

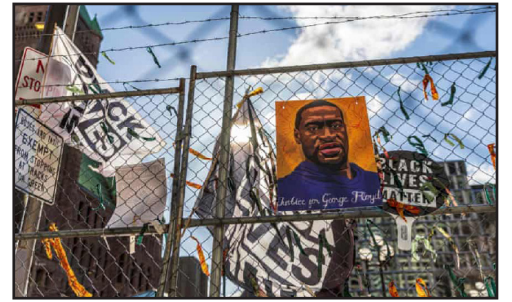
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1st Place award-winner from the American Scholastic Press Association



# The Lion's Roar

The voice of Liberty High School students

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

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FREE

## The Heather Harper legacy: Looking back on her time on campus

By Mariah Schafhausen  
Staff Writer

Just as Liberty says goodbye to its seniors, it is also time to say goodbye to principal Heather Harper, as she prepares to leave Liberty to take a job as the Director of Human Resources in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Now the school must say hello to the next principal, Mr. Efa Huckaby.

Mrs. Harper began at Liberty High School during the 2017-2018 school year, but her drive for education began when she was stationed in Tokyo with the United States Air Force. During her lunch time, she would volunteer her time to help kids who were having a hard time with math and reading.

"I also have a HUGE heart for kids," she said. "It's why I stopped flying airplanes in the Air Force and got out and began teaching."

Coming from a family of educators, Harper decided to obtain her teaching credential from Brandman University and earn her master's degree in education while stationed in Grand Forks, North Dakota. After she obtained her M.Ed. credential, and finished her student teaching, she began her teaching career as a middle school math teacher. However, she knew that she had a passion for teaching in high school. After moving to Brentwood,



Photo courtesy of thepress.net

After a delayed start to the school year, Principal Harper checks on a Zoom class on the first day of school. Harper began her term when the Class of 2021 were freshmen, and will leave as they graduate.

she began teaching biology at Freedom High School and stayed there for four years. Once her time at Freedom ended she began as the assistant principal at Heritage High School and worked there for another four years before finally coming to Liberty after Superintendent Eric Volta recommended her to the school board for the opening principal position and was approved.

When reminiscing about her time

at Liberty, she said, "It was such an incredible experience getting to be a part of this school's long history. We had a lot of good times and some difficult times, but we got through them together."

Despite this, Harper says that she is sad to leave and hopes to be able to come back in the future to see staff and the community that she has been a part of for the past 12 years.

The incoming principal, Efa Huckaby, comes from Ygnacio Valley High School with glowing reviews from both students and teachers. During his time at YVHS, he implemented an International Baccalaureate program which increased the students' college readiness by 19%. He also implemented a Positive Behavior Intervention Program that lowered student suspension rates by 6%.

## Class of 2021: The ones with an in-person graduation ceremony

By Krystal Martinez  
Staff Writer

Throughout Liberty's history and many classes before, there has always been a traditional graduation. But unfortunately, these classmates won't be getting the traditional graduation. Due to the unlikely circumstances surrounding the world today, the class of 2021 won't be able to have the full-on experience. But most 2021 graduates still feel grateful that something is better than nothing and that this is something the class of 2021 is excited for. "If you don't want it then don't try, good things come to those who work hard and hustle," said Kaitlyn Goulart, a senior.

Graduation will be held on June 4th at the Ohmstede Field from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. Based on the survey results taken by students and parents, there was an overwhelming desire to hold in-person graduation as students felt



Photo courtesy of Jillian Sameron

To celebrate grads, a parent group donated lawn signs to students in the Class of 2021.

the need to have something special on their last day on campus. In-person graduation plans are based on Contra Costa's placement in the Orange Tier. If the tier or guidelines change, these details may change. In accordance with

state and county guidelines graduation is limited to 33% capacity at outdoor seated events. This will allow for each graduate to receive two tickets.

Seniors were able to pick up their two tickets the week before graduation. As

for the practice schedule, graduation rehearsals will be held on June 3rd at 1 pm and June 4th at 8:30 am. There was a survey sent to guardians about who they would like their two guests to be for the tickets, as well as a survey being sent out to students about who they would like to sit next to at graduation. Requests for guidelines shall be spoken to Mrs. Harper the principal at her office during school hours.

At the event, there will be bleachers marked with "X" to show where not to sit to make it easier for the guests. Chairs will be rented for seating on the track, behind graduates and both sides of the track, and unfortunately, no full band or choir due to restrictions. For those who won't be able to attend, the event will be live-streamed online. Any quarantined students will not be allowed to participate in graduation for the safety of others but will be able to pick up their diploma or have it sent to one's home.

