be vaccinated — or face

a three-week "hard quarantine" period that lasts longer than the Games themselves" are guidelines that have been stated by the International Olympic Committee. The Olympic games are being held from February 4th, until the closing ceremony that will happen on February 20th. Viewers will be able to experience the Olympics on several broadcasting networks such as NBC, CNBC, USA Network, and Peacock.

Playing a sport is a stressful thing to do. Now imagine the insane amount of pressure competitors endure when broadcasting their talents in front of millions of spectators watching a world wide competition that their country is participating in. Along with the pressure of being watched by millions, the competitors

are now lacking the comfort they get from knowing their families are amongst the millions in the crowd watching them. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 families are not going to be allowed to attend the Olympics as spectators to try to put a halt in the spreading of the infectious virus.

While Beijing was having many worries about the spreading of Covid-19, the US announced its boycott against the actions taking place in China. The boycott will include President Biden not sending the country's usual delegation in protest against the 'Xinjiang Genocides' that have taken place in China. The genocide is mainly targeting Muslims, including Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyzs.



Photo courtesy of Alix Langone

Don't get caught in the smoke

Nicotine is the leading cause of premature death

By Gabbie Munoz
Editor

For years, decades, and even centuries many humans have participated in the consumption of nicotine through cigarettes, pipes, and more recently vape pens. But most of them don't know the long-term effects that nicotine can have on the body and how it can lead to premature death.

The most common effect that smoking nicotine has on the body is the huge toll it takes on the lungs. Acrolein is a chemical found in cigarettes that in most cases can cause permanent lung damage. Along with acrolein cigarettes also have chemicals called bronchodilators, which are made to help open up the lung's airways, further increasing the number of chemicals that are being absorbed by the lungs. Since these chemicals are being absorbed in such a high amount this is what causes many long-time smokers to get lung cancer. Along with lung cancer, it can also cause Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which makes it much harder to breathe and can ultimately lead to death due to the lack of air.

Along with the effects that nicotine has on the lungs it also has severe effects on the heart. Amongst heavy smokers, one of the most common causes of death is cardiovascular disease, which directly targets your Car-

diovascular system, which includes the heart and blood vessels. When cardiovascular disease starts to affect the body's system, it can lead to Atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is when the arteries start to become more narrow, due to the build-up of plaque and clots that can be formed by smoking nicotine products. Other diseases can be caused by atherosclerosis such as coronary heart disease, which is caused by the clots that are formed from smoking, blocking veins and arteries which can lead to a heart attack and even death.

Another common effect of nicotine is the toll that it has on smokers' teeth. Any form of nicotine consumption can lead to gum disease. Gum disease is when an infection is formed on the

gums that then begins to attack the bone structure that helps to support the teeth. With gum disease, if it gets too severe it can lead to the teeth following out. In which the Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that "Smoking is an important cause of severe gum disease in the United States". Smoking causes the immune system to weaken after time, which can lead to the body not being able to fight off gum disease before it becomes too severe. The lack of a strong immune system also makes it a lot harder for the gums to heal after they have already gotten gum damage from smoking.

The effects mentioned before are already common amongst smokers, but now with the influx of teen smokers, these diseases and symptoms are more

likely to be sprouted early on in life. Studies show that in an annual survey done with high schoolers, the smoking percentage for just seniors was at 37% in 2018. That percentage is only continuing to go up as now in 2021 more than 2 million high schoolers and middle schoolers have reported using e-cigarettes. The blame can be put on the increase of flavored vaping products that have drawn in a huge amount of underage consumers. When interviewed, a student at Independence High School, who asked to remain anonymous confessed that "I started in middle school, it was when the Juul had just started to become popular and I've been smoking ever since."

The student got very heartfelt as they began to describe the troubles of starting to smoke at a young age. They described

the effects of withdrawals, addiction, and the toll it took on their body.

"I lost so much weight, it killed my appetite. I felt weak from the lack of food, but when I did eat I felt nauseous."

Along with weight loss, the student also began to confess about the effects it began to have on their lungs after 5 years of smoking.

"For a while, it almost felt like I couldn't take in a full breath, my lungs felt weak. I couldn't even run without dry heaving afterward, I used to be able to run a mile before smoking. Now I can barely make it through one lap."

The student's frustration was evident as they answered the questions, they started to express how much they regret starting to smoke at a young age and how much they wish they could quit.

