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The Lion's Roar

The voice of Liberty High School students

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850 Second Street
Room B-111
Brentwood, CA 94513

Issue 2, Volume 36

April 1, 2025

FREE

Trump's executive orders raise concerns for transgender students

By Julian Reynoso
Staff Writer

The audience of President Trump's inauguration speech gives a standing ovation as he declares, "There are only two genders: male and female." Transgender identities have become a hot topic of debate in politics, and some Liberty students are caught in the middle.

President Donald Trump spent much of his 2024 presidential campaign promising to take action against what he calls gender ideology, which is the idea that one's gender is separate from biological sex and that gender is determined by how one presents themselves, not how one is born. He took little time to follow up on his promises, publishing his first executive order against gender ideology on his first day in office. In this order, he demanded government agencies withdraw support for gender identity and only use two sexes, male and female, in their wording. By doing this, he claims to be defending women's rights and the reality of biological sex from an idea that seeks to confuse the borders between man and woman, and endanger women by putting who he deems as men in their private spaces. Others question whether these problems being raised exist in the first place.

"How many cases or reports have you heard of trans-women going into the locker room or bathroom and assaulting other women?" asks Elliot, a Liberty Junior and transgender man.

A 2018 study conducted in Massachusetts by the *Williams Institute*, a public policy research institute based at the UCLA School of Law, found no evidence that transgender citizens using restrooms matching their gender

identity increases safety risks. In fact, a 2021 *Williams Institute* study found that transgender people are four times more likely to be victims themselves of violent crime, including sexual assault, than their cisgender counterparts.

Even so, President Trump passed another executive order eight days later, banning all government support of gender-affirming care for teens, including hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgeries, despite evidence showing these types of surgical operations on teenagers to be rare. These orders bring worries of further restrictions on how transgender people are allowed to present themselves.

"People are saying, 'you're not trans because you're too young to know,' yet these people want them to experience life while holding back what they can experience. If they want to see how it feels to wear a dress, then let them wear a dress," said Elliot. "You're not being supportive."

Elliot has known that he is transgender since the fourth grade, and it has affected his life and how he feels about himself ever since.

"Being trans is not a choice. I didn't want to be trans, I just wanted to be put in the right body," said Elliot. "I would feel like I was never going to be accepted... People have a hard time understanding."

Mental health struggles are common among transgender youth. A 2023 study by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) found that transgender teens were more likely to report bullying, poor mental health, and suicidal thoughts. In addition of this, President Trump's orders against gender ideology and the current state of transgender people in political discussions has caused further harm to some.

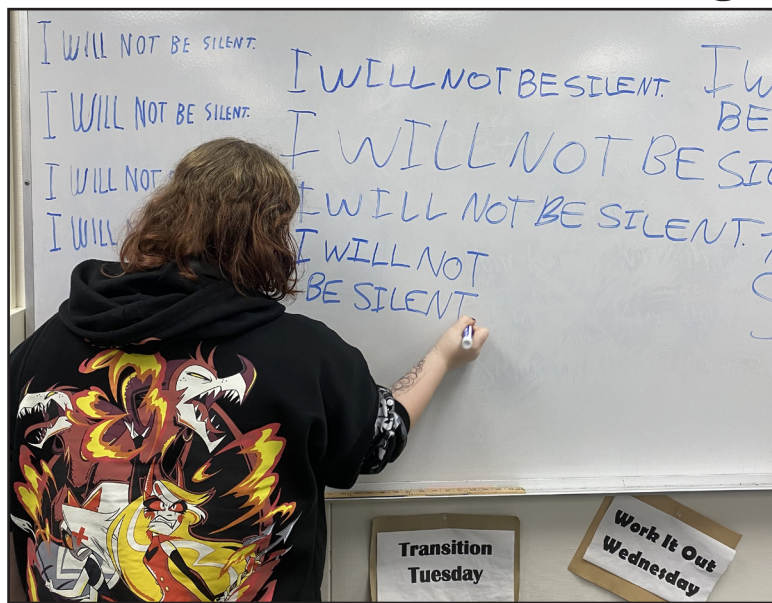


Photo by Julian Reynoso

Liberty Junior and transgender man Elliot expresses his feelings on President Trump's executive orders that limit the rights of trans teens. A 2024 study by the CDC found that 40% of transgender high school students had experienced bullying in the past year, double the amount reported by cisgender students.

"I don't want my gender to be politicized because of who I want to be and who I am. That shouldn't be the issue," said Elliot. "The issue should be against world hunger and all of that instead of focusing on one small thing."

It is important to note that these executive orders cannot violate preexisting laws and Congress can block executive orders by passing their own legislation. However, executive orders are part of the President's duty to enforce the law. Thus, unless otherwise challenged, the President's interpretation of how the law should be enforced becomes required across federal agencies and influences public opinion on the matter. This directly affects transgender citizens in ways such as passports now not offering "X" gender markers for

nonbinary people and the prevention of federal health insurance from being used on gender-affirming care. While having far reach, executive orders are not unstoppable. The Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal are currently suing the federal government for its ban on transgender military members.

"The fight for LGBTQ+ rights has been long and difficult, but progress has always been made through resilience, activism, and the law," writes Sarah Warbelow, a representative for the Human Rights Campaign. "HRC and our community, millions of LGBTQ+ individuals and supporters strong, will continue to show up against discriminatory policies and demand equal rights and protections."

State laws against transgender identities have become more common, with twenty-six states placing bans on gender affirming care for minors in the past four years, despite this care being called life-saving for many trans youth. Luckily for transgender students at Liberty, California has some of the most robust protections for transgender people in the country. These protections include laws allowing citizens to freely change their name and sex on state legal documents, allowing the use of the aforementioned "X" gender markers on documents, and banning schools from being forced to "out" trans students to their parents. These laws show a willingness to protect the rights of California's transgender population that other states and the federal government lack. "Under California law, gender classifications are 'suspect' for purposes of equal protection analysis. Such classifications are therefore subject to strict scrutiny as opposed to the heightened or intermediate scrutiny applied under federal law," wrote Judge Michael Sachs in his ruling against the Chino Valley Unified School District, which sought restrictions against the SAFETY Act which protects students from being outed by their school.

The further escalation of anti-gender identity policies as seen in President Trump's executive orders inevitably lead to one question: are transgender people able to live their lives in the United States of America? Elliot remains hopeful.

"In the past, transgender people were more closeted because of all the orders and hate, so now that it's more open, it's letting people express more because they feel like they're safe," Elliot said. "You are loved. You are cared for. You are not alone."

Behind the wheel: How self-driving cars could impact students

By Nicholas Howard
Co-Editor

Imagine a world where traffic jams are a thing of the past, car accidents are rare, and your daily commute becomes time to relax or be productive. Self-driving cars promise to revolutionize transportation, but with this innovation comes questions about safety, job loss, and the future of personal freedom on the road.

As autonomous vehicles—cars that operate without direct human control—get closer to mainstream use, their impact on society is becoming impossible to ignore. One of the most compelling arguments for autonomous vehicles is their potential to eliminate the dangers of human error on the road. Human error is a leading cause of traffic accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 94% of serious



Photo courtesy of TechRadar

Hands rest on an open book, eyes scan the pages, and the steering wheel remains untouched as the self-driving car moves forward. This moment captures the evolving role of passengers in an autonomous future.

crashes are caused by human mistakes, including distracted or impaired driving. Autonomous vehicles, which use advanced sensors and artificial intelligence to navigate, could significantly reduce these incidents. Additionally, McKinsey & Company estimates that self-driving technology could decrease

traffic accidents by up to 90%, potentially saving thousands of lives each year. Beyond safety, autonomous vehicles could transform the way cities and communities function. Transportation expert Andreas Tschiesner compares self-driving cars to the shift from horse-drawn carriages to automobiles, signal-

ing a dramatic change in transportation. This new technology holds the potential to reshape urban planning, reduce congestion, and change how people travel daily.

For students, self-driving cars could redefine the daily commute. Morning rides might become time for finishing homework or catching up on sleep. Teens without licenses or cars could gain newfound independence through self-driving transportation, making it easier to participate in after-school activities or off-campus events. With more accessible and efficient travel, students may experience greater flexibility in their schedules.

However, these benefits come with challenges. Industries like trucking and ride-sharing may face job losses as self-driving vehicles replace human drivers. Safety is also a topic of debate, as experts question how well autonomous systems can handle un-

predictable situations such as construction zones or extreme weather. While the technology is advancing, concerns about reliability and security remain.

Another obstacle is cost. Currently, self-driving technology is expensive, limiting widespread adoption. But as advancements continue, prices are expected to drop, making autonomous vehicles more accessible for families. Over time, widespread adoption could lower transportation costs and make carpooling more efficient, further reshaping how people get around.

Liberty High students and their families should be aware of the possible effects of self-driving technology as it evolves. While autonomous vehicles promise safer roads and greater convenience, they also bring complex challenges. The decisions society makes now will shape how self-driving cars impact students, families, and communities in the future.

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Upcoming events:

Junior Prom Bids Due - 4/4

Summer School - 4/11
Applications Due

Playmakers Awards Night - 5/2

Auto Club Car Show - 5/3

April 1, 2025

Making music from scratch: New LHS band class opens doors to young musicians

By Morgan Haney
Staff Writer

It's not too late for a new hobby. Next school year a new Beginning Band class will be open to all who want a new opportunity to expand their knowledge of music, experienced or not.