## Speech and Debate takes center stage on campus

By Ria Sanghera  
Staff Writer

Recently joined to the Liberty High School campus, the new Speech and Debate Club has already established its presence with around twenty members. The club now plans to participate in debates with rival Heritage High School before the summer break.

After a late start, Speech and Debate has had just a few meetings but is on its way to becoming a Liberty staple. On September 7, 2020, the club was co-founded, just two days before all club paperwork was due.

Co-president and Liberty junior Taylor Dee reflects on the experience and remembers her desire for creating the club: "I'm glad to have become able to give people interested in the club a place at Liberty."

The speech and debate club was approved in April by Club Council and allowed to join the Liberty campus. That is, after a lengthy process of emails and paperwork in seeking to find an advisor. Since then, the club has found an advisor in English teacher Ms. Ondek, and has been moving swiftly toward larger plans and regular meetings with all its members.

Such meetings, though, may sound daunting for new members. Liberty sophomore and club Secretary, Jaya Sanghera expressed, "I hope for this club to continue despite how prestigious it sounds; it's really a chance to get to know people."

Thus far, simple debates and discussions at the ends of meetings have worked to create the described atmosphere as members across different grade levels can express their opinions with one another. Further, the co-presidents strive to keep the club relevant and interesting with jokes and amusing topics, like intense debate-discussion over the legitimacy of pineapple on pizza. Yet, the club also wishes to expand beyond the borders of Liberty through outreach to neighboring high schools.

Heritage High School was one of the first schools to come to mind, primarily because, according to Dee, "Though they are a rival school, we also saw an opportunity to learn from them."

With the support of administration and Liberty club directors, a partnership was established and the club successfully participated in speech and debate games with Heritage on May 21, 2021. Ultimately, this club hopes to stay at Liberty and to continue fostering connections with other schools.

Hear us roar some more



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Upcoming events

6/04 Graduation  
7/15 9th Grade Walk-Thru  
7/15 10th Grade Walk-Thru

7/19 11th Grade Walk-Thru  
7/20 12th Grade Walk-Thru  
7/29 First Day of School

June 1st, 2021

# The show must go on: *Heathers, The Musical*

By Keira McIlvenna-Davis  
Staff Writer

Musical theatre came to a halt in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, but the school brought it back, hosting *Heathers, The Musical* on their stage. With a cast and crew of over 60 people, *Heathers* was delayed several times throughout the past year. Strict COVID and social distancing guidelines had to be adhered to and the bulk of rehearsals occurred outdoors. Originally planned to be performed outside at the aquatic center, Contra Costa County entering into the Orange Tier, which is less restrictive and allows for events to happen indoors, resulted in the performances happening inside the Performing Arts Center. Many believed the musical would be canceled; but the curtain rose for opening night on April 28th.

This musical is the last for all of the seniors involved in musical theatre at Liberty, and one of the last for juniors. In March of 2020, *A Chorus Line* was the opening show and the last few shows were livestreamed as lockdown was just beginning. *Heathers* was the first in-person theatre experience cast and crew have had in over a year. "I think that the show is going as greatly as anyone could expect. Both nights we had amazing crowds, who really showed us how much they loved the show, and every night has felt like a celebration of everything we have



Photo courtesy of Charlotte Amelia

Cast and crew alike prepare at rehearsal to open for their first musical in over a year; working tirelessly, students from all around campus put in countless hours of work on stage in order to be prepared for opening night.

worked towards," said Chaz Callahan, a junior at Liberty involved in theatre and portrayed Big Bud Dean and Bill Sweeney in *Heathers*. "It is definitely an AMAZING show to end off with for seniors, and it's a great one to get everybody else pumped for the next shows. It's incredible to see how beautifully everyone handles the given situation, and really giving one heck of a performance whilst doing so." Not only have the actors and cast of *Heathers* had to adapt to new ways of

performing, the tech crew and backstage helpers stepped up to ensure that *Heathers* would run smoothly, regardless of where it was performed. "It honestly all came back to me super quick, falling into the rhythm of tech week and working with everyone to make the show pristine is something that always comes together no matter what happens. It's really exciting to watch it all come together in the shows and it's something I don't think I will ever get tired of," stated Samantha

Hunt, a senior who is in the lighting crew for *Heathers*. For some, stepping back into the process of doing shows came more naturally than for others. Tech crews control all of the things happening off stage and often find themselves with very little time to get ready for the show by the time the dates are announced.

This new era of COVID-safe theatre has entirely revamped the way many things are done. Actors are unable to spend time in the dressing rooms un-

less they are putting on or taking off costumes and the cast is expected to come to the shows each night with their hair and makeup already done in order to only have limited contact with others. Directors have had to learn to adapt to casting and directing their shows while still remaining distanced from their cast, which has been another learning curve. Ultimately, many say the Coronavirus has resulted in theatre most likely being changed for good as casts, crews, and directors have learned that there are many easier ways to do things for shows remotely.