With the influx of underage students smoking, stories like the students mentioned before will start to become more common. Then with big businesses targeting teens with their products, the influx of underage smokers will also continue growing. These businesses such as Juul, Puff \ ers down is to educate the youth on the possible diseases that they can get from smoking such a young age that can lead to possible death. The businesses are in it for the money, but the youth has to be educated on the possible outcomes of feeding into these businesses' obvious marketing.



Photo courtesy of Lee Johnson

OPINION

January 27, 2022

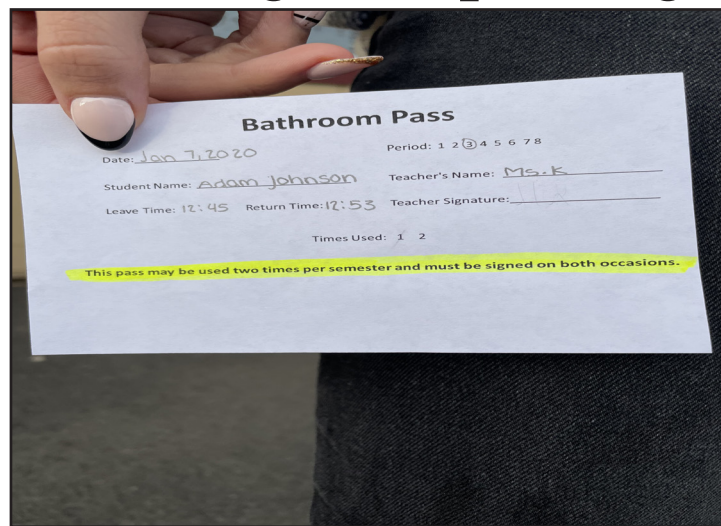
Bathroom passes: A right or privilege?

By Anaya Tellado
Staff Writer

You're sitting in the hospital, clutching your lower abdomen and writhing in discomfort. The doctor returns with news. You have a urinary tract infection (UTI). How did this happen? It happened because teachers have refused your basic human right to use the restroom.

As students work through the school day, they often need to use the restroom, which is not always possible during lunch or a passing period. Some classrooms are not near any bathrooms, leaving no time to walk across campus during the passing period. Bathrooms are also constantly being locked throughout the day. When a student needs to use the restroom during class-time, why do teachers say no?

The most common answer is that teachers don't want students to miss information or get behind because they're missing class. This is completely understandable, however when a student needs to use the restroom during class, they will likely be more distracted and not able to focus on the lesson. When a student returns from the restroom, they can get caught up by asking their friend for notes, talking to the teacher after class, or finishing an assignment at home.



Some teachers only allow students to visit the restroom a limited number of times per semester; if more visits are needed, the student may not be allowed to go. Photo by Anaya Tellado

This is not to say that students should be able to leave at any given moment. It is completely reasonable for a teacher to ask a student to wait until a classmate returns or wait until they finish a test. It is also reasonable that students wouldn't be able to go multiple times in one class period. However, setting unrealistic expectations and unreasonable restrictions on bathroom use for students can do more harm than good. Additionally, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

states that workers must be allowed bathroom breaks to prevent health complications (urinary tract infections, bowel issues, and further bladder issues). Adults and teenagers in the workplace are free to use the restroom when needed. Students in school deserve the same rights. A person's health should be a main priority, regardless of age.

Therefore, it is within a student's right to use the restroom throughout the school day, including during class-time.

The botched reason for plastic surgery

By Annabelle Smith
Staff Writer

There is little concern for the risks of cosmetic surgery that go as far as death by women worldwide. Cosmetic surgery refers to the various procedures people undergo to change their physical appearance. As materialistic values flourish so does self objectification and the idea that attractiveness equals material success.

A study of 336 Chinese women by a university in China found that there is a direct link between materialism, self objectification, and capitalization of attractiveness. As a result of globalization, materialistic values thrive. The idea that body perfection equals material success is further encouraged by multi-millionaires like the Kardashians; who have fabulous features as a result of their plastic surgery and it is seen that they get many of their accomplishments as a result of this.

"Once we accomplished the lips," Ourian, the surgeon who operates on the Kardashians said, "All of a sudden I noticed that there was a surge in the number of younger people who wanted to get their lips done. A lot of the people from all over the world would come here."

With an increase in the number of influential people getting cosmetic surgery and posting unrealistic results on social media, many are seeing these results and believing, "If I look like that, I will have more success." The unrealistic beauty standards also lead



Photo by Annabelle Smith
Is a perfect face the key to happiness? According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 64,470 cosmetic surgical procedures were performed on people ages 13-19 in 2015.

to trends like the Kylie Jenner lip challenge where people would put shot glasses around their lips to get them bigger, which mainly resulted in terrible outcomes like bruised lips or getting the glass stuck.