Up until now, the lowest level of band students could join was the Concert Band class. However, this class still has requirements; students have to have experience with their preferred instrument and must participate in the fall marching band season. This meant that if someone with no musical experience were to try and get into the band program, they couldn't.

That was until Mrs. Kellogg and Mrs. Krey took notice of the amount of students that had no experience but wanted to join. The two decided to approach admin with their newfound idea.

"We wanted these kids to be able to join band and our hope is that after a year these students will be able to go right into Concert and Marching. We were hoping the class would be taught at the same time as concert band so we would have two bands together in separate rooms, and if students are learning very quickly there is a possibility that they could advance into concert band more quickly," Mrs. Krey explained.



Photo by Morgan Haney

Touring the pit of the PAC theater, Mrs. Krey shares her plentiful knowledge of instruments. Mrs. Krey's goal is to make her percussionist students aware of all types of instruments.

Mrs. Krey will be teaching the beginning band class and as a result will be handling the planning of the curriculum. Mrs. Krey has had experience teaching beginning band classes before, although it was a middle school class rather than a high school class. The way the class works will be in similar fashion.

"It'll be kind of like a typical beginning band class. We will have a book

that we will play from. Students will learn how to put together an instrument, how to take care of an instrument, everything that they would learn in a traditional beginning band class. Plus, there's online stuff that I always use in my beginning band classes, like videos and such," she discussed.

To dive in further to how the class will run, the issue on how students will acquire the instruments for class is still under deliberation. As of now, students will ideally be expected to bring their own

instrument to the table. While the band program does have instruments that are loaners, priority goes to those that are used for marching band or jazz band.

"The instruments we're talking about having are flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and baritone. Those instruments are all easily rentable through Geddes or Gill's music here in town, and they have very reasonable rates." Mrs. Krey continued by

expanding on the fact that, "They could also purchase them for sometimes under \$200 and get a really nice quality instrument. I think it'll be a mix of kids mostly providing their own, and then also if we need to, loaning some out." After a student takes the class, it's expected that they will go on to the concert band. Beginning Band will serve as an introductory stepping stone for those that wish to get into music and to go on to participate in all the band program has to offer.

"If students do the class the whole year and they have practiced and they've learned their instrument, it is our hope that they will continue on and be in concert band. Students can also take it for a year and learn an instrument and if they don't like it, they can decide not to continue. The goal though is that it will motivate them to continue on into the program," Mrs. Krey mentioned.

In addition to enriching the band program, she hopes that it will enrich the lives of those deciding to sign up to take the class.

She spoke of her hopes that it could serve as a fresh start for some and serve as a revelation into some students' newfound passion for playing music.

"I'm hoping that students that didn't get a chance to play in middle school will join this beginning band class and

realize they love playing an instrument and they'll continue on for the rest of high school. I have had a number of students that have come through the Liberty program that didn't start band until seventh or eighth grade. I can't imagine them not ever playing an instrument, and if they had never joined band, they probably wouldn't have done all of these things that they're doing now," she revealed.

Mrs. Krey emphasizes why this new addition to the band program is so important. She brought up the fact that learning to play an instrument helps expand the mind in ways that other subjects don't help with and how it uses so many different parts of the brain to do so.

"It just helps you to think differently, and it helps your brain to grow. Also, music makes people happy," she noted. "It's one of the things I think that brings everybody together. You think about all of the movies that we watch, all of the music in the movies. You think of Spotify and, I mean, YouTube has almost every song imaginable on there. I mean, people just listen to music and it's such a big part of their life. I want that in this class, and I think music is important for everybody. It's not just for those kids that are in band or in choir or in theatre. Music really is important for everyone."



Photo courtesy of NBC News

On January 18, 9 pm PST, the TikTok ban went into effect. American users were able to access the app 14 hours later on January 19, 11 am PST.

Banned and back What's the current status of the TikTok ban?

By Julius Keys
Staff Writer

On January 19, 2025, millions of TikTok users across the United States woke up to an unexpected message: "TikTok is currently unavailable due to a legal restriction in your region." The long-debated ban had finally taken effect, leaving content creators, businesses, and casual users in shock.

Back when TikTok was just emerging from being one of the most used social media apps in 2020, Congress brought up banning it because of its ties to China. Three years later, a bill was brought into office to ban TikTok because of its ties to China's national security. By April 4, over 16 regions or global institutions had imposed a partial or total ban on the social media app.

After its global appearance as a "threat," Congress decided that it would be banned 9 months after April 19, 2024, unless it was sold before then. Time passed and many believed that it would not happen because of the past times they said they would ban it and didn't. Nine months later, all users in America were banned from using the app.

The ban's enforcement highlighted concerns over data security and foreign influence in social media. Lawmakers argued that TikTok's ownership by Chinese company ByteDance posed national security risks, leading to the restriction. Despite multiple attempts by ByteDance to negotiate a sale or address security concerns, the

U.S. government moved forward with the ban.

For years, TikTok served as a digital stage for influencers, small business owners, and creative minds who relied on the platform for income and exposure. The app's unique algorithm provided an opportunity for influence, allowing individuals to turn hobbies into full-time careers. Many faced an uncertain future as they scramble to find new platforms to sustain their audience.

As TikTok users scrambled for alternatives, rival platforms have seen a surge in new sign ups. Instagram and YouTube have ramped up their short-form content features, offering monetization options to attract displaced creators. However, just 14 hours after the ban was implemented, the U.S. government announced that it was temporarily lifting the restriction while further negotiations took place. On January 20th, Trump signed an order that gave TikTok 75 days (i.e., until April 4th) to comply with the law. While users were able to access TikTok once again, the app was removed from all major app stores, but returned on February 14th. For now, TikTok creators and businesses remain in a state of uncertainty, waiting to see what comes next in the ongoing battle over digital regulation and national security. Rumors have circulated whether anyone will actually save TikTok by purchasing it. Notable names who may be interested include Elon Musk and Larry Ellison, owner of Oracle software.

Buy, sell, trade Teens enter the investing world

By Michael Hanlon
Staff Writer

Cash in America is becoming relied upon less and less. Other methods of payment like debit and credit have emerged and become favorites for Americans. With this surge in online payment, other ways to pay have been created, such as crypto currency. This has created a new plane of investment that teens are taking advantage of.

Studies show more and more teens and young adults investing every year. A survey that polled 1000 Americans between ages 18 to 34 showed that this age demographic is interested in investing or currently investing. Sixty-three percent of young adults in America believe in investing, with many saying that the reason there is more pressure to build wealth in different avenues like investing is because of inflation and rapidly climbing housing prices.

Teen investors walk the Liberty High School halls every day. Two of these teen investors, who preferred to stay anonymous and will be referred to as AM and GM, shared how teens invest. AM, a Junior at Liberty, said, "Teens invest through custodial accounts or just having your parents invest for you."

Although teens could start investing on their own, they may need help. GM, a Sophomore at Liberty, mentioned how his dad helps manage his investments, while AM uses other sources like YouTube, Investopedia, and finance books for help.

While teens and young adults have grown up in a more investor friendly time, they also feel that things are getting too expensive. Most of these young adults believed that investing was ideal for another way to make money to stay afloat during this period of time.

Through investment, AM mentioned they have made 1,900 dollars while GM has earned 40 grand. AM said that they usually reinvest or save to buy more luxury items, while GM was able to buy his first car. Studies show that American teens have, on average, a few hundred dollars, meaning both young investors have more money than the average teen from investments alone.

Regardless of the amount made, AM

and GM both agreed about the positive impact on their finances and their knowledge of finance.

The belief that investing is important is shared by other adolescents. A survey of youth between the ages of 13 and 17 found that seventy-five percent of children ages 13 to 17 said that investing is important to them. Additionally, fifty-one percent believe that having good financial literacy is important and feel that they should be further educated on topics such as saving, spending, and investing.

Online currency like Bitcoin and companies like Amazon aren't the only route these teen investors are going in. The Global Retail Investor Survey

shows that 70% of retail investors are under the age of 45. This industry, who in years prior has been dominated by those considered "older," is now seeing a rise of young retail investors dominating the business. Outside of the U.S., a survey conducted in China showed that 90% of university graduates from age 22-32 consider investing an important part of their life plan.

When asked how they discovered stocks, GM said their parents taught them and AM discovered it from online sources and stuck with it. This shows that whether one's parents know about stocks or not there are multiple avenues to get introduced to the stock market.

