



# El Rodeo



El Rancho High School

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## Freshmen TEAM Goes Back in Time to 1930



BY SOPHIA DUNCAN  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Last Thursday, Mrs. Lamar, with the help of Mrs. Mata and Mr. Rojo hosted an after school Southern potluck with all of the Maycomb residents of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The 1930's era, south-inspired potluck proved to be a fun, creative way to celebrate the completion of the book as well as an easy grade and break for the hardworking freshman English TEAM students.

The first half hour was devoted to getting the food set up and on student's plates while the other hour and a half was spent watching the movie version of the novel. The idea, thought-up by Mrs. Lamar with the help of a web site, was put into action for the first time this year, but she and Mata plan to keep it an annual tradition.

"I hope to help them learn about other cultures through enjoying food," said Lamar.

After the class finished *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the students in Lamar and Mata's English TEAM class received a purple invite to a "tea" hosted by Lamar, dressed as Miss Alexandra. Each student selected the character from the novel they were most familiar with to assume the identity of and write an analysis on. The analysis, worth half of the total points, describes everything about the character, from family life to attitudes towards other people and events. In addition to bringing themselves, the analysis, and a Southern dish to share, the students were required to wear at least one article of clothing that represented the chosen character. Extra points were received for dressing head to toe or bringing in an object prop to suit their characters.

"We want them to learn about the characters and imitate and understand what they felt... This is basically the grand finale," said Mata.

To most, the novel can only "get" you emotionally the first time reading it, but Lamar was amazed to find that's not always true.

"I was with the class, reading through it and I was surprised I started crying! That was like my fifth time running through this!" she said.

## Dons Uncertain How CAHSEE Will Impact Commencement

BY THOMAS MEDINA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Once again the threat of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) looms in the face of El Rancho students again. The seniors who have not passed the CAHSEE now have only two chances to pass the exam or they will not be able to pass the exam.

However, since the Class of 2006 is the very first graduating class that must pass the California exit exam in order to graduate, very many questions have yet to be addressed. Will the students be able to walk, even if they don't graduate? Are they considered a drop out or are they given a certificate of completion, but not graduation? Should students in Special Education classes be exempt from this exam? None of these questions will be answered until December 2<sup>nd</sup> when the representatives from the schools in Los Angeles County will attend a meeting where questions such as these will be answered.

"We are doing every conceivable thing we can in order to get these students to pass the exit exam," said Assistant Principal of Curriculum Pricilla Linares. "Rather than just have the CAHSEE intervention classes offered only in the first trimester, they are now offered all year long."

Within the next week, new information updates about the CAHSEE should be made available to the schools. The Legislature is expected to do some-



thing with the issue that Special Education students receive no concessions in this exam and must take it like everyone else.

But what about the end of the year activities? Prom, the Senior picnic and other such activities? Passing or failing the Exit Exam has no bearing on whether or not the student will be able to participate in these activities. "The only reason students who have not passed the exit exam will not be able to participate in the end of the year activities is for the normal reasons that they would not be able to participate," said Linares.

But how do the students feel about taking the exam? "I was very nervous, but I think I

did well this time," said a senior speaking on the condition of anonymity. "We worked very hard in the [CAHSEE intervention] class, so I should have passed this time. The teachers also put a lot of effort into helping us to learn the materials."

It takes about 10 weeks for students to receive the results of the exam and find out whether or not they passed the exam. Because of this, if students do not pass this exam and are required to take the next exam, must take the last two exams. They will not be able to find out whether or not they passed the second exam before they would have to take the third one.

On January 13, the students

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We all have things that we are thankful for so, what are *you* thankful for? **On Campus. Pg.6**

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"she opened her mouth to sing, but instead began to chant, *we are in love, we are in love...*" **Entertainment Pg. 7**

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Boys' Cross Country takes 5<sup>th</sup> title in a row. **Sports Pg.8**

who took the latest exam will find out if they passed or not.