"We know it's pervasive in our culture that women are objectified," said Dr. Jennifer Lewallen, PhD. "and issues of body image have been around for quite

some time." The combination of women being objectified along with already present body image issues paves the way of interest by more and more women to get cosmetic surgery. Between 1992 and 2008 the number of cosmetic procedures in the US increased by 882% and 91% of these were performed on women.

"Our society does reward beauty on the outside. Women must not be blamed for choosing short-term beauty 'fixes' that harm our long-term health", stated Naomi Wolf. "Since our life spans are inverted under the beauty myth, and there is no great social or economic incentive for women to live a long time. A thin young woman with precancerous lungs [who smokes to stay thin] is more highly rewarded socially and economically than a hearty old crone." Whether it is smoking to stay thin, putting a shot glass on your lips, or getting cosmetic surgery, there are many possible health issues that go hand in hand. However these issues are shoved out of mind, because the idea in society that being more attractive and making more money is the most important thing.

Many, if not all, women are objectified at work, and in social settings. This means that in these situations, better looks equate with more opportunities, which means a better job, which means more money, which ultimately results in being "happier". Attractiveness can and is used for capital that can be used for economic and social rewards.

Reeser's Reasonings: No, you don't need a new phone every year

By Zaden Reeser
Staff Writer

Have you ever wondered when you should get a new phone? I used to always get jealous when someone would get a new phone every year. However, as I got older I realized that it is not necessary. There are many ways to keep the lifespan on your phone going. Simple changes to what we do every day on our phone can play a bigger role than we think.

Bad habits can lead to a cost but not all habits are hard to break. You don't

have to be techy to keep your phone in its best shape. According to CNBC's Todd Hasleton, don't skip software updates. Although I struggle to remember this simple step myself, it is very important to apply software updates. These updates will make apps perform better and allow the phone to run smoother. Another easy way is to clear apps every day, which will save the battery and help increase overall phone quality. Lastly, keeping apps up to date and updating them every time the chance comes up; this will help take the bugs and glitches out of your phone. Following these simple steps

can gain you at least two years with your device; and you will save yourself expenses and problems.

Simplicity can sometimes be the answer. While following the simple steps mentioned in the paragraph above, it is almost guaranteed you don't need to purchase a phone every year, saving you expenses and a little bit of time out of your day. For the past couple of weeks I have been working on breaking these simple habits and have noticed my phone working faster and being more responsive. I can speak for myself and definitely say I will not be needing a new phone for the year.



Photo courtesy of Marvel.com

Record-breaker:

Spider-Man: No Way Home slings its way into theaters

Is this the best Spider-Man film ever?

By Michael Ybarra
Editor

Spider-Man: No Way Home, the latest installment in the Spider-Man franchise, was released in December and the hype was real. According to Variety.com, the film is expected to make over \$150 million in its box office debut, an impressive accomplishment for a movie releasing in the middle of the pandemic. In the weeks and months following the movie, several leaks about important actors reprising their roles from previous movies were revealed, despite the efforts of the studio. Marvel Studios went to great lengths to prevent spoilers from leaking to the public. In an interview with the LA Times, Willem Dafoe, the actor who is known for playing the titular Spider-Man villain, Green Goblin, explained how the filmmakers attempted to hide his identity on set: "The second you got out of a car at the studio, they'd throw a black cloak over you," Dafoe stated that whenever he or other actors wore their costumes to and from different sound stages they were concealed to stop paparazzi from glimpsing at which characters would appear in the movie.

At the end of the previous film, Spider-Man: Far From Home, Spider-Man's (Tom Holland) identity as Peter Parker was revealed to the whole world by the super-villain, Mysterio. No Way Home picks up right where the last one left off in which Peter's life is upended now that the whole world knows Peter's identity. Due to some people not seeing Spider-Man as the friendly neighborhood superhero that he is, both Peter's and his friends' (Zendaya and Jacob Batalon) college applications are rejected. Desperate to help his friends, Peter asks for Dr. Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) to cast a spell that will make everyone forget his secret identity. Unfortunately, the spell goes awry, and instead of erasing people's memories, it opens portals to different dimensions which unleash

villains from the previous Spider-Man movies into the world. The main plot of the movie focuses on Peter defeating these old villains and sending them back to their dimensions, with the help of a few unexpected allies.