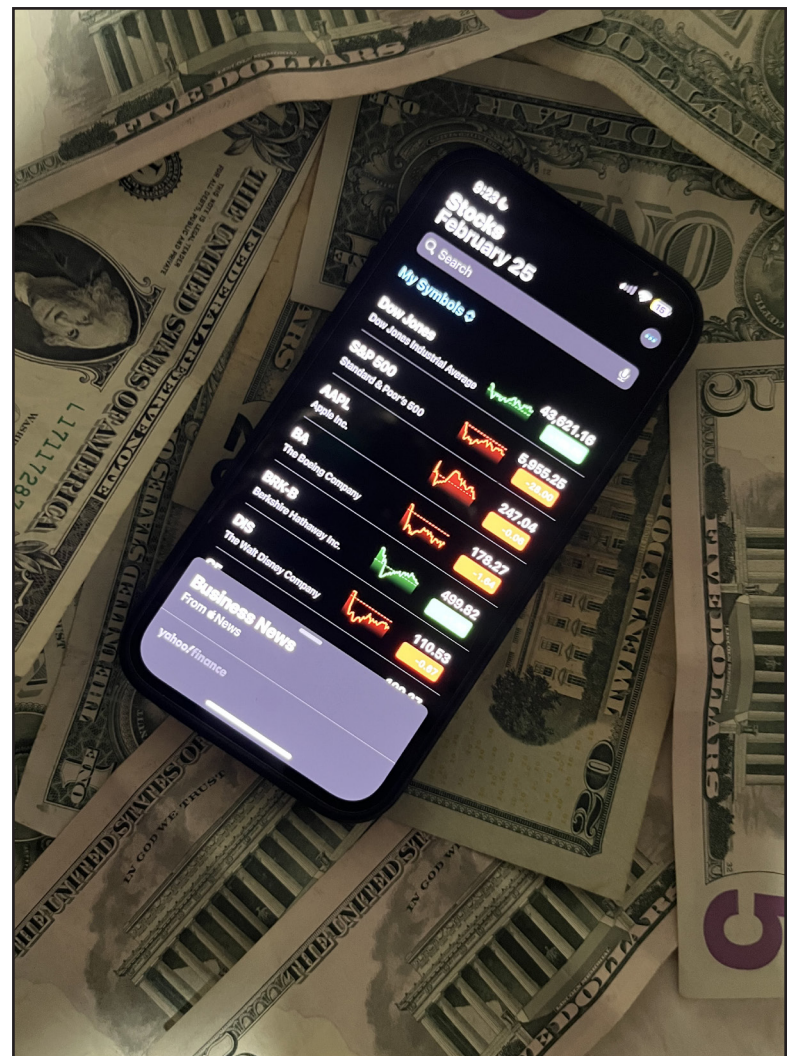


Photo by Michael Hanlon

Teens are seeing their investments bringing in big profits. A Sophomore at Liberty, who asked to remain anonymous, has made \$40,000 from investing.

CAMPUS LIFE

April 1, 2025

Rumor has it: The effect of gossip on high school students

By Loujain Habibi
Editor-in-Chief

Psst...did you hear about...? The rumor mill at Liberty High School is always running; although gossiping may feel harmless, rumors profoundly affect students.

Nearly 65% of people's conversations are made up of gossip, according to the study "Negative School Gossip and Youth Adolescents' Mobile Phone Addiction: Mediating Roles of Anxiety and Experiential Avoidance" by Xiong et al., published in the National Library of Medicine.

"Those who are being talked about by peers may experience highly charged emotions, including those of betrayal, exclusion, and humiliation," explained WordEffect, an educational organization dedicated to raising awareness about the power of words.

This is supported by the study "Causes and Consequences of Social Exclusion and Peer Rejection Among Children and Adolescents" by Mulvey et al., published in the National Library of

Medicine. Mulvey et al. explained the negative effects social exclusion and peer rejection have on youth, such as internalizing depression while externalizing aggression.

Kirsten Ashby, a Senior at Liberty, explained the effect of being the subject of a rumor people spread about them.

"It was pretty nasty stuff about my body and physique. However, it did not personally affect me too badly because I guess I'm pretty headstrong in the sense that comments like that pretty much won't get to me too terribly bad. At the most, I only felt paranoid, I guess, trying to figure out with the people around me who were saying those things about me," said Ashby.

This effect on students is significant, since rumors and gossip are typically untrue. According to Oxford Languages, rumors are "a currently circulating story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth." Similarly, gossip is defined by Oxford Languages as casual conversation about others that "typically [involves] details that are not confirmed as being true."

In the study "Explaining the evolution of gossip," published in PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences), Pan et al. suggest that a positive effect of gossip is that it incentivizes people to be more cooperative. This is because engaging in gossip makes people more aware of their reputation, thus they cooperate more with others to "maintain or enhance" it. On the contrary, WordEffect stated, "Gossip pits students against one another. It can fill a room with negative energy and damage the reputations of everyone involved. It is an invisible force that influences behavior in a detrimental way, and encourages students to dehumanize each other."

When asked if they believe there's a difference between harmless gossip and damaging rumors, Ashby replied, "I feel like there is a clear difference between the two. Like some rumors can be about who has a crush on who. However, it can also reach a point where it's hurtful and deeply prying into someone's personal life."

One way to avoid the negative effects



Photo by Loujain Habibi

A student tells their friend a rumor they heard; although it may be unintentional, spreading rumors negatively impacts the mental health of the student they are talking about.

of spreading rumors, as suggested by Mulvey et al., is to create a positive environment on campus where students share common goals and work together, all while knowing they are equal. "I feel like there will always be rumors. People will always try to pry into people's personal lives and make

assumptions. What really matters is if the school teaches students how to carry themselves in the face of situations like that because honestly, no matter where we go, there will always be people talking about you or lying about knowing what you truly have going on at home," said Ashby.

Seeing through a different lens How do immigrant parents view education?

By Marina Hernandez
Rodriguez
Co-Editor

Rushing to wake up, heading to work, and spending countless hours at a back aching job, just to come home and be parents. This is the reality for millions of immigrants in the U.S. Immigrants are hardworking, with education being seen as a pathway to become successful in America, this raises the question of what types of opportunities immigrants get to receive or achieve with or without an academic background.

A registered Dental Assistant named Teresita Splain, recounts her experience growing up as an immigrant who was adopted by a Caucasian couple. She admits that her upbringing was rather privileged, which allowed her to choose what to do after high school. The 'irregular' aspect of Splain's pathway highlights the differences between immigrants regarding education.

Splain explains that "I tell people I'm from Stinson Beach and people are impressed and assume I went to a private high school and college...Instead I went to a vocational school, I don't speak Spanish, and I had my first kid at 21. People look at me and feel sad." Additionally, immigrant parents are

known to have high academic expectations for their children. Splain explains that most parents give higher expectations for their children because that was the belief system they were raised in. But Splain announces the nonconformity of the academic expectations she has for her children.

Splain continues by saying, "And I want my kids to be proud of their grades. I don't expect A's. I expect them to be proud of what grade they bring through the door because they tried hard."

Like Splain, other immigrant parents share the idea of having good and higher academic expectations for their children. However, Splain believes that children should try their hardest and obtain what they couldn't. Splain had experience with an IEP, a program that helps students with learning difficulties; she voices her struggle in school and how that presumably made her more understanding of the academic challenges her children could have.

Additionally, Splain comments on the feeling of failure, stating that "If you're going to fail, fail with your head held high, how else are you going to learn to do it better the next time? Learn from your mistakes because no one is perfect."

Splain reiterates what many immigrant

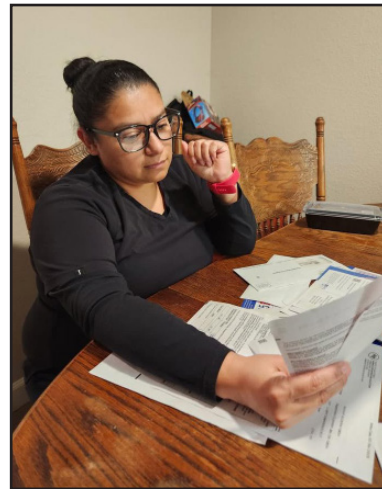


Photo courtesy of Mia Ramirez
Teresita Splain is seen examining paper work for her job; to become a Dental Assistant it takes 9 months to 2 years of training.

parents want, their child to succeed. Even with failure in mind, immigrant parents want their child to pursue an enriching future and lay roots in the U.S. In the land of the free, children of immigrants reap the educational advantages of the U.S and build a life most immigrant parents are proud of. The accomplishments of their children are also their accomplishments; whether they show it or not, they are proud of who their children choose to become.

Bottom of the ladder: Students struggle to score jobs in modern job market

By Toby Bartling
Co-Editor

The looming question every adult is asking these days is "why don't kids want jobs anymore?" Well, that may not be the case, students everywhere are trying to climb the working ladder as they enter their new lives as adults, this means applying for jobs. Despite this, employers are avoiding teenagers for a few reasons—some factors being teenagers' lack of experience, availability and the high competition. Liberty High School Junior Addie Homer applied for 24 jobs, for some of these jobs, she even applied for twice; before landing a spot at the new chip cookie spot in Brentwood.

"I'd say maybe about three places actually responded to my applications." Addie explains, she learned quickly that employers weren't going to hire her. With a packed school schedule, extracurriculars and homework, employers weren't finding a hardworking

student's unavailability desirable for their company.

Teens around the country are applying for jobs. Over one third of the teenage population in America is in the market for a job, and, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Blog, 58% of teens aged 16-19 were employed in 1979, but in 2011, that percentage was at 34% and has been declining ever since.

"...Right before I got the job I have now I had altogether given up applying because I felt like I was getting nowhere." Addie exasperatedly says, after two dozen applications, it was clear her approach needed to change. Addie found it most important that when she went to companies in person requesting an interview, employers were able to see her personality, passion, and ambition to get a job as she went out of her way to approach them in person. This is a common theme in employers hiring teenagers, they're more likely to hire when they can meet

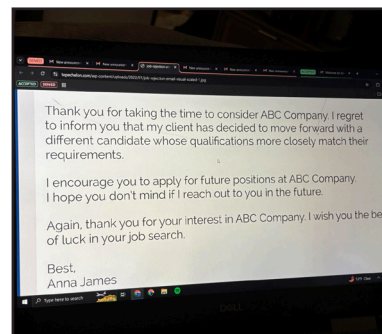


Photo by Toby Bartling

After applying to seven jobs, a Liberty High School student was only able to score an interview for one. Trying for weeks, the aspiring worker only got an interview from the one company he visited in-person.

in person, an email is easy to disregard. By visiting companies in person, employers are able to interpret the attitude and work-ethic of the person they're considering for any position. By showcasing a positive attitude and strong ambition to work and work well, employers are more likely to hire students.