The almost year-long process that was *Heathers* has now been seen on stage and live audiences were once again experiencing watching performances in-person. Theatre may have been forced to come to a standstill, but Liberty High School is already beginning to prepare for their next upcoming musicals and theatrical performances, announcing that their next undertaking will be a production of *West Side Story: School Edition*. What with the chaos surrounding the uncertainty that came along with hosting a musical during a global pandemic, only time will tell how long it will take for theatre to get back to where it was with full capacity audiences. Nevertheless, unlike many other things that have not yet begun to recover from COVID, theatre is slowly but surely creeping back into the spotlight once again.

## How former Lions pass the Lion pride to their cubs

By Madison Brown  
Staff Writer

When people hear the word "legacy" what usually comes to mind is the inheritance of money, ancestral belonging, or for some that vampire show "Legacies". To add, it is the family and community that the word "legacy" is connected to just like college legacies, where a student who has had a family member, whether it be a grandparent, parent, sibling, attend that college; the same can be said for a high school legacy student.

Students who have had family members attend the same high school, are considered high school legacies.

Liberty High School has a handful of families whose teens attend Liberty, as did their parents. From third-generation Liberty alumni to first generation alumni, families and staff return and bring back another set of students to walk the halls of the past. The community surrounding the campus has evolved too, with Heritage and Freedom not yet built, Downtown Brentwood eventually doubled in population with a 121 percent increase. With time, the school not only grew with the amount of buildings, tennis courts, and swimming pools added to campus, but it has also grown in the large numbers of diverse students enrolled throughout the years.

Over the years, Mr. Beaver, a Living Earth teacher, has seen changes, as he and his family have also gone to Liberty. Both of his parents taught on campus, and his mom was a student. "Definitely [a] lot more diversity... there is a lot of kids that see a lot of different perspectives and backgrounds," remarked Mr. Beaver, Class of 2003. "It's opened up a lot of people who've been here a long time, opened up their eyes." Liberty has created a community from 1902, when it was founded, to 2021, whether it be the teachers and staff, sports and organizations, or the continuous support from the local community such as Downtown Brentwood. The

alma mater to many, the school brings back families and students, generation after generation.

"We wanted Hannah to experience the stuff we had experienced when we were her age," explained Mara Kitching, Class of 1998, mother to Hannah Kitching, Class of 2023. For high school legacies, in a similar manner to college legacies, this status may be a boost up, in clubs, student government, and in athletics. But there is also a downside mentally for being a "legacy". Being a part of a community that already knows one's parent, or grandparent, is not ideal when the package that comes with the expectation to be a "high school hall of fame

softball star like mom" or on the dance team, honor roll, even a presumption delinquent.

Luckily, for Mr. Beaver he has had a good relationship with both his parents, as he was his mom's teacher aid and his dad coached him in football. While he didn't face many pressures on and off the field, in school he explained, "Having academic pressure, there was a lot of well your parents are both teachers you should have straight A's kind of deal, anything negative surfaced my teachers knew where to go," expressed Mr. Beaver. "I kept an even perspective, mainly because of the friends I had and the support I had with my peers."

## Summer events not to miss out on

By Rylie Vandevor  
Staff Writer

With unpredictable dates of events due to COVID-19, the City of Brentwood and our very own Liberty High School has still managed to put some dates on the books for the finishing school year and what's to come for the next few months. As a school we can experience just a few more events before the year ends and participate together as a community in different activities.

Mark your calendars lions because you are not going to want to miss this. Starting May 24nd, Liberty's Senior sendoff week will go until May 28th. To our graduating lions you don't want to miss it. May 28th is your last day as a lion rally so rsvp your spot now. Every Wednesday for Liberty, the students can take part in our Wellness Wednesday with your counselor. Don't forget it's cherry-picking season. Head to your nearest cherry farm on weekends from 9am to 7pm. Heading into June we have our class of 2021 graduation on June 4th, don't miss it seniors. June 1st and 2nd Brentwood is having a planning commission meeting and youth commis-



sion meeting. June 8th is a city council meeting so if you plan to listen in, look out for more information. Watch out for car shows on Sunday in our very own downtown, you never know when cars will revv their way into our streets.

Going into the next school year we have a confirmed homecoming game date on October 29th against Antioch, so get ready for your 2021 homecoming week.

So many exciting things are coming up and you won't want to miss them. Buy your tickets or plan on going because you never know when a global pandemic might hit again. So, let's gather as a community and a school to support each other by participating.

## Too much Zoom, too soon? What happens to young children with early exposure to the Internet

By Mary Grace Contreras  
Staff Writer

The buzzing sounds of alarm clocks are not enough to wake children up. Kids stay up at night on their devices because they refuse to get off them. Sleeping in late, and obsessing about technology, children are having a difficult time managing their daily schedules.