"It was a great success because almost everyone who needed to take the exam showed up to take it," said Linares. "Getting the people to show up to take this exam is one of the hardest parts. We can prepare them as well as we can, but if they do not take the exam they can not pass it." Their last two chances to pass the California High School exit exam will be in February and March.

## El Rancho Dons Do It Once Again

BY TONY CHAVARIN  
EL RODEO STAFF

Another good run for the marching dons. This time the El Rancho Band competed at the Palma days Band Review. Competing against 30 different schools in the southern California area, the band placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the 4a division getting a score of 92.15, beating every school but four. As for drum major Jeanette Aldana, she also placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the mace division at the same time getting the highest score of all drum majors. "I got a 95.8 and my scores keep on getting higher and higher every time," says Aldana. Placing second in their 4A division was the color guard getting the score of 84.6. When asked if the band gave it their all, Aldana said, "Yes because they have been trying really hard. The bands next competition will be at the Bell over field tournament. As the instructor Mr. Diaz makes sure that every band member does their best, the band is determined to do even better in their performances for more tournaments to come.



Xylophone players prep for their big competition in Bellflower.



## Wish List

The Library Wish List on Amazon.com continues to be a great way to make a lasting contribution to our school. Donate a book by going to the Don page, clicking on Library and opening the Wish List. Library Angel Ms. Kiralla just bought three books for the library. *Why You Cryin'* (autobiography of comedian George Lopez), *Heaven is a Playground* (inner-city playground basketball life) and *O* (autobiography of singer Omari Grandberry). The ERHS Library is open from 7:30am - 4:00pm, including lunch.

**Bus Ride:  
\$5**

**Movie Tickets  
\$14.50**

**A Hot Date  
Priceless!**



BY THOMAS MEDINA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Everyone loves to go out, but it can get very expensive. So doing a bit of investigative reporting, El Rodeo's Advisor decided to find out if people could actually go out on a date with only twenty dollars. Well, I Thomas Medina, and my fellow El Rodeo layout editor Daniela Sanchez, involuntarily volunteered.

Since we had only \$20 we had to watch every dollar we spent. Seeing as how gas is up to about \$2.50 a gallon it was much more practical to take public transportation.

Well with only \$15 left we arrived about 5 blocks away from the movie theater.

Now, movie tickets have become quite expensive in the past few years. The average movie ticket price in California is among the highest in the entire country. The price of two tickets at the movies would have been about \$14.50 leaving only about fifty cents to get something to eat. Rather than pay such a high price to see a movie, we had to ummmm.... well use other methods to gain entry.

With only a few dollars left at this point we knew that buying food in the theater was not going to happen. Thank god women always walk around with bags; to sneak food in. We managed to save on the food expense by just going to a nearby supermarket and buying little snacks there.

After finally getting our seats we watched Saw II. It was a rather entertaining movie despite being exceptionally grotesque and gruesome.

Well by this time it was already late and time to go home. Since it was already about 11 o'clock and the buses weren't operating anymore the only available option was to call a friend to come pick us up. Overall, we discovered that it is possible to have a good time going out and spending only \$20. (Thank you Mr. Zeko for giving us the \$20.)

# Henderson's Hearty Advice for E.R Dons

BY VINCE MENDEZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Just in case you didn't receive enough health tips the first time around, here is some more advice from El Rancho's very own health teacher and kinesiologist (study of human movement), Brian Henderson.

Henderson says that, "there are a variety of strategies for the variety of goals".

For example, if you want to be like the wrestlers you watch on television, this article will not help you accomplish that, but on the other hand it will help you lose weight.

According to Henderson, many people don't know or misinterpret the use of the word "diet." He states, "people think the word diet means what you're going to stop eating when in fact it means the total opposite."

Henderson suggests that you can eat anything you want as long as it is in "moderation".