Fashion Spotlight: School or slumber party? The pajama trend hits LHS

By Jade Zulich
Staff Writer

Waking up early in the morning and getting dressed can be extremely tiring; for many students it is easier to show up in pajamas. Bizarrely, if we look around Liberty and modern-day schools, we can see how this has come true, and how normalized it is. Some call it laziness; others embrace the new form of comfort. Some deem it inappropriate; others rejoice in the acceptance of pajama fashion at school.

"I think that students wearing pj's to school is a good thing because they feel more comfortable in their learning environment" notes Liberty junior, Madison Phillips.

Pj pants can help students feel more "at home" and comfortable in their classes and their overall learning experience. It could also provide a student with more convenience. It can be an easy, time-saving process, that can be beneficial towards a student's stress reduction. Some studies show that comfortable clothing can increase productivity. If students are more comfortable in pajama pants, they may be more focused and engaged while learning. According to Vanguard University studies, productivity increases by 25% when employees perceive their environments to

be more comfortable. This can be related to students' productivity increasing while at school, as they have control over their comfort levels.

"As a high school student, I find pajamas incredibly convenient because they save me time in the morning and require no extra effort to put together an outfit" Gabriel Ico, a junior at Liberty comments.

With school dress codes easing restrictions, students may use this to express themselves by wearing pajamas, many different designs and patterns can show off one's interests or personality. While pajamas and pajama pants have many benefits, and can be very fashionable and cute, there is stirred up controversy on whether it could be appropriate for school or not. Some teachers deem it informal and a lazy look for school students, who just don't want to get ready in the mornings.

"In my opinion pajamas to school have not exactly become an act of laziness, but more of something people enjoy wearing" Liberty junior Ailyn Moreno explains.

Pajama pants seem to be a new and hot wear at schools around the U.S, especially at the Liberty High School campus. They can be a great way to express who you are, relieve stress, and decrease tensions at school.



Photo by Jade Zulich

Liberty junior Kaitlyn Ellis shows off her Snoopy pajama pants, according to Mentor High School Cardinal Nation, 93% of schools in America have a policy regarding dress codes.

April 1, 2025

The fork in the road: Pathway to becoming an educator

By Mia Ramirez
Copy Editor

One of the biggest concerns for a high school student is “what will I do with my life?” The pressure of figuring out their future before going off to college is brain consuming, taking quizzes to find out which career is compatible with one’s characteristics or interests. The vast range of fields are provided by community colleges, state colleges, and universities. What if the goal is to make a difference in the world, starting with the next generation? Educators are responsible for the growing minds of millions of children and adults.

For instance, if described as being a person with good “communication, listening, collaborating, adaptability, empathetic, or patient.”, they should consider a career as an educator, as summarized from *10 Qualities of a Good Teacher* by Danielle Gagnon. Having these characteristics are ideal in making a successful teacher.

Therefore, having communication, collaborating, and patience makes the fundamental characteristics of a good teacher. Not just teaching, but qualities needed to have any job. If someone has these skills there are 5 steps to becoming a teacher in California, after high school.

For example, the University of San Diego wrote *The 5 Steps to Becoming a Teacher in California* on their website. The first step being getting a “bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution;” this can be any type of bachelor’s degree. Step two is “completing an accredited teacher preparation program,” with coursework and fieldwork. Step three is a “passing score on the

CBEST (California Basic Educational Skills Test),” testing the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Step four is having a “passing score on the CSET (California Subject Examinations for Teachers) and TPA (Teaching Performance Assessment).” Lastly, step 5 is to submit a full application to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Without a doubt California’s 5 steps help produce qualified educators. This is not just for the University of San Diego; many programs, colleges, and schools have paths for people who want to pursue a career as an educator. Although if someone is asking themselves whether they should become an educator, Liberty High School offers a teaching pathway locally.

In fact, the teaching pathway at Liberty is called the Teaching and Learning Careers (TLC) Academy. Academy Coordinator, Karen Cailotto, manages TLC/Ed Careers Internships, directs TLC/ROP program, and teaches Developmental Psychology of Children at Liberty. This Academy is open to Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors; one can enroll for their sophomore year on schedule for the next coming school year.

Moreover, Cailotto states that students who are in the TLC Academy will “receive free college credits from Sanoma State and Los Medanos Community College.” Students receive 6 college credits, 3 from both schools, which are transferable to most colleges. Cailotto exclaims that, “Students get hands on experience by working in a classroom.” This experience is gained from interning in one’s Junior and Senior year of high school.

This program gives students a peek at



Photo by Mia Ramirez

Leadership teacher at Liberty High School, Jamie Seipel, has been at Liberty for 6 of her 17 years spent teaching. She originally majored in IT (Information Technology), but after her favorite teacher passed away in a tragic accident, she decided to become a teacher so that she could impact kids the same way her teacher impacted her.

what an educator experiences in their occupation. For instance, they offer hands-on experiences, like the internship provided by the TLC Academy, which can spark a student’s interest in a teaching career path.

A Junior in the TLC Academy at Liberty, named Zoey-Jane Wallace, describes her time at internship, and how it has sparked her to look towards a career as a TK-teacher or in special education. Her intention of becoming

an educator is “to see every kid reach their potential and succeed beyond what they believed they could do.” She comments on the benefits of being a part of an academy like TLC, stating, “I get the job experience, as well as getting a feel of wanting to be a teacher and get a feel of what I want to do.” Furthermore, she voiced that “before TLC I wanted to become a realtor, but being at interning has me consider being a teacher.”

Even so, Wallace never had really thought about being an educator until the TLC Academy; the academy gave her the chance to understand what it is like to be a teacher. Liberty’s TLC Academy started in 1999, with the first graduating class in 2003, and has proudly been producing educators and many other students who pursued different careers. Like Wallace, a teaching pathway like this could be the answer that one is looking for.

What makes a Game of the Year? LHS gamers reflect

By Trent Grass
Staff Writer

Video games are an impactful form of expression, able to take a person from the couch to some far off, larger-than-life world. A good game can do

wonders for stimulating one’s creativity, imagination, and problem-solving skills. However, a great game can also thoroughly impact a player on a deep level, leaving room for discussion on what leads a great game to the biggest or most impactful source of recognition, The Game Awards, and the most awaited category, Game of the Year (GotY).

When asked what GotY means to him, Liberty High School student Jayden Ellis stated, “Game of the Year leaves a legacy for the game that won that year.”

Ellis expresses a deep care for the games that have impacted him, saying that games should be made to please the community of players backing it, instead of the industry.

Not every big title lives up to this belief however, as seen with a winning title such as *Overwatch*, which took the world by storm in 2016 with its innovative character concepts and fast paced six-versus-six gameplay. Even with this,

Overwatch started to hit a steep incline after the introduction of a new support hero by the name of Brigitte; her gameplay ended up highlighting some core issues in *Overwatch*’s design that had been lurking in the background up until that point. Blizzard attempted to fix this, yet the damage had been done and each ‘fix’ only upset the community they still had, leading to *Overwatch* going dead in 2020.

Until October 4th, 2022, *Overwatch 2* contained many glaring flaws, such as its greedy monetization and a lack of features giving it the right to call itself the sequel in many players eyes. Even with its huge impact on modern multiplayer games, such as *Marvel Rivals* and *Valorant*, this once beloved game fell into a pit of appealing to the industry and being forced to appease their higher ups resulted in a sequel that comes off as disingenuous and a greedy, a desperate attempt at a cash grab, insulting the players who cared. Not every game that wins this coveted title ends up with a bad reputation however; for instance, *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* (BotW) is still marked as one of the best games to grace the Nintendo Switch. Fellow Liberty High School students, such as Ben Grace, remarks on how BotW impacted them with its stunning visuals,

expansive map, and beautiful story. “Its re-playability is insane,” Grace exclaimed, throwing their hands in the air and altering their sitting position. Grace went on to speak about how BotW was met with a long and loved life. They went on to say, “If a game makes you feel like a genius when you’re not, it’s a good game.” In contrast, Grace spoke to how its sequel, *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom* (TotK) deserved to also win over its competition of *Baldur’s Gate 3* as it “Didn’t have much steam-power,” and how they viewed it as an internet trend that just so happened to last long enough to claim the title of Game of the Year for 2023.

More casual players, such as Liberty High School student Alexis Loyd, spoke to how even though she doesn’t care as much, she still found it as “Something I look forward to.” Not only that, but she went on to still be able to express opinions and wishes for The Game Awards. She spoke about their opinions on BotW, stating, “Every aspect encompasses what it’s looking for,” and that BotW is an amazing example for Game of the Year due to its great visuals and soundtrack. In a more in-between perspective, Nathaniel Zavala, yet another Liberty student, spoke to how 2018 winner *God of*

War appeals to a mass audience. They called it, “One of the most breathtaking stories,” and calling the *Dark-Souls* influenced game a cinematic masterpiece. Nathaniel even went on to practically shout, “It’s peak... It’s peak!” Each of these students was also able to speak of a game that deeply impacted them that they wished would have won GotY. Ellis described how *Bloodborne* would have made for an incredible winner due to its unique and creative takes on the souls like genre. He also went on to voice his opinion on what the most important thing in a game is to him: “That’s the most important thing, that it has dedication and love put into it.”