Before the 21st century, there was no technology that kept children inside the house all day and night. Now, children are stuck at home with their iPads, phones, and video games, and because of it, parents are struggling to control their children when it's time to eat, clean up, and sleep.

Parents can't help their children if they aren't obeying to the orders or rules that are given to them. Airane Henderson, a mother of 3 from Los Angeles, California is worried for her younger children. Airane has a 17 year old daughter, a 9 year old son, and a 6 year old daughter. She expresses, "I feel as though children using technology can be a very dangerous thing when not monitored because children may be

exposed to things that aren't appropriate. In addition, technology limits the way my children are socially, and the amount of time they want to spend outside. It's not only difficult to get them off of their screens because of how captivating the entertainment is, it's difficult because they've gotten used to using it for so long."

The more that children focus on their technological devices, the less they spend outside of their homes. Their attention spans navigate towards their devices all day, which isolates them from the outside world. Children are more focused on technology rather than other things. The risk of cyberbullying increases as kids spend more time online. They are exposed to apps that could be harmful to them in forms of mean comments and/or messages. Cyberbullying could immensely impact a children's life if they are left unsupervised. Western Governors University includes that there is also an increase in risk and lack of privacy since children might not realize what website or app they click and join. Online addiction is a risk as well for children. It is harder to control their screen time if they are

addicted to technology. "We can do more when kids are younger; it is harder to intervene as they get older," claims Dr. Nicholas Edwards, a pediatrician and sports medicine physician in orthopedic surgery at the University of Minnesota.

As children grow older, their mentality is affected by what they grow up with. Kids who grow up depending on technology are affected differently than those kids who grow up without technology. Depending on technology too much can have the mental effects of isolation, anxiety, depression, as stated in an article by MedicalNewsToday. The physical and mental effects of kids being dependent on technology at an early age can worsen as their dependency continues. Parents have a tough time maintaining and limiting their children's screen time, which causes long-lasting effects that can go on until their adult years. Parents are having a harder time trying to maintain their children's screen time with the pandemic. Children have no choice but to spend time on their devices since they cannot go out and play with their friends.

June 1st, 2021



Photo courtesy of The Hill

Along with co-sponsors, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speaks about the deal, where she discussed a more "sustainable future."

## Green New Deal seeks change for environment

By Gavriel Curameng  
Editor-In-Chief

In the 1930s, America was in the middle of a Great Depression. To get the United States out of the depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt implemented the New Deal, an economic reform plan based on government intervention to provide public work programs. Nearly 70 years later, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) reintroduced a similarly-named plan to combat environmental issues named the Green New Deal.

"Already, 10 local governments, including the state of New Mexico, have adopted local versions of the Green New Deal. The desire for these investments is there," said Rep. Ocasio-Cortez. "We need to give our local communities the funding and support to act."

This isn't the first time she has introduced the Green New Deal in the House of Representatives. The 14 page resolution calls on the federal government to act on growing climate change, notably through ending the use of fossil fuels as much as possible. Organized into two parts, the first part answers the United States' role in climate change, followed by how US workers will deal with such a transition away from fossil fuels. During her freshman term, she introduced the resolution but it failed to pass to the Senate.

"This radical proposal would take our growing economy off the cliff and our nation into bankruptcy," said Senator John Barrasso (R-WY), chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. "It's the first step down a dark path to socialism." But the resolution's non-binding nature does not make anything in the proposal become law, as reported in The New York Times. This means the document isn't a bill or legislation.

"I think the Green New Deal is very cool because I want to save the environment because I like the earth not being dead," said Ashley Riberio, LHS junior. "Because I like it not being 1000 degrees every day."

Despite having support from the Progressives in Congress, not all members of her own party agree.

"It will be one of several or maybe many suggestions that we receive. The green dream, or whatever they call it, nobody knows what it is, but they're for it, right?" said Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) when it was first introduced in 2019. "I do know that it's enthusiastic, and we welcome all the enthusiasm that's out there," the Speaker later clarified at a conference.

With a Democrat in the White House, the resolution can act as a way to pressure the President in taking action in regards to climate change.

"Our movement towards a sustainable future has been divided with a false notion that we have to choose between our planet and our economy and we've decided to come together in sweeping legislation that not only rejects that notion but creates a plan for 20 million union jobs in the United States of America," said Rep. Ocasio-Cortez.