Instead of eating the entire bag of Oreos, just grab a couple and put the bag away. That is moderation.

When you eat and exercise keep in mind that your



Mr. Henderson, the guru of health and fitness, gives E.R Dons healthier alternatives to staying in shape and losing weight.

body uses all the carbohydrates as a primary source of energy.

"For the average person a healthy diet should consist of about 60% carbohydrates," says Henderson.

After that it looks for any fats stored in your body as a secondary source of energy, and last, but not least your body uses your muscles which have protein as a last resort for energy.

Henderson states that even though many people perceive thin people to be healthy,

they are sometimes as just as unhealthy as obese people.

Many thin people have fast metabolisms, but if they are eating junk food and relying on it for energy every day, they are causing damage to all their body parts especially their blood vessels.

If you're always having trouble knowing or simply wondering how many ounces of water you should be drinking a day Henderson offers you an easy to remember equation.

First take your body weight

and divide by two and whichever answer you get equals the ounces of water you should be drinking.

If you're an athlete you should obviously drink more since you are constantly losing body fluids.

Next comes the exercise part of Henderson's hearty advice. The shortest effect, but fastest way to lose weight is by doing nothing but cardiovascular exercises. This helps you lose weight fast because you're losing fluids, but it's not necessarily helping you burn fat.

Henderson recommends that you do push-ups or lift weights in order to increase your metabolism which will then help you burn fat. This helps you out in the long term.

Henderson also offers his services and advice to all of his students or anyone who needs help free of charge.

Whether or not you take this advice, remember not to rely on food as being your psychological friend.

Don't eat just because it makes you feel good; instead help yourself by making healthy lifestyle choices that will pay off in the long run.

## The Leo's Club Spreads Holiday Cheer

BY CARINA PADILLA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Leo's Club not only participates in community activities, but also shows compassion towards Pico's elderly. Last week, members of the club hand-made their own Thanksgiving cards for convalescent patients.

"We are making these cards for the old people of our community. I am sure that this will make their holiday happier," says senior Kristina Biado, president of the club. Members of Leo's Club are often involved in activities such as this one, showing that they care for the older generations of Pico Rivera.

Many of the elderly people who live in convalescent homes are lonely patients who are often ignored, even by their own families. However, many people, like students in the Leo's Club, are concerned about these abandoned people.

"I think that this is for a very good cause. It makes these people joyful and we are also letting them know that there are young people who care about them," says junior Danielle Duarte, a Leo member.

Mr. Vincent Chavez, member of the Board of Education and of the Lions Club [Pico Rivera's formal community service club] also participates in these activities. He always advises the club's meetings and proposes many of the activities of the club. Mr. Chavez even suggested that the students should "take the cards after school to the convalescent home on Mines." This kind deed will surely be appreciated by the elderly people.

If you want to cooperate with the Leo's club activities, feel free to come in during lunch on Wednesdays in room B-104.



Leo's club members show off their homemade thanksgiving cards.

## Ms. Katsumura, Cool Kat on Campus

BY MICHELLE GARCIA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

AP Biology teacher, Ms. Katsumura is young, adventurous, and full of life. She has a unique blend of nationalities within her family.

Her father is Japanese and her mother is a mixture of German, English, and Irish.

Katsumura's family recently celebrated their 200th year anniversary of migration from Japan to the United States. Her Japanese grandparents were placed in the infamous Internment Camps.

Her family celebrates many Japanese customs, "News Years is huge!" says Katsumura. "We also celebrate Boys and Girls day, it is a celebration that honors children," said Katsumura. On these days the young boys get all dress up and the girls display "all their porcelain dolls."

Katsumura is the oldest of her three siblings, "I live with my younger brother, It's fun, we don't kill each other!" unlike most siblings. "After he turned twenty-one we became best friends."

Katsumura attended Roamona Covent Secondary school; an all girls school. "It was a small school; it was nice. I got a very good education and I was a total nerd!" Katsumura admits.