Other students spoke about games that came out before The Game Awards even existed, such as Zavala speaking on how *Batman Arkham Knight* “Did it better before Spider-Man,” and how it, “Paved the way for good superhero games.” Ultimately, video games are an experience. A full, well-rounded, experience can leave anyone walking away from the game fondly. Game of the Year isn’t just celebrating a good game, or uplifting a development team, it’s leaving a legacy of experiences behind for imaginative people to look back on or reflect upon.



The winner of Game of the Year 2024, announced on December 12, was *Astro Bot*. Also at The Game Awards 2024, *Astro Bot* won Best Game Direction, Best Action/Adventure, and Best Family Game.

Liberty Club Corner:

Math + Club = Six Flags, Pi Day, and much more

By Ian Smyth
Staff Writer

Clubs at Liberty High School are unique, as they’re formed by students who come together because of their shared interests, with the Math Club being one such example.

The Math Club, whose club advisor is Mrs. Gross, gives students the opportunity come together over their love of math, to test their math skills, and to provide help with homework, although students could also go to Math Help on Tuesdays and Thursdays before and/or after school.

The club celebrates Pi Day every year

by playing games and participating in fun activities related to Pi. Another event hosted by the Math Club every fall is the American Mathematics Competition. In this event, students test their math skills in a competition against other students.

The club also participates in fundraisers, such as the quarterly Food Faire,

for their annual Six Flags field trip. The goal for the fundraising is to build a sense of community here on campus. Each year, the goals and ambitions of the Math Club are different as new class officers take the club in fresh directions. The club officers come together to share ideas, shaping the club into what they want it to look like.



Need more information on the Math Club? Reach out to their President, Maddie Huxley, or send them a message on Instagram @lhs_mathclub.

Photo courtesy of @lhs_mathclub

April 1, 2025

Teen \$ports betting

The high-stakes risk hiding in plain sight



Photo by Jorge Juarez

Two teens stand in the middle of a quiet suburban street, eyes locked on their phones as they scroll through sports betting apps. What looks like a casual moment with technology is actually part of a growing trend, minors getting involved in online gambling.

By Jorge Juarez
Staff Writer

Everyone dreams of becoming rich, yet the path to it is often difficult. However, recently teenagers have been led to believe that online sports-betting is a quick, one way ticket to fulfilling this dream.

With the rise in popularity of sports betting, exposure has bloomed through advertisement and easy access from mobile apps, leaving the temptation for teenagers to engage and develop harmful habits in the palm of their hand.

As a result, there has been a large uptick in teenage fans quickly seeking loopholes around the law, to join in on the money gambling “fun”. The problem within teenage gambling is not the affect on their money and possible debt to come, but the psychological aspect. “One survey from the University of

Minnesota, by Dr. Ken Winters, indicated that youth are at four times the risk of adults for developing pathological (compulsive) gambling: 6% of the teens who have tried gambling develop the most severe form of gambling addiction (pathological gambling), compared to about 1.5% of adults.” This heightened risk means that teenage gamblers are more likely to develop ill-advised tendencies that can impact their decision-making, emotional regulation, and overall mental health.

The thrill of gambling can develop a cycle of chasing losses and seeking rewards, leading to long-term struggles deriving from addiction. Due to an undeveloped brain, teenagers are left extremely vulnerable to making bad thrill-induced decisions. In light of this, Liberty Basketball Coach, and Athletic Director John Heinz, knows that within Liberty he has not had to address large issues among students,

yet he does, “know it happens but I think it’s more with the +21 year olds, especially the +18 year olds... and so once you get to that age where you can really go to a casino, that’s when I think it gets even worse, it’s just so much more accessible.” Coach Heinz acknowledges that while underage gambling might not be a widespread issue within Liberty High School, it is still present, especially among older teenagers namely college students.

His statement highlights a key concern: as students approach legal gambling age, the accessibility of casinos and online betting platforms makes it easier for risky behaviors to escalate. This suggests that while younger students may experiment with sports betting through loopholes, the real danger comes when they reach an age where gambling is fully legal and even more enticing.

In the (mosh) pit, we fall: How metal music provides teens with a soundtrack for struggles and a community of hope

By Ashton Goelz
Staff Writer

Visualize this: a teenager, one full of angst and lost hope, suddenly discovers a form of music that, unlike other genres, addresses mental health and political topics. It’s a form of poetry written by loud guitarists and fast-pounding drummers, providing a medium that relates to him and makes him feel seen without resorting to self-destructive behavior. This is metal music often viewed as controversial or misunderstood, but it offers more than just noise—it offers solace, understanding, and a sense of belonging. As with anything new or different, panic often follows. The “satanic panic” of the 80s was filled with myths based on religious ideologies or pure prejudice towards metal listeners. Even in today’s world, other musical genres like rap face similar opposi-

tion, with older generations often resisting shifts in musical trends.

But despite such misunderstandings, research suggests that metal music can have significant benefits, especially for teenagers struggling with their emotions. Scientific studies have shown that listening to metal music can help alleviate symptoms of depression and stress. According to *Frontiers in Psychology*, “research on music and emotion supports the function of music to convey and elicit strong emotion.” For many metal listeners, this connection to the music allows them to process their feelings in a healthy way, offering an outlet to express emotions that might otherwise go unaddressed. Often, metal listeners bond over shared interests and find an outlet for feeling seen. Studies also show that when teenagers are sad, they seek out music that relates to their issues, allowing them to form a personal connection

with the music. Metal fans, in particular, have developed a unique bond. As sophomore Victor Zuniga states, “Everyone has an appreciation for the same thing we like. The metal community is overall accepting and non-judgmental.” This sense of belonging within the community can be deeply powerful, offering emotional support and a shared understanding that may

be missing in other areas of their lives. Popular metal bands among teenagers include Slipknot, Deftones, System of a Down, Korn, Pantera, and Linkin Park. These bands tackle topics that people can immediately connect with—whether it’s issues like suicide, heartbreak, or personal struggle. Teenagers often use these lyrics as coping mechanisms during difficult times. Metal music helps

them navigate complex emotions and provides a safe space for expressing feelings of alienation or frustration. When talking with sophomore Sawyer Bevell about the importance of lyrics, he passionately highlighted a song by Slipknot: “Left Behind,” saying, “It’s about being alone and fighting for yourself when no one else will help you.” For him and many others, metal music isn’t just about the sound—it’s about the message. It’s about feeling understood when the world feels overwhelming. While metal music may be viewed by some as an intimidating or misunderstood genre, for many teenagers, it offers much more than loud guitars and fast drums. It provides a medium through which they can connect with their emotions, their peers, and themselves, allowing them to navigate the challenges of adolescence with a sense of empowerment and community.



Photo by Ashton Goelz

After listening to Linkin Park, LHS student Sawyer Bevell jumps in the rain. Bevell usually hangs out at lunch in an area where kids bring a speaker and play metal music.

“The metal community is overall accepting and non-judgmental”

-Sophomore Victor Zuniga

Are these bubbles bad for the body? A look at probiotic and prebiotic sodas

By Mia Castillo
Staff Writer

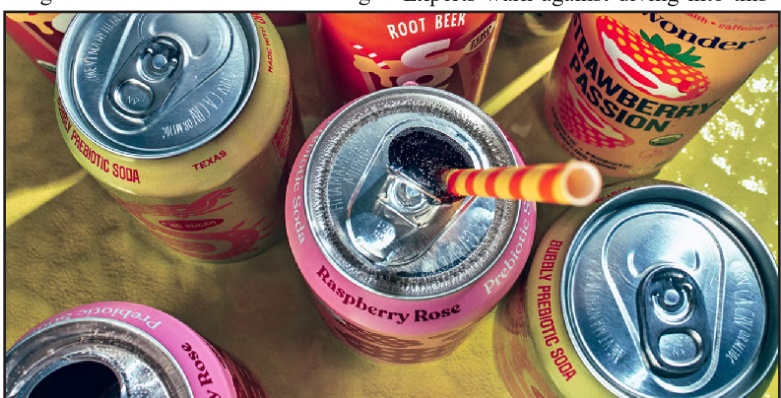
Recently, there has been a rise in the popularity of probiotic and prebiotic sodas. These trendy drinks, marketed as gut-health and immune-boosting

options, may hold more secrets than anticipated. While advertised as healthier alternatives to sugary sodas, they may not be as beneficial as they seem, hiding potential downsides that consumers should be aware of. Experts warn against diving into this

trend too quickly. “There is a lot of talk around prebiotic sodas, and while they are healthier than regular sodas, it’s important to keep in mind that they are not the end-all, be-all of gut health drinks,” says Amanda Saucedo, M.S., R.D., founder of the Mindful Gut. Before deciding to indulge, it’s worth considering that while these drinks may provide some gut benefits, they can still contain added sugars and other ingredients that are not the healthiest for the body. For those already addicted to these drinks, it’s important to know that they could potentially cause more harm than good. “VIP Smiles Family Dentistry outlines how traditional sodas can be bad for teeth due to acidic content and sugars, which can soften enamel—the protective outer layer of teeth that prevents cavities. Enamel doesn’t grow back, so it’s important to protect it.”