# Learning Loss:

The invisible enemy of students in the post-pandemic era

By Dominic Lau  
Staff Writer

In the past year, students faced a pandemic that wiped away everything society knows as "school": location, teaching styles, and especially peer support. Papers became PDFs and classrooms became Canvas. Through all the changes that happened after that extended spring break of 2020, what was most prevalent was the idea of Learning Loss. Learning Loss is the loss of academic skills and knowledge during a gap of education. Before last year, this was known as Summer Learning Loss, but this issue now applies to the school year instead of just pertaining to holiday gaps. So what about post-pandemic era education stimulates Learning Loss to occur? In an article entitled "The COVID-19 Induced Learning Loss," writers Le Thu Huong and Teerada Na Jatturas discuss the problems underlying

Learning Loss. One of those problems is the digital divide, a gap between students based on technology and whether or not they have it. This especially can lead to huge gaps of education between students from the pre-pandemic era and those taking class right now, particularly those who can't afford what's necessary for school at home. A similar problem is that students may complete a class and earn credits but their knowledge may be less than that of the average student who took it before classes went online. For most at-risk students, Learning Loss may prove a bigger beast as it may derail an already struggling high school career and cause one to be underemployed indefinitely after they graduate.

In Stephen Merrill's article called "Too Much Focus on 'Learning Loss' Will Be a Historic Mistake," he focuses on the issues that produce Learning Loss and how they could be fixed. He later states, "There's a broad and growing consensus that online learning, in both

its hybrid and purely remote forms, has been an anemic substitute for in-person instruction." Merrill then discusses the solutions that could fix the imperfect education system now faced today. He believes that districts should essentially slow down and take the results of standardized testing as a jumping off point rather than a label to put onto students.

Merrill offers the idea of helping students on a case-by-case basis using the results of standardized testing rather than simply testing them and putting a label on them based on the scores. But how do students feel about learning loss and its affects? Liberty senior Brian Harrigan says, "This school year really made work hard; it felt like the work was never ending and the whole experience was very isolating." He goes into detail, explaining, "The constant workload alone made it harder to learn new things quicker and retain old things longer." Harrigan would add on that, over time, it felt harder and harder

to complete assignments as it became too tough to juggle all of his class' lessons and work at the same time. Asking another senior, Carson Lombardi, about whether or not he felt discouraged this year, he stated, "Honestly, I was very discouraged, I felt there was a far weaker tie to our teachers and there was particularly far less attention put into our assignments which made it harder to practice what we were learning."

Learning Loss opens up a variety of issues between students and the staff. How should Liberty handle such a behemoth of an issue? Principal Harper plans to curb the effects of Learning Loss through lowering the student-to-teacher ratio in particular classes, adding tutors for students outside of school hours, and introducing more technology, specifically for students. Harper then adds that this is just the beginning, as she has more ideas to discuss soon with the school board.

## Small businesses, big dreams

Student entrepreneurs find early success

By Summer Farage  
Co-Editor



Photo courtesy of Makena Quesada

It started with a small dream with big intentions for Kikiz-cosmeticz. With over 8,000 followers, Makena Quesada continues to ship out packages to different locations.

Although COVID-19 has taken a toll on a majority of the world, it has also brought to light new interests for Liberty students through their own small businesses. At the beginning of quarantine, students found themselves surrounded with the unknown of what their future would look like after living through their first pandemic. People had different emotions, different situations, but one common element was time. Time to take a step back and focus on

family, and time to pick up new interests, which is where students had time to begin their small businesses. There are a variety of small businesses that are active within the Brentwood community including tutoring, handmade jewelry, sweet treats, and cosmetics. With most people active on social media, it creates a platform for users to discover these small businesses. All it takes from the buyer is a click to the young entrepreneur's websites in which they can pick the product they want and have it sent to them.

Although money is an amazing benefit, these small business owners enjoy much more than just the cash. Kylie Alfano, LHS senior and owner of gourmet donut business Drive Me Glazy, says, "I started my business because I wanted to spend time doing something I loved and share it with

other people. I wanted to make a difference in any way I could, especially for people going through a hard time, and this business was an outlet for me as well."

LHS senior Makena Quesada shares a similar experience through her small business known as Kikizcosmeticz on Instagram. She creates her own unique cosmetics and has shipped over 3500 orders. She plans to continue advancing her brand and adding new products down the line.

A benefit for these young entrepreneurs is their ability to balance school with work by creating their own work hours and gain experience for when they enter the workforce. Skills such as communication, accounting, and marketing that are currently gained as student-entrepreneurs can transfer to many other workforce areas in the future.

## Finding neutral ground in the classroom

Liberty students hope for change in pronoun usage

By Kieran Mustafa  
Staff Writer

On a hot summer morning, students gather at Liberty High School. It's the first day of the new school year. Students are filled with excitement and anticipation. Hearts race over the sound of the first bell. As their new teachers take attendance, most students ecstatically raise their hand and shout "Here!". However, this moment isn't so joyous for some students. These students use gender neutral pronouns, and most teachers use gendered pronouns to refer to them.