"I was a smarty pants. I took all the hard classes and worked my butt off. I spent four hours each night on homework," and it certainly paid off she said.

Her counselors urged her to apply to some Ivy League universities but she had her



Ms. Katsumura savors her fifteen minutes of fame.

heart set on attending Cal State Long Beach because there "you can get your bachelors degree in Marine Biology."

"I love being by the ocean and near animals" says Katsumura. She received her Bachelors degree in Marine Biology and before she became a teacher she was a marine biologist scientist.

"I went out and sampled marine life of all kinds such as fish, worms, and plankton to see if our pollution affected the marine life."

Katsumura eventually began teaching. As a twenty-four year old teacher, "I can relate to you guys better. I have more energy; I'm not an old fart" jokingly says Katsumura.

She is definitely not your average teacher, on her free time she loves to snowboard, hike, ski, and rock climb. "I love the outdoors," says Katsumura.

She is one of the friendliest teachers on campus.

"I'm pretty much myself with everyone," says Katsumura which is why so many students love her!

# The Making of a Metrosexual

BY DANIELA SANCHEZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

It used to be girls who were the ones who woke up two hours before school began to at iron their hair, moisturize their faces, color coordinate their clothes and put on their make-up. Today, girls are not the only ones who do this. Guys seem to have gone from hard-core macho men to sensitive, Abercrombie-wearing "metrosexuals."

Ten years ago the question women would ask when they liked a guy was, "I wonder if he's single." That question seems to have transformed into, "I wonder if he's gay, straight, or bisexual." When guys are too pretty for women to be able to distinguish between gay or straight, there is a serious problem. Women don't like men who hog the mirror more than they do and women hate it when their boyfriend looks prettier than they do. Sometimes it gets to the point that the woman feels, acts, and looks more masculine than the guy. Nothing is wrong with today's women mak-

ing the first move, but when a guy is too much of a coward to ask a girl out on a date and waits for her to ask then something is wrong.

It is scary to go over to a guy's house to find his bathroom full of face creams, body spray after body spray, and eyeliner. What is wrong with today's guys? Do they actually think that acting like a girl and looking like one will attract their fellow female classmates?

It is a huge turn off when a guy spends more money on clothing than a girl would in a whole year. If girls wanted to date someone who acted like a girl then they would date girls. There would be no need for men.

There is nothing wrong with being gay. Gay men and women are probably the most accepting and open minded people out there. The problem is that straight guys who act gay is not only confusing, but irritating. Metrosexuals, as straight men who act and look like gay men are called, seems to be an escalating trend. Before Ryan Seacrest's amboyant personality hit the air waves,



A book encouraging the new male trend.

not many men were seen attending day spas or getting manicures. Now it's almost normal. Overly sensitive men are everywhere and there leaves no room for the forever-crying females. Just remember guys, if you are gay, then continue doing what you are doing. If you are metrosexual, then act more manly because whatever girl you are trying to impress will think you spend too much time on your looks and not enough time checking out the girls.

# The Right To Skip



BY SARAH SAIKI  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

How many students are failing an important class in an average high school? In El Rancho high school, there is an average of fifteen students failing out of a class of thirty-five. This is just one class' statistic in a 3,300 student populated high school. This statistic indicates the lack of effort of students on free education. This also shows that students on free education do not appreciate what every tax-paying person is doing for them.

It's easy to understand that many teenagers do not like attending school, but are forced by law. What isn't easy to understand is why sixteen year-olds are held responsible enough to own a permit to drive, but are not held responsible enough to make their own decisions about attending school.

If given a choice of attending, the education in high schools would be more productive. Also students buying education at private schools would allow them to make the right decision. Students older than sixteen are old enough to be able to decide if they really want to attend school and they should have the right choose.