If maintaining healthy teeth is a priority, it might be best to reconsider frequent consumption of these beverages. Another important factor to consider is the sugar content. These drinks often boast “low sugar” claims, but even with less sugar than a traditional soda, they still contain significant amounts that may not be ideal for overall health. The amount of sugar in these drinks can also disrupt gut health. “Research shows that consuming sugar can cause dysbiosis and harm the protective gut barrier, destroying gut health. Dietary sugar—no matter the source—feeds pathogens and encourages their growth and overgrowth.” If maintaining optimal gut health is a goal, it may be wise to avoid falling into this trend. Lastly, carbonation itself can disrupt the gut and digestive system. Although many of these drinks advertise gut

health benefits, carbonation may have the opposite effect. This is not unique to probiotic or prebiotic sodas; any carbonated beverage can trigger digestive issues. “Consuming carbonated beverages like soda can cause gas, belching, and bloating. Research shows that carbonation can trigger IBS symptoms. It also appears to increase symptoms and the incidence of GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). One study found that carbonated beverages caused dyspepsia symptoms such as stomach pain, acid reflux, and heartburn in 86.7% of subjects.” For those who enjoy these drinks frequently, it may be time to rethink consumption. Ultimately, it is crucial to conduct thorough research before adopting any new trends or products, as not everything is as beneficial as it appears.



Brands like Poppi and Olipop claim that they “support digestive health” on the can. These sodas sell for approximately \$2.00 each.

April 1, 2025

The sleep deprivation of many student athletes: Struggling to balance training, academics, and health

Free apps that help support healthy sleep habits:

- Pillow
- Calm
- Headspace



Photo by Sophia Cantin

Madison Phillips, a member of the Liberty JV cheer team, takes a break to rest after a day of practice and schoolwork.

By *Sophia Cantin*
Staff Writer

With demanding training schedules, academic pressures, extracurricular activities, and personal lives, many people are left questioning the amount of sleep student athletes are getting, and how chaotic their sleep schedules are.

According to sleepfoundation.org, “Our guidelines state that teens (ages 13-18 years) should be getting between 8 and 10 hours of sleep every night.”

Lack of sleep can lead to an overall unstable lifestyle, poor mental health, and inability to maintain relationships. Along with that, it can lead to seizures, depression, high blood pressure, and migraines. According

to hopkinsresearch.org, there are four stages of the sleep cycle. The first stage is drowsiness, which is the difference between being asleep and being awake. There is then light sleep, where breathing and heart rate regulate, and temperature drops. The third stage is the deepest, called non-REM sleep. Lastly, the fourth and final stage, REM sleep, is where dreams occur. Research has shown that it is essential that students between the ages of 13-18 years old receive between 8 and 10 hours of sleep at night. Student athletes need these hours in order to recuperate so that they can perform to the best of their abilities.

Liberty soccer player, Alyssa Perreira says, “I get about 4-6 hours of sleep every night, I’m always so tired during classes and when I have to wake up the next morning.”

Perreira explains how negatively she is impacted by her sleep schedule, and how little energy she has throughout the day, even struggling to get out of bed at times.

Lack of sleep can result in poor mental health, risk for illness, and impulsiveness. It is difficult for student athletes to maintain balance without the necessary amount of sleep, and this can be extremely dangerous.

Student athletes can improve their sleep schedules simply by implementing more productive routines for sleep. Simple changes, such as avoiding caffeine, reserving the bed for sleep only, as well as the bedroom for relaxation alone, and getting plenty of sunlight and minimizing screen time can make all the difference in adjusting to a healthier sleep schedule.

Kids having kids

The rise in the rate of teen pregnancy and what can be done about it

By *Mia Regalado*
Staff Writer

Positive test scores, but we’re not talking about history or algebra tests have swept the nation and high schools across America, like Liberty. We are looking at another possible baby boom in America. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, teen pregnancy rates have spiked, due to the lack of sexual education, contraceptive use, health knowledge, lack of knowledge of the dangers of young pregnancy, and overall care.

According to UNICEF, “Globally in 2023, an estimated 13 percent of adolescent girls and young women give birth before age 18”.

The decline of sexual education knowledge has caused the decline of contraceptives being used and teens specifically relying on what is known as the “pull out method” or using ‘Plan B’ as a regular contraceptive or as birth control. Not only do many teens not think of the financial burden of raising a child so young but, also the physical burden. The female body can fully de-

velop around the age 15 through 17 but there are young girls childbearing much younger, not knowing the harm they can cause to not only their bodies but the baby as well. Pregnancy during the adolescent stage of life can not only cause long term medical problems but can result in death as well.

“Adolescent girls, especially those in early adolescence, are particularly vulnerable to the health consequences of pregnancy and delivery as their bodies may not be physically ready” (UNICEF data).

Teen pregnancy has had a big spike due to the lack of use of contraceptives along with the normalization of having multiple partners due to social media culture. It is believed that social media being its own ‘culture’ in itself has influenced and romanticized the idea of being a young mother because ‘no one wants to be old while their child is young.’

“With an influx of teens using social media, pregnancy rates have started to increase once again” (Buffalo State).

Through young teen mom influencers, and shows depicting the ‘realities’ of childbearing at a young age, some young girls have been drawn into the false reality that being a young mother is all sunshine and rainbows without realizing

all the sacrifices they’d have to make along the road.

“Nearly one-third of teen girls who have dropped out of high school cite early pregnancy or parenthood as a key reason” (Colorin Colorado).

While teen pregnancy comes with sacrifices and shifts of priorities, nearly 70% of teen moms drop out of high school due to lack of support, judgment, and simply just because it becomes too difficult to carry on with studies while pregnant.

According to PPI Radically Pragmatic, “Just 38 percent of teen girls who have a child before they turn 18 have a high school diploma. For these teens, the task of balancing their education and a baby proved impossible”

Not only is the rate low for teen moms who obtain their high school diploma but it’s also incredibly low for them to obtain any sort of college degree in their future, and those who do earn their Associates Degree around the age of 30. Many see teen pregnancy being the #1 reason why young girls drop out of high school and end their school careers as an alarming wake up call for America to better educate and advocate for self success.

Feminine hygiene products: necessity or poison?



Photo by Jasmine Morales

A wide variety of feminine hygiene products line the shelves, each promising health benefits, but not all are backed by scientific evidence. Consumers may unknowingly face risks from chemicals and additives in these commonly used items.

By *Jasmine Morales*
Staff Writer

Buying feminine hygiene products might seem like a simple task, but there are hidden dangers that could pose serious risks to physical well-being, or even life, when using certain items.

Many individuals turn to products like vitamins or herbs in an attempt to regulate vaginal health. These products often claim to balance pH levels, reduce odor, and prevent infections. However, the effectiveness of these claims is questionable. Dr. Mary Marnach from Mayo Clinic points out, “Many of the products available have no scientific research behind them to prove that they are effective,” and adds, “They may actually be harmful.”

Numerous feminine care products can trigger severe reactions due to the chemicals used in their formulation. Products like deodorants, vaginal washes, and antibiotics have been linked to issues such as bacterial or yeast infections,

painful rashes, hormone disruption, and an increased risk of breast cancer. Dr. Marnach further suggests that maintaining a healthy diet, including plant-based foods and lean meats, along with proper self-care, might be the most beneficial approach to preserving gynecological and reproductive health.

Moreover, many menstrual products contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals that can lead to serious health issues. Some of these substances have been associated with vaginal ulcers and toxic shock syndrome, a rare but potentially fatal condition that can result in organ failure. Unfortunately, manufacturers of menstrual products are not required to disclose the contents of their products, leaving consumers unaware of the potential risks. Professor Stephanie McClur highlights that the lack of regulation allows these manufacturers to evade accountability, as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) “does not mandate regular testing.”

The Bay Area NBA All-Star Weekend experience: A weekend to remember in San Francisco

By *Jorge Juarez*
Staff Writer

Stephen Curry has owned All-Star weekend before, but this time, he made sure the spotlight followed him all the way home.

The Golden State Warriors have only hosted the NBA All-Star Game one time, however that took place in the Oracle arena in Oakland. The Warriors relocated to the Chase Center, in San Francisco in 2019 but their first season in the NBA was cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With the NBA back in full motion in a post-Covid era, the Golden State Warriors are looking for an interesting finish for the season, setting their sights for the NBA Playoffs. Nevertheless, this year’s All-Star events took place in 11-time All-Star Stephen Curry’s home court. While the All-Star game has long been a showcase for the league’s top talent, recent changes in an attempt to boost viewership have sparked debate. Some players are frustrated with the inclusion of non-All-Stars

on the main stage, questioning whether it dilutes the prestige of the event. Local Golden State Warriors legend, and four time All-Star Draymond Green voiced his strong disapproval for the inclusion of, “Some team that no one wants to see. I had to work so hard to play on Sunday night of All-Star weekend. And because ratings are down, because the games bad, we’re bringing in Rising Stars? That’s not a fix... And these guys get to touch the All-Star floor? On Sunday night? When the floor is the floor... When All-Stars are on the court now it’s the All-Star court. Those guys did not make the All-Star team. To be playing in the All-Star game, and you did not make the All-Star team, it’s absurd.” While many people agree with this point, the bright side of All-Star weekend is not only highlighted through Sunday night. All-Star Saturday night has always been the most popular day throughout the leagues All-Star history, in large part due to the Dunk Contest.