Gender neutral pronouns are pronouns that do not confirm to any one specific gender identity. They/them, ze/zir, and xe/xem are a few examples of gender neutral pronouns. Those who use these pronouns may identify as non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid. Liberty High School Junior Kaedyn Shuttlesworth knows this reality well. In their opinion, teachers do not consider gender neutral pronouns. "I think what most teachers do is assume that their students are either female or male due to their appearance or just by what it says on their roll," Shuttlesworth comments.

However, when asked about their overall Liberty experience being ENBY (someone who identifies as non-binary) Shuttlesworth explained, "I'd say pretty positive. I'm out as nonbinary to pretty much everybody and it's also nice to be asked what I identify as before people assume that I go by my birth-given biology. Most of the time I'm not asked what I go by, but it is nice to hear when people are open to hearing about what I am."

Shuttlesworth shared that many teachers do not ask for students' pronouns, and asking for them would be beneficial.

"I think what teachers can do to get rid of this system is to maybe have a confidential paper that is shared between only them and the student that can help the teacher try and remember their pronouns and sex as best as they can, whether it be known with the class or just between the two of them. Said student could be living in a home environment where what they go by can be not accepted or even harmful to mention. Having school as a place to freely be who you identify as is great, and I think teachers helping can be a big first step into being comfortable with themselves."

## Representing the hearing-impaired community:

What can be done?

By Rachel Olivás  
Staff Writer

Representation in the United States can be a constant issue. Many different cultures and groups are often given little representation or are completely left out of everyday life. This includes students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Growing up deaf can be an enormous struggle on its own, but not having basic needs met in the classroom can make it worse.

For some schools, it isn't always possible to accommodate each student's needs. "Traditional classrooms don't have immediate modifications or ac-

commodations for deaf and hard of hearing students," addressed Emily Vincent, M.S. CCC-SLP, Bilingual Speech Pathologist. Generally, the typical classroom includes lots of background noise, which can make focusing difficult for any student. For deaf and hearing impaired students, hearing the teacher can require them to use more of their attention than the average student. For instance, if the teacher is not facing them, or talking near them, it becomes challenging to gain insightful information.

One way to accommodate hearing-impaired students is with FM systems, which amplify the teacher's voice and

help to decrease the amount of missed information. Another helpful way for students with hearing impairments to follow along in a classroom is to have a designated desk or buddy. Hard of hearing students will benefit greatly from either of these options, since both allow the students to have better comprehension of the instructions or material given to them. Additionally, if a student is non-verbal, it is required by law that an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter accompanies them. More often than not, deaf and hard of hearing students will have an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan), which will consist of modifications to support

their access to the material and learning environment. It can also include access to a special education resource specialist, someone who is an instructor specific to deaf and hard of hearing students.

In a world where the majority of people hear without any problems, Vincent observed that within a classroom, "there is definitely a lot of lack of information and understanding." She further acknowledges that many students that are hearing impaired get by in school because they have no learning difficulties per se, but at the same time it could be very easy for them to miss or misinterpret information.

# The Chauvin trial verdict is accountability, not justice

By Valeria Leon  
Co-Editor

Accountability and justice are not the same. But for so long, people of color in America have been denied both of these from our legal system that the mere recognition of wrongdoing from the system feels like a win. The three guilty verdicts for Derek Chauvin's crimes cannot be thought of as justice. Justice would be George Floyd still living and breathing with the rest of us. Accountability is what we saw with the verdict in the Chauvin case, and it is the bare minimum of what the legal system should be doing.

Chauvin murdered George Floyd on that summer day in 2020, and there was video proof. In any other situation it would be seen as a guilty conviction cut and dry, so we have to ask ourselves, why is it that so many of us following the trial sat with our hearts pounding in agony and anticipation when they released the verdict if it was clear that Chauvin was guilty? It's because for so long, African Americans and other minorities have been denied justice over and over again, and we've been denied accountability from police officers and law enforcement for so long that we still wait at the edge of our seats even when a guilty verdict is clear. The Chauvin verdict is an action of accountability in part of the system, this is not an exoneration of America's

legal system and its historic treatment of people of color.

The generational trauma that has plagued people of color in regards to the justice system is something that has been passed down through generations for decades, and something that needs to be understood and recognized to comprehend the deep rooted distrust and anger with the system.

Many believe that the history and story of Emmitt Till was one that happened long ago, too distant for it to be considered a part of modern history, but what a lot of people don't consider is that the story of Emmitt Till happened when most of our great grandparents and grandparents were alive. It was a tragic event that has stuck with them, a cautionary story of how black people were viewed and treated unjustly, and how prejudice has the possibility of leading to the violent loss of life. Then for our parents there was the story of Rodney King and how he was beaten by police officers, and all the officers involved in his beating were let off with "not guilty" verdicts. These were the stories that were passed down to our current generations, the history about how the law enforcement systems treated people of color within its own sanctions.