Teenagers are held responsible for something at the age of

sixteen for at this age they are old enough to have a driving and/or working permit. If the government feels that sixteen year-olds are old enough to drive a motor vehicle, then why are they not old enough to decide for their own futures? If teenagers are held responsible enough to earn money and possibly get into a car accident then they should be held responsible for making grown decisions about their education. Many sixteen year-olds are responsible and work to buy their personal belongings.

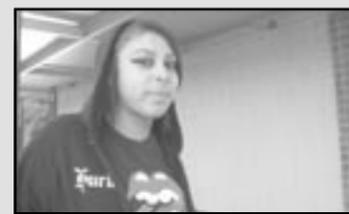
Sometimes teenagers are not drawn to an educational career, but would rather have a career in the NAVY, the U. S. army, or the U. S. Air Force. These individuals should have the right to do whatever they believe is better for their future. After all, it is their personal choice, it is their life.

# Ready For the Sugar Cut?

BY ABBY JAIME  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Two years ago, Governor Gray Davis signed the California Childhood Obesity Prevention Act and made it a law that would soon be applied to every elementary, middle, and high school in California. The new law declared soda in schools to be replaced with healthier options, such as water, milk, 100 percent fruit juices, or fruit-based drinks that have no less than fifty percent fruit juices and have no artificial sweeteners. The law was supposed to be put into action last July, but was put on hold. It was forgotten until now.

Effective as of next year, all soda machines at El Rancho High School, Rivera Middle and Elementary, as well as surrounding schools will have their soda machines removed. In the place of them will be the healthier products. We asked students on campus how they feel about this new, drastic change.



"Caffeine is addicting and some people can't go without it."  
Denise Contreras  
10th grade



"I think it's stupid because it's what we want to drink; we watch our weight."  
Matt Figuero  
11th grade



"We will get soda from somewhere [else] anyways."  
Aidee Marquez  
11th grade



"Don't take them out because we're all thirsty!"  
Joseph Morah  
9th grade



"I think it's good. It's healthier."  
Celena Torres  
12th grade



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\*Master of the Universe

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING



MONICA ALDERETE  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Since the early 70's graffiti has dramatically increased. Who is to blame for its beginnings has also shifted throughout the years. Graffiti was once used to set territories or promote gangs and was not as prevalent.

Today, people tag for fun and/or to promote their artistic abilities. This increase in graffiti has angered many, leading to the accusation of people based on stereotypes.

Stereotyping cities and people has become as common as going to the movies or getting the u. Many of these people are falsely accused only because they fit the profile of a tagger. Tagging on city walls only shows the low class and ignorance of the people who participate in it. However, stereotyping all people who look like they may be taggers doesn't help either. Many do not realize that graffiti can be done by people who do not look like taggers, but instead, can have the appearance of a good well educated person.

Judging a person and blaming them for vandalism to property for dressing like a tagger is not the right thing to do. This can be seen when cops stop people who look like taggers instead of the ones who do not qualify as a tagger. Anyone who can hold a can or slap some stickers, or write with a marker can be a tagger.

Today there are many places where both young and older people can express through graffiti as an art and not cause problems. Without knowing of these places graffiti will continue to increase when graffiti has a solution. If not by classes, then taggers should be punished with tickets and maybe jail time. Ruining a city for fun is as ignorant as jumping off a cliff. Both are just as ignorant as it is to blame someone just for looking as a tagger.

BY VINCE MENDEZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

There are laws and consequences that will make taggers think twice before picking up another graffiti tool or paint can. These are the California penal codes against vandalism and graffiti, and can be found at <http://webdisk.berkeley.edu>. Just in case you did not know, California penal codes describe graffiti as "any unauthorized inscription, word, figure, mark, or design that is written, marked, etched, scratched, drawn, or painted on real or personal property."

If the property damage caused by graffiti is more than \$400.00 then it is punishable by imprisonment for no more than a year and/or a fine of \$10,000.00. However, if the damage is over \$10,000 then it is punishable by jail time(at the most one year), and a fine of \$50,000.