This year, Mac McClung of the Orlando Magic made sure to not disappoint with thrilling and uber creative dunks. His creativity led him to a path of four per-

fect scores, and the first ever three peat dunk contest champion. Throughout the three events in the night, the Warriors attempted to bring home a win for their city in both the NBA Skills Challenge and Three Point Contest. For the Skills Challenge the event was indeed entertaining for former Warrior Chris Paul and generational talent Victor Wembanyama got disqualified for using loopholes within the rules. This led to the Golden State Warriors Draymond Green and Moses Moody coming in second to the Cleveland Cavaliers’ Evan Mobley and Donovan Mitchell. Later in the night, recent Warriors acquisition Buddy Hield fell one point shy of a win to Tyler Herro in the Three Point Contest. But in typical fashion superstar Stephen Curry pulled through with the greatest honor of all in bringing home his second All-Star Game MVP which he found to be, “Special, this is kind of very symbolic of my entire journey out here... This is a special place to play basketball in front of some amazing fans... and to shine a light on the Bay-Area all weekend. There’s no better way to



Photo courtesy of NBA All-Star Instagram account

Stephen Curry releases a half court shot on the bright All-Star court, surrounded by defenders watching helplessly. What looks like just another deep shot, is actually part of his performance that led him to his second All-Star MVP honor.

end the night and have a lot of fun.” In the same interview to Curry, teammate Draymond Green expressed his excitement, telling Curry he couldn’t wait to see him bring home another championship. While winning it all may seem like

a tall task for the Warriors, many fans share Draymonds confidence. Regardless of how the season unfolds, one thing is certain, the All-Star events, if not considered entertaining, were certainly eventful.

April 1, 2025

Adam and Eve and Darwin Creationism and Evolution should both be taught in public school

By Nathan Afolabi
Staff Writer

How did mankind get to where we are today? The theory of evolution, which is supported by significant evidence, explains life through natural processes and is widely accepted in the scientific community. The theory of creationism, based on religious contents, stated that life was created by a divine being but is not considered a scientific concept. The main question is whether science and religion can live together and both be taught in a school setting.

Some may say that creationism does not qualify as science and is not based on observational evidence of nature, but rather on belief. Consequently, one belongs in a science classroom, while the other does not.

Kristina Kohler a living Earth teacher said, "Regardless of the religion in question, teaching creationism in a public school would violate the First Amendment since it is a biased belief that might establish or encourage a re-

ligious viewpoint".

Additionally, Chemistry teacher Corey Spainhower said, "Teaching creationism violates separation of church and state, it is specific to one religion, not all religions."

According to Pewresearch.org, the United States finally brought a ban to creationism in 1987 in public schools.

When asked about evolution being taught in schools, science teacher Sarah Diaz said, "Being that there is tangible, scientific evidence to support this phenomenon, I think it is important to learn so that students have an idea of how scientists study the past to learn its patterns, understand the circumstances around biological changes, and use that to help make current and future decisions such as conservation efforts to help mitigate climate change, habitat disruption, and the loss of biodiversity." Conversely, when asked whether evolution and creation should be taught in public schools, Golden Hills Community Church high school pastor Cyrus Waters said yes, because he believes that "God created

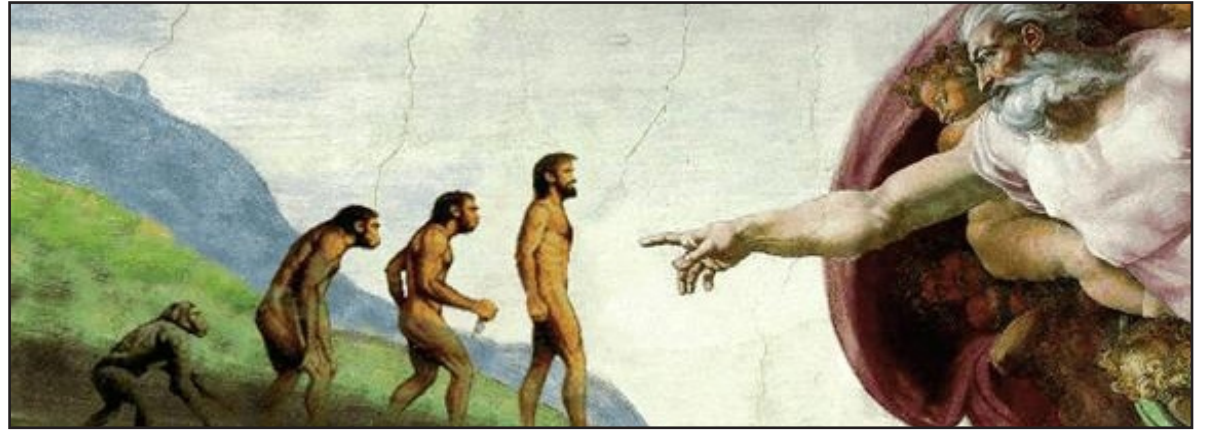


Photo courtesy of Felipe Ligeiro and Elon University

In many cases, those devoted to Christian or Catholic faiths advocate for evolution and it being taught in all levels of education.

everything." And when asked whether teaching creationism in schools violates amendment rights he said "No, because if evolution is taught it should be a violation of my rights".

Although creationism might not be able to be taught as a science, it can be taught as religion class. According to Blue Marble Space Institution of Science, philosopher Daniel Dennett proposes requiring all children to take

a world religions class at a young age, in which they are taught the facts of all major world religions. This will help students to be well informed as they develop and function well in a diverse society.

On the whole, schools do not need to teach creationism in a science class. However, they can teach it in a religion or philosophy classes where students can learn about Christianity as well as

other religions. Additionally, they can have discussions about the culture behind the religion and the history of it and can have debates on certain school appropriate topics.

Clearly, teaching both evolution and creation in schools can give students diverse perspectives on the origin of life, increasing critical thinking and allowing them to form their own views from scientific and religious points.

Wingstop walked so Wing Bros could run

Lion's Cafe:

A review of Wing Bros

By Addysan Ambrus
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of Wing Bros

Wing Bros is conveniently located at 8610 Brentwood Blvd.

After an amazing meal at Wing Bros, it may be the place for my new weekly meal.

Wing Bros not only had amazing service but was very clean overall. The atmosphere of the entire restaurant was incredibly inviting. When ordering, they take your order, and after paying you find a seat. This is similar to restaurants like The Habit and Wingstop, when entering you first go up to the clerk to order and then seat yourself. This style of restaurant is very relaxing as you are not plagued with the pressure of being greeted by a waiter. Despite the comforting environment, the seating is less than optimal. Metal chairs and stools scatter the restaurant,

most had minimal back support and all of them were cold to the touch.

However, not only do they bring your food to you, but the pricing is affordable. For ten dollars I was able to get six wings, paired with two carrots and two celery sticks with a dipping sauce on the side. At Wing Bros, ranch is a very popular sauce. Despite its popularity, the ranch they provided was good but it doesn't beat the Wingstop ranch. Additionally, the fries were delicious; they were crunchy, battered, and perfectly salted.

Overall, the food was great, and I highly recommend it if anyone wants wings. Compared to Wingstop it's more affordable and has similar tastes, however the ranch at Wingstop is too good to beat. Wing Bros, in its entirety, is a great option for everybody in the mood for some delicious, traditional wings.



Photo by Toby Bartling

In the US, the average high school class period is between 45-60 minutes long. However, students on this schedule also report exhaustion and fatigue.

Ninety-minute class periods are too long for high school students

By Yurithzi Lopez
Staff Writer

There are many reasons why classes should be shortened in schools. Shorter classes keep students engaged and focused, making learning more effective and less exhausting.

Shorter classes can help students concentrate better because longer periods can lead to boredom or zoning out too much. Also, if classes were shorter, there would be better engagement between the teachers and students when learning. A shorter period will also help students focus more on class since so much is going on when a period is long. Students also get overwhelmed by all the information they have to take in.

For example, in math class students may struggle if a class is very long because over time in the class, they might

get frustrated or stressed out. Also, in PE class shorter periods would be better because if PE classes are too long, students will be overly exhausted for their next few periods.

When having a shorter class, it would provide more time for a student to study or review things after school. Karamjot Sandhu stated, "I think classes should be shorter because I think it's a little unnecessary to be sitting in a class for almost 2 hours." Also, when a student has extracurricular activities after school it would be better if they had more time to do them. Another reason why having short classes is beneficial is because if all the classes were long, by the end of the day students would be exhausted from everything they had to learn.

Karamjot also commented, "Half the time what we do and talk about in class only takes up to an hour."

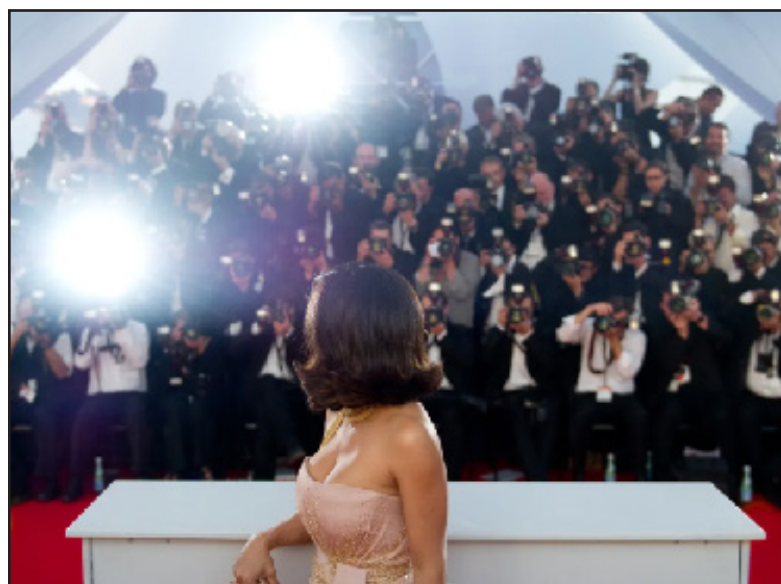


Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Celebrities are constantly surrounded by paparazzi and adoring fans begging for pictures. This can cause a loss of integrity in the person as they're constantly performing.