It's a generational trauma that has affected families of color for generations. The stories sit in the back of the minds of people and every time an unarmed black person is killed by police officers

it just reinforces that history that we have been told by our ancestors over and over again, and the stories that we see now on the news like those of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, and of George Floyd, deepen that trauma. For the coming generations, George Floyd will be a part of that devastating history. A story about how an unarmed black man was killed by a white police officer who believed that he held the power to play judge, jury, and executioner in a matter of eight minutes and 46 seconds.

The three count guilty verdict is not justice; justice would have been George Floyd being questioned by the police in a civilized and humane manner, and if required, taken into custody in a humane manner. Justice would have been George Floyd being taken into custody, questioned, and then taken to trial where a jury would then judge Floyd for his crimes if any were committed. Justice would be George Floyd having been given the rights that our constitution and legal system supposedly grant us when it comes to being arrested. Accountability is what we saw with a guilty verdict against Chauvin, nothing more, nothing less. We cannot mix up the accountability for the actions of Chauvin with the justice they should have been granted to George Floyd.

The American justice system and the way that it treats people of color is broken, that much can be acknowledged

by anyone. The National Police Misconduct Reporting Project analyzed 3,238 criminal cases against police officers from April 2009 through December 2010. They found that only 33% were convicted, and 36% of officers who were convicted ended up serving prison sentences. Both of those are about half the rate at which members of the public are convicted or incarcerated for the same crimes. Police officers in the US shoot and kill hundreds of people each year, according to the FBI's very limited data — far more than other locations like the UK, Japan, and Germany, where police officers might go an entire year without killing more than a dozen people or even anyone at all.

This trial was so anticipated and so emotional for a reason. Because it was not just Chauvin up on the podium the day that the verdict was released; the policing system, and the law enforcement systems that have for so long oppressed people of color were up there on that stand too. It was a moment to see if these systems could finally acknowledge and own up to the failings within themselves.

A local community activist from Minnesota told CBS News she "felt relieved" after hearing Chauvin was found guilty on all counts. "And now I'm ready for all the rest of the police that have murdered Black men and women to be found guilty on all charg-

es of murder," she said. She also said that she had doubts about the outcome before the verdicts were read. "I didn't have doubts that he was guilty. I had doubts in terms of white supremacy, and white supremacy saying that... if you are White, you can get away with murder, as long as it's a person that is Black" she said. "We've always been treated like slaves," she said. "And some people say we've been treated like second-class citizens, but for the most part, citizens have not been part of the equation when it comes to Black people."

Those three guilty verdicts, while not complete justice for George Floyd, have brought a semblance of awareness to the systems. Awareness that, one, the systems are not invincible, they are not exempt from the rules and laws, and two, for so many of the people who were following the trial, it opened up an awareness to the injustices of people of color, and the fragmented justice system and the way that it treats black and brown Americans in the United States. While this is not justice, it can hopefully be a start for a new era of our justice system, one where everybody is held accountable for their actions, and one that provides a history and story to tell the future generations on the development of our legal justice system and its treatment of people of color moving towards equality.

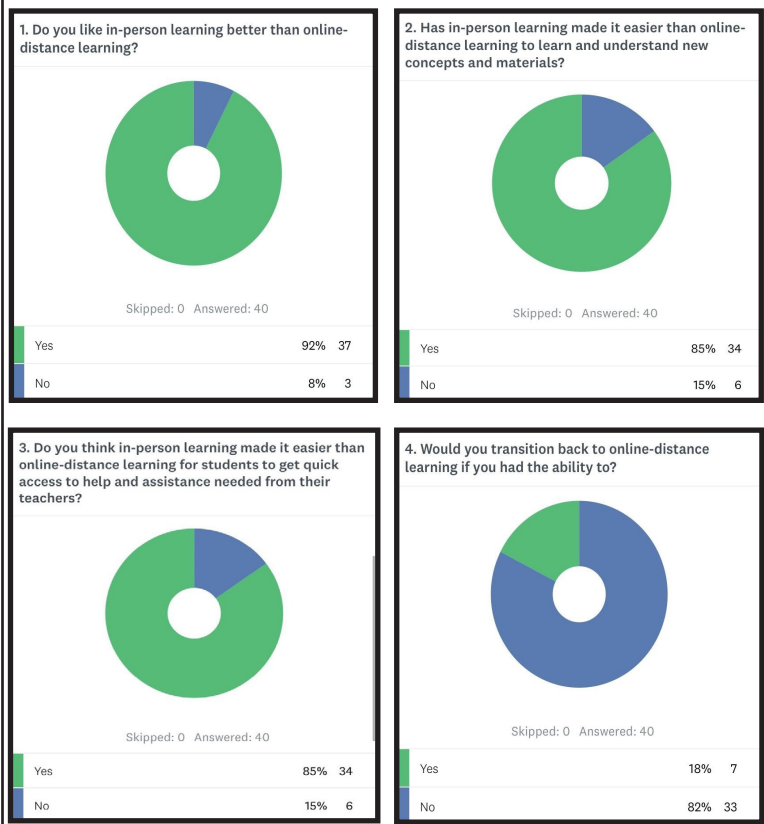
## From the computer screen to the classroom: Student's perspectives on the hybrid schedule