When property damage does not surpass the \$400.00 mark then it is punishable by



Graffiti is increasing across the nation and so are the laws against Graffiti.

jail time in a county jail (at the most one year), and a fine of no more than \$1,000.00. If the defendant has been previously convicted for damaging personal property, and the damage is less than \$400.00 then the defendant will have to serve one year of jail time and pay a fine of \$5,000.00.

On top of all this the defendant can also face community service consisting of

clean up, repair, or replacement of the damaged property.

Still want to keep expressing your self on private property? Here is more: under the California penal code, the court has the power to order the defendant to perform community service, graffiti removal, and if the court finds it necessary, it can order the defendant to undergo counseling.

Community service can range anywhere from 90 hours to 400 hours depending on the severity of the case. The court may also choose to make the defendant keep a property within the community free of graffiti for 180 days, as part of the defendant's probation.

The best way to avoid all of this is quite simple. If it is not yours then do not write on it. Do not deface private property because it is just that, private. Have the courtesy to respect other people's property and belongings.

TAGGING WITH HONORS

BY CARINA PADILLA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

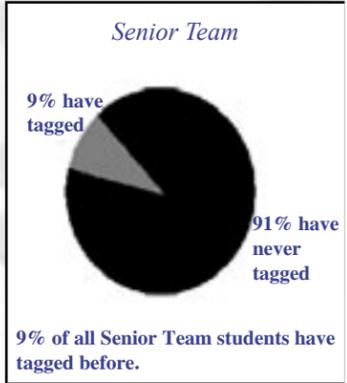
Many would be surprised to learn that A.P. students also "tag" in and out of school. AP students are always expected to be the most outstanding in education and citizenship. Probably no one would expect these honored students to participate with graffiti.

Many times, students who fail in school or dress in a certain way are stereotyped as the "taggers" of school. Nevertheless, a survey asked to twenty A.P. junior students showed that six out of the twenty had tagged before. "A.P. tagger" students were asked why they tagged and these were their confessions:

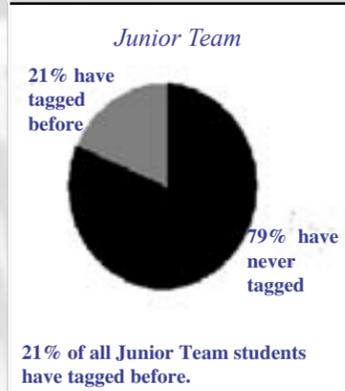
"Personal stuff."  
"Just for fun."  
"My friend said something funny so I wrote what she said."

that vandalism is incorrect."

"I think it's pretty sad if an A.P. student is tagging. These students are regarded as those who should know better. Yet an A.P. tagger prove is that it's a sad misfortune for future societies," adds Ms. Rotell.



Teachers obviously disagree with graffiti, not only because they encourage students to become outstanding people for society, but also because it transmits a bad impression of their advanced education. A.P. students are considered the example to follow. However, "tagging" in and out of school contradicts their honored studies because their elevated degree of learning should make the students aware of the seriousness of vandalizing in the community. Tagging also degrades the concept that other students and teachers have for the A.P. student.



"Because I can"  
"I was bored."  
"I thought tagging was cool, but I later realized that it wasn't."

Junior A.P. Team teacher, Ms. Rotell, suggests that graffiti "goes against their A.P. values and everything the students learn. Tagging is vandalism and A.P. students know



Don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

CREWS DOMINATING CREMES

BY JEANNETTE RANGEL  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

It is a Friday night, 11:45 and your wall is being tagged on. Who is the perpetrator, a gang member or a crew member?

No one really thinks of crew members as gang members because they are not gang affiliated individuals. But although they are not gang affiliated they walk a thin line between not being one and becoming one.