So how was the actual movie? Exciting, fast-paced, and heart-wrenching. No Way Home throws the audience immediately into the action and there were rarely any slow moments. Tom Holland once again steals the show as Spider-Man, performing his most emotional portrayal of the character in the new trilogy of Spider-Man movies. Holland's acting is further elevated with Willem Dafoe's performance as the sinister Green Goblin. However, I will say that this movie requires the audience to have seen all of the previous Spider-Man movies to fully understand this one, as it relies on hardcore fans' nostalgia for the characters from the other films. And that might be a turnoff for many casual cinema-goers since having to watch five different movies to understand every single reference is time-consuming and, in my opinion, not worth your time and effort. Although the majority of people that see this film are probably already Marvel fanatics, for those that aren't I recommend at least watching the original Spider-Man trilogy starring Tobey Maguire. Secondly, the comedy gets a little distracting as some characters slow the movie down just to crack a lame joke, but that only happens a few times.

Overall, Spider-Man: No Way Home earns its 4 1/2 star rating as it was extremely enjoyable and I found it to be the best of the newer trilogy of Spider-Man films so far. The whole time I was on the edge of my seat wondering what would happen next. This is worth buying a ticket to see on the big screen as the visuals here are stunning and immerse you into the experience. Lastly, hardcore Marvel fans will want to stay for the mid-credits scene and post-credits scene as it teases the next crossover and a new movie.

ATTENTION
ALL
STUDENTS:

Course Request Forms
are due to your Den
TOMORROW
January 28th



Photo courtesy of Zaden Reeser

The author recommends NOT keeping up with the latest tech trends.



The average female begins menstruating around the age of 12, and reaches menopause at age 51; this totals 39 years of spending on feminine hygiene products. Photo courtesy of Trevor Clifford

By Julian Nixon
Copy Editor

What would you do with a guaranteed \$20 monthly? That's \$240 a year, \$1200 in 5 years, and nearly ten thousand dollars in a lifetime. Ten thousand buys a lot these days from a modest private jet to a semester of college to a down payment on a small home. Unless of course, a woman is in the situation seeing as that spending cash would unjustly go towards feminine hygiene products, thus feeding the 19.32-billion-dollar industry run by the patriarchy.

There is an overarching misconception that the American government or any nation's for that matter could not possibly bear the burden of being re-

sponsible for covering the cost of "that time of the month" for over half the population. In the grand scheme of things, there is not a penny not already committed to some "critical" federal savings account whose absence would "devastate the economy".

Really? Because celebrity pandemic COVID-19 single-handedly puts this myth to rest. After the mask mandate crossed the globe, face coverings were available, for free, on every corner in the country. Something about them being necessary for the population's survival prompted the states to dig around the government couch for spare change.

According to the *NY Post*, California alone spent 1 billion dollars solely on masks in January of this year. It is safe

The "S" in PMS should not stand for "spending"

to say, budget is about priority rather than lack of funds. Since over fifty percent of Americans are female, having adequate supplies to support their life cycle sounds like basic logic.

When asked about household finances, Kedra Gant, a mother of three daughters explained, "fifty dollars a month comes out of toiletries in this home, to cover cycles- it really begins to add up."

Adopting a more political approach, one could also argue that taxing feminine hygiene products is blatant systematic sexism. Imagine profiting off of one gender's bodily anatomy. Not a soul wakes up in the morning and makes the conscious decision to menstruate. In all honesty, who would actually opt in to shed an internal organ for three to twelve days? Exactly. At least men and women have equal pay, so the money spending is fair. Oh wait, they don't because of the infamous wage gap (aka oppression at its finest).

"It's unfair because periods are already an inconvenience, and you expect us to pay a fee," Liberty High student Jada Imai expressed.

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of the concept of all is the element of shame that comes with young men-

struators and their isolation. Advocating for bodily needs as an adult is one thing but think of the children. Most cycles begin between the ages of ten and twelve but can arrive as early as eight falling under elementary and middle-school years. Without readily accessible provisions, and often before the proper puberty introduction that comes with sex ed, students are left clueless and vulnerable.

"Periods aren't yet consistent in middle school making packing and dressing for them hard... you don't always have supplies on you and asking adults on campus for help is awkward," informed Jasmine Savannah, a seventh-grader attending Bristow Middle School.

As pillars of civilization itself, the female race shouldn't be punished for having functional reproductive systems. Seriously, does the patriarchy want more generations to come or not? The beauty industry already rakes in a fortune profiting from women's insecurities but having a period should not have a price tag.