By Belkhis Hoseny  
Staff Writer

Imagine starting the school year transitioning from a regular classroom setting to full, online distance learning through a computer screen, without the contentment of having teachers and classmates physically around. Picture your school year progressing each and every day through a computer screen, using applications such as Zoom and Canvas.

Then imagine one day a miracle mo-

ment occurs that unbelievably changes the world. Envision every moment of life progressively transitioning back to normal, as students prepare to return to in-person learning. This was the reality this past spring, as Liberty students were given the option to return to campus on a modified hybrid schedule. But how has it been going? Forty Liberty students from various grade levels were asked about their opinions in regards to the change from distance learning to the in-person hybrid schedule. The following data is shown in the charts below:



## TikTok challenges are far too treacherous

By Gabriel Hernandez  
Staff Writer



Photo by Gabriel Hernandez

The bottom of a person's shoe is probably one of the dirtiest places ever, yet countless social media users participate in challenges like this. Licking random, filthy objects could allow one to contract COVID-19 or numerous other harmful infections.

TikTok is a platform where there are many ways to go viral: Some people go viral for dancing while others go viral for doing trending challenges. However, some of these challenges can be very dangerous. Not knowing the influence big creators have on their fan base, some children could easily find and participate in these dangerous challenges and could get seriously injured or even die.

One of these dangerous challenges is the Black Out Challenge. This challenge a person to choke him or herself until they pass out or nearly pass out. "There were a lot of videos on my For You Page that participated in this challenge," says Lorenzo Hernandez. In Italy, a 10 year old girl participated in the "challenge" and ended up dying as a result. According to Newsweek.com, the little girl reportedly tied a belt around her neck which caused her to pass out and go into cardiac arrest.

Another challenge that is really dangerous is the Coronavirus Challenge. "This trend was all over Twitter and TikTok when it first started going viral," states Lorenzo Hernandez. The Coronavirus Challenge encourages people to go out to public places and lick light poles, toilet seats, and other objects. This not only puts them in danger to receive the virus, but this could also spread the virus to others. According to Meaghan Wray from Global News, famous TikTok star and Instagram model Ava Louise was on a flight to Miami when she participated in this challenge and licked the toilet seat on the plane. The video of her doing so went viral, not just on TikTok but on other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram.

People would do anything for some recognition on the internet. They would even do dangerous challenges that could seriously injure them. Going viral is like candy, people crave more and more of it after they get a little taste.

## Beware of the dark side of children's tv shows

By Kristine Sanchez  
Staff Writer

Kids shows from Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" to Cartoon Network's "Regular Show" have something for everyone; no matter the age, anyone can enjoy, from the jokes to the plot of the show. However, most do not suspect that there is a dark side to these shows.

Most parents may think that the shows they let their children watch often are safe and not explicit. Yet, there are scenes of shows that they usually do not know about that may contain sexual ideas. Additionally, they add in black humor. Black humor also goes by different names such as galls

humor, morbid humor, dark comedy, and dark humor. Black humor jokes about serious subjects that are usually not joked about, such as death, diseases, and deformities. When these jokes are made to create humor, it becomes "frame blends" which require the blurring of two distant scenarios to create a humorous hybrid.

The rules of censorship in modern day television have become less strict. Kids shows that have been known to have black humor include Disney shows such as "That's So Raven", "Kim Possible", "Boy Meets World", and "Suite Life on Deck."

Black humor that is evident in "Kim Possible" would be in episode one, season one, "Low Budget". When the

main character Kim confronts the evil villain Lucre, she said, "Alright, Lucre, cough up the sausages!" Her sidekick Ron replies, "Ew, rephrase please."

When asked about this type of humor, Karen Ngyuen, a student at Liberty High School, confesses, "I think it's pretty funny until you actually relate to it."

While dark humor can be amusing to older people, the effects on the mind are rather the opposite. According to www.ifstudies.org, children watch shows that contain dark humor, they "may not become "violent" or "sexual," but our behavior and our responses are impacted by what we have seen. Empathy is reduced. Objectification is increased. Morality erodes."

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