Crews have become quite popular and are the new talk of town due to their car races and graffiti tagging. Walking the streets and racing on dark alleys, crews enjoy the social life: friends, alcohol, sex, drugs, parties, and a lot of FUN. Much like a gang does.

According to Sheriff Peralta, police see crews as causing the same damages and threats to the community as gangs do. Many times crews and gangs will cause tension between the two social groups, causing the two to fight and kill members amongst their groups.

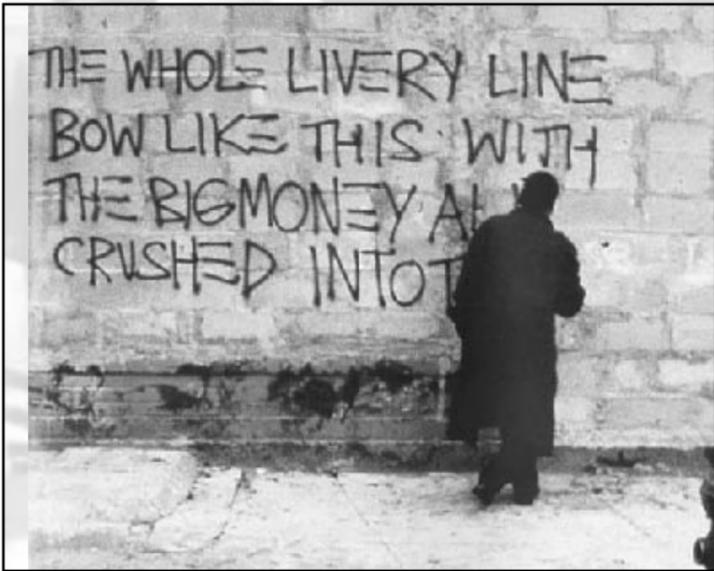
Aside from crew members being mistaken as gang members and running the risk of being killed, they also run

the risk of being killed by local residents for tagging on their property or of ending up in jail like most street hoodlums do. Although, crew members differentiate themselves from gangs, they also run the danger of associating themselves with one and walking into the gang life.

Peralta said that "it is very easy for crew members to become a part of a gang because, already, they are so much like a gang that it's hard to tell the difference."

Crews identify themselves through a social name. Crews are involved in graffiti, tagging up walls and claiming a specific territory, much like what gangs do today. Crew life, which at times turns into gang life, is not the smart way to life. So think twice before you associate yourself with one. Do not do what you would not want others to do to you.

A HISTORY OF TAGGING: GRACKOTO AND



show their worthiness to join, and to prove they are "down" or loyal to the gang. Gang members often use nicknames to identify each other; it is also common for these names to show up on graffiti "roll calls" or "placas." Many gang members use graffiti to brag about crimes they have committed. It is also common to find graffiti in places where a crime has happened.

Street gangs use their own language to communicate with one another through graffiti. This language includes common numbers, letters, words or phrases which are easily understood in the streets. Some Hispanic gangs may include phrases in Spanish which are often misspelled. For example, *loco/loca* (crazy), *Rifa/Rifamos* (we control), *por vida* (for life), *vatos* (homeboys), *jura* or *hudda* (police), and *calle* (street).

When gangs make threats using graffiti, these threats are often very direct. Some of these threats can be terms for their rivals, such as writing slob in place of Blood, or crab in place of Crip. Gangs may also add the term killer or killa after the name of a rival, or simply add the letter "K" the after initial of a rival gang as in B/K (Blood Killer) or C/k (Crip Killer). Tagging is a popular trend that is on a rise all across the United States and many parts of the world



EXPRESSING YOURSELF SHOULD BE DONE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW

BY KARINA MUNOZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

that live in that community look bad as well. So, if graffiti makes so much of a difference to a community and makes people look bad then the only thing one can do is not do it at all. If you feel like expressing your self then you can do it without breaking the law and you will not get into trouble. The only conclusion anyone can come up with is that these people are going to keep doing it. That is why the administrators are more strict and do what they do when it comes to school. If you don't like to be treated as kids then you should act your age and know how to differentiate between right and wrong. Try to keep your school from looking "ghetto" because the more graffiti there is the worse the place looks and the lower class visitors view your city.