It's time for society to get its priorities in check because backed by the feminists, that time of the month is about to get twenty dollars cheaper.

Dear Dress Code: We are not a distraction



Photo by Abby Wright

Males have shoulders too; so why aren't they a "distraction"?

By Abby Wright
Staff Writer

"Don't wear this, don't show that, that's too short, that shows too much skin". All around the country, schools show unfair double standards when it comes to dress code.

Schools target girls with unfair rules. When temperatures get over 100 degrees, no girl wants to hear that their shoulders are a distraction.

At one school, a hashtag was started saying, #iamnotadistracted, showing that students are being sexualized by showing regular anatomy, such as, shoulders, legs, and skin. At a school in St. Louis, female students were told that they were a distraction in a school wide dress code informational video, says *Education Week*. This sexualizes girls for just existing, and this can start all the way back in elementary school.

According to *Education Week*, at Indian Trail High School, girls were being taken out of class and missing valuable teaching time just for wearing yoga pants. Which is more of a distraction of learning, a girl wearing shorts or girls being taken out of class? It is definitely the latter, and it shows the priorities of schools.

Clothes are not the only way girls are dress coded. In fact, all around the country, African American women are about six times more likely to get unfairly dress coded for their hair. Plus sized students are also more likely to get dress coded for "showing skin". Though not only girls are targeted, so are non-binary and transgender students.

Schools need to change their dress codes to be more fair, no one should be told they are a distraction. People should not have to worry if their clothes will cause them to get in trouble.

Supply chain issues made holidays unhappy

By Michael Davidson Jr.
Staff Writer

How did supply chain issues impacted holiday gift giving?

While many middle class Americans have already been stretched thin financially through Covid and new variants, tough times are still coming. Since the beginning of the pandemic many economists have looked into the impact of consumers going to work in person.

"The leading cause of the supply shortage is the shift in consumer spending since the beginning of the pandemic," according to LHS social science teacher, Mitchell Lemos.

This "shift" caused many Americans to stop spending money on doing activities, and start spending more on actual products. Less people going to the movies, out to eat, playing mini golf,

and other causing Americans to buy goods at an increased rate of 20.32% and services at only 0.73% from January 2020 to January 2021.

"Companies and their suppliers were not prepared for this huge uptick in demand," according to Mr. Lemos.

Demand continued to grow for the holiday season. As a result suppliers had a lack of parts to assemble products; since sale numbers are more than production numbers, prices increased to an exorbitant amount. Even traditional sales and holiday discounts were no longer being given or were reduced greatly, due to most stores selling out. As for consumers wondering why, the record high numbers of products being purchased combined with the most busy shopping time of the year created the most damaging supply issues we have seen.



Many found holiday gift-giving difficult this past season, with empty shelves offering fewer options for shoppers. Photo courtesy of Corina Knoll

More mental health support needed at school

Anayely Arreola
Staff Writer

Everyday here at Liberty High School or at any other high school, parents are growing more concerned about their kid's mental health. The questions here is should the school be doing more to support their students' mental health? There are many ways for staff, students, and even parents to do so. First, at Liberty High School we have school counselors, nurses, and administration that can be spoken to if feeling concerned about their or others mental health. Our school should be recognizing when students are experiencing mental health problems. Coun-

selors can have meetings with their students every other week or even once a month to check in with their students and see how they are doing mentally. Students have found it very helpful talking about their emotions, but in order for that to happen the student must be able to trust their counselors.

In order for staff and school counselors to help us students, they can do many things to support us. One example includes a therapy group. This is where a group of students and administrators or a school counselor sit down and share how they are feeling. All this would be confidential to ensure the students privacy.

Another example our school can do



Photo courtesy of Fairfield Medical Center

is help create a safe and healthy environment for students to feel safe and heard. In order for this to happen staff must be educated on mental health symptoms. "Advisers can work to normalize conversations around mental health both in and out of classes, making sure that students have at least

one person in their lives they can reach out to." This student spoke out about how we can normalize having conversations about how we feel towards schools.

Although students may appear fine, they may not be. Some symptoms of mental health issues are emotional outbursts, feeling guilty, or (the two biggest ones) feeling depressed or anxious. There is also substance abuse, and post traumatic stress disorder also known as PTSD that students may experience.

There are still many ways that staff, counselors, nurses, and even parents can do to help and support our students here at Liberty High School.

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