Glorifying celebrities goes beyond admiration

By Hallie Munoz
Staff Writer

Glorification affects more than just celebrities' lives. I'm sure there is a person out there who is currently scrolling through their favorite social media platform finding a photo or video of a person and starting to compare themselves to them due to the number of likes, views, or comments the post gets. But the glorification is dangerous in other ways, too.

The glorification of celebrities has been happening since before social media came into picture. According to Oxford Dictionary the definition of glorification is, "The action of describing or representing something as admirable, especially unjustifiably". This is what people have been doing for decades. Admiring people and not being

able to justify why.

Other people may argue that it's healthy to look up to someone and believe in that person. They may feel that way because they had once looked up to someone and wanted to be them. Or they may think that it would be no harm to anybody to glorify a celebrity. In my opinion, it's unhealthy to glorify someone who we don't fully know. Someone may think they "know" the person they are basically worshipping, but they don't. This is dangerous not only to the fans who are glorifying the celebrities, but also to the celebrities themselves. It can harm the celebrity's families and loved ones if a person becomes too obsessed with said celebrity. But there is reason behind the glorifica-

tion of celebrities.

Dr. Paul Harrison believes our obsession and interest in celebrities is driven by our "human instinct to 'follow' or 'look up to' an authority figure." He also stated humans are constantly in need of someone or something to "improve" our lives.

Whether its fashion ideas from *Vogue*, to the type of personality that we wish we had from our favorite celebrity, I am in no way saying that it's wrong for us to look up to people. I'm just saying that we shouldn't let them dictate how we feel or act. It's wrong for someone to begin glorifying a celebrity and have it slowly become an obsession that could not only harm themselves but also the person they are obsessing over.

April 1, 2025

Less isn't always more: The recent trend of overconsumption

By Mia Torres
Copy Editor

In a world where many feel that following trends is the only way to ensure one stays on top, overconsumption has become widely normalized. Switching to a different perspective, however, people don't really question why it's bad or why they continue to follow the trends of having way too many of a single product.

Overconsumption has tripled since the 1970's, according to an article from Friends Of The Earth. More than ever, overconsuming products has been rising rapidly due to social media trends, influencers and celebrities persuading the movement, and capitalism worldwide. Overconsumption became heavily normalized on TikTok, the home of microtrends. Many of the trends often seen on social media apps are also the main reason why people spend so much on products. Some of products that are most referenced to overconsumption are Stanley cups, makeup products, and plastic storage containers.



Photo by Mia Torres

Overconsuming products has been popularized with the new passing trends on social media over the last few years. Studies show that goods such as shoes, paper, and many every day items are part of the overconsumption trend.

As a result, when creators or celebrities promote certain products, most of the time they're sponsored by the brand. This gives them a reason to show it off to their platform, despite them not really even needing the said product. Following another reason as to why over-

consumption is so normalized is due to the relation of success and happiness meaning having many of one product. Many relate to the idea that because someone has so much, their wants and desires are fulfilled because one has the privilege of being able to afford it.

In contrast, people like overconsuming products because it makes their lives easier, more organized, and it fits well with the aesthetics of ongoing trends. Much of the time, when consumers buy products it's because the purpose of the product is helpful, and it makes things

easier. Additionally, consumers help balance out the economy. As businesses produce more goods, the consumers buy more, and it creates stability. Conversely, while consuming products has its benefits, it doesn't help when it gets to the point of buying them simply because it's advertised so much or simply because everyone else has it. It comes to a point where it's evident that whatever people are consuming just doesn't have a good purpose. Having one product that will last a while and is also good for the environment is a good way to buy a product. Buying 20 versions of it in different colors, however, is simply wasteful and defeats the whole purpose of its creation. Consuming a product of any kind isn't entirely bad. Consuming a product has many benefits and can of course make anyone's life easy. However, overconsuming a product simply because of a trend that'll be forgotten about after a month won't help anyone, much less its intended purpose. One should take into consideration whether the product will be useful or if it will be hidden or tossed away after the hype for it has faded.

Stop, drop, and post Online trash-talk is out of control

By Abby Thomas
Copy Editor

Your phone lights up with notification after notification. The bright light hoped to serve as a distraction from a stressful week of horrible events, instead shows the horrors of mocking and glorifying posts of the news as they plagued your phones screen, blinding you from reality.

On January 7, 2025, the news blared with reports of a fire starting in the city of Los Angeles. That one fire slowly grew to seven more fires that have destroyed at least 40,000 acres, taken 29 lives, and has been listed as the most destructive fire in California's history. Families had to leave behind all they knew, farmers leaving behind animals they could not evacuate, Fire stations from Oregon and Texas as well as many other states came to aid in the fight. All of this was stressful, even for those who didn't live in LA as social media

posts arrived on different social media platforms. Many people posted videos of their homes and the fires, trying to inform people of their situation as well as others, but some people took this as an opportunity to show a sinister side of our world. People posted hate posts towards the victims whether those who posted 'get ready with me to evacuate the fire,' or to celebrities posting photos of them packing unnecessary belongings or of their homes after the fire's. These comments were hateful, some saying these people deserved it, others blaming the government, and most taking matters into their own hands and creating smaller spot fires within the LA area. Many will take this matter and say that the people being so hateful towards the people who have lost their whole lives are just uniformed people who believe everything they see on the internet is true. I am sure they feel this way as it is the standard way to think, that everyone follows 'clickbait' and will thrive off this.

Through testing, it has been prov-

en, and what I believe is true, is that people post such hatred and lies as a coping mechanism or a way to have some form of control over the situation. Psychologists and Neurologists have tested this activity for years, the brain even has what they call, the hate circuit. The hate circuit is what allows us as humans to feel hatred towards people or things, it is also the reason people act the way they do. It's like a remote control. One second its flipping through different channels of essentially boredom till it finds one that is most interesting, when it finds that channel it latches onto it and creates as its own hyper fixation, when it does that it makes it so that person has control over the volume of the channel and when its paused or re-winded. It gives her person a sense of happiness knowing that they can control what's happening, that nothing can go wrong. Perhaps people who struggle with this could find ways of controlling it by using grounding techniques, a way to bring oneself back to reality and understand that you have no control over the things around them. I am sure it could help others by just talking, sharing how you feel maybe on the internet in an anonymous post about the way that person feels, it could help them meet others who also have this need for control, and they can all help each other with ways of coping.

People use the media as a platform of control, one post that belongs to one person means that they have control over what people say about it, how people feel about it, and how it is perceived, making them feel as if whatever stressful situation is occurring around them will go away and everything will be just fine.



Photo by Tapagana Lewis
4-H member Reagan Powell, holds her lamb, Arnold, during a lamb meeting. This was the first 4-H meeting during which showmanship was practiced.

The benefits of Youth in agriculture

By Tapagana Lewis
Staff Writer

The gavel taps three times, and a loud voice echos through the room, "please take your seats, the meeting is about to begin." This is a scene one might see at a Knightsen 4-H agriculture meeting. being exposed to agriculture at a young age has many benefits, it provides life skills, creates friendships and scholarship opportunities and even offers the experience to work with others improve confidence and critical thinking. According to experts there are many benefits to consider when analyzing the effects of agriculture's influence on youth development, having the life skills to raise livestock and work a farm can improve one's overall quality of life, along with the community surrounding them. The long-term positive effects on a community with youth groups impacts the health, education, and economic standing of adults within the community, according to Biomed Central. Typically, these groups present youth with the opportunity to find their passion and build experience and self-reliance. 4-H is the largest youth development program that focuses on building up young leaders and building community through well rounded edu-

cational programs.

In one interview with county ambassador Eliot Shindo, "I credit most of my growth in leadership to 4-H, particularly in the areas of public speaking and leading meetings, both of which I have improved a lot." It is obvious that programs like 4-H are valuable and irreplaceable in our society.

Elliot goes on to say, "participation in 4-H has helped me break out of my shell and provided me with valuable skills and lessons that I continue to use every day."

The opportunities that these organizations present for friendship and experience are almost overshadowed by the scholarship opportunities they present for students of agriculture. 4-H is like no other organization.

"I think organizations like 4-H offer something for everyone, and above all, they serve a purpose of building beautiful communities full of amazing people." Eliot Shindo says when asked about what he thought the value of these programs is. These programs effectively shape and connect youth to each other and provide them with the skills and opportunities that will continue to help them in life even after they age out.

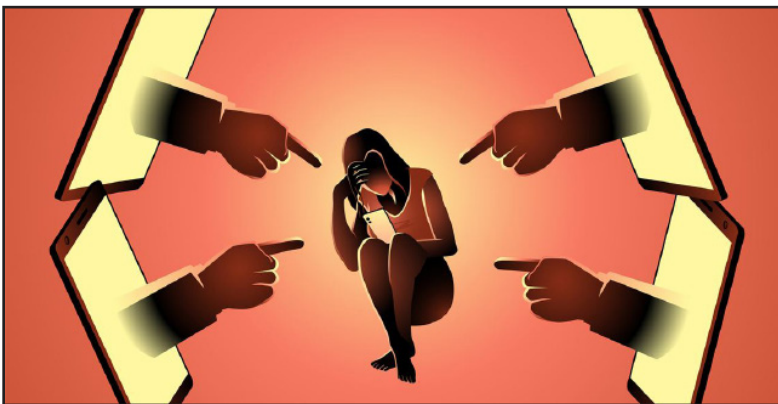


Photo courtesy of Getty Images

More people post negative information than positive, helpful information and it can be a heavy burden. This misinformation is actually a form of coping for those who need to feel as if they are in control.

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