Many schools have the same problem when it comes to graffiti, yet most cannot do anything to stop it. People caught doing this type of vandalism can be fined and get into serious trouble. It is a very serious and sensitive topic. Many cities share this type of problem. As soon as someone drives through the vandalized streets that have graffiti on their walls, what you do think comes across a visitor's mind? The first thing that might come to everybody's mind is, "What are these people thinking? Do not they have anything better to do?" Sadly they don't. If you think about it, graffiti makes a community look disgusting and the people

BY MARIA RAMIREZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Graffiti has become so popular that it connotates too many things. For example, Graffiti is looked upon as a type of art. Others see it as just writing on walls and other public places and they don't really care if it's theirs or not. But do people really know what graffiti is and the cause of it? Graffiti is done by members of gangs, as well as by graffiti writers called *taggers*. To leave their mark, gang members use spray paint, wide-tipped markers; they even etch writing into glass. To claim their territory, gangs mark their neighborhood with graffiti. They leave their mark on fences, schools, sidewalks, and even

homes. Gang hangouts are covered heavily with graffiti. Different types of gangs create different types of graffiti, most of the time the graffiti will include the name of the gang and nicknames of the members of the gangs.

Graffiti also includes threats and challenges to other gangs. It can also be use to show disrespect to other gangs. Because members of different gangs often live close to one another graffiti can cause confrontations. Gangs and taggers use graffiti to gain recognition. Gang members usually think that by putting up graffiti it re ects their loyalty to the gang. In some cases, new gang members or friends may be ordered to put up graffiti to

WHICH STUDENT DO YOU THINK IS THE TAGGER AND WHY??



#1



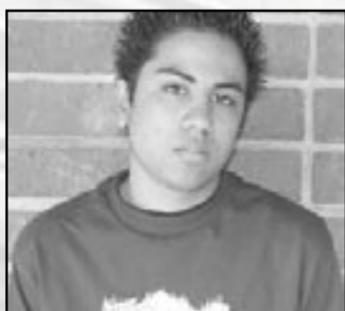
#2



#3



1. "Number one because he dresses like a gangster." -Li-zette Urias 12<sup>th</sup> grade



2. "Number one because of his shirt." -Chris Rodriguez 12<sup>th</sup> grade



3. "Number three because it is someone that you wouldn't expect." -Sergio Oropeza 11<sup>th</sup> grade

TRUE CONFESSIONS FROM ONE OF OUR OWN...



Anonymous student

BY JANELLE DORAME  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

What is the real reason for all the tagging on bridges, freeways, stop signs, bus benches, rest rooms and on desks? An anonymous El Rancho student confesses and explains his point of view as to why he does the things he does.

The name for the activities in which he participates in is called "Tag Bangers". "It is almost close to being a gang. Tag Banging is half tagging and half fighting. I've been apart of this for about five months," says the student, and admits to his share of tagging on public and private prop-

erties such as freeway over passes and our own schools, in our school. "I've tagged a couple times in our school gym, but I just tag my crews' name. And yah I've tagged on the 605 freeway. But we don't do it just because, it gets around and that's how we get are name out; how we get known. On the freeway it stands out. We do it whenever we have cans [of spray-paint], daylight or not. And no, I've never been caught"

"I have a little brother and I would beat him if he ever got involved with the kind of things I'm involved with. I don't want him to end up like me at all. I would never tag around an elementary where little kids could see. I know what I do isn't right. That's why I consider myself a two-facer. I don't think I'm a bad kid. It's just around my family I'm cool, I don't act the way I act when I'm with friends. I don't disrespect my parents or anything like that. They don't know what's up and I'm not sure what they would do if they found out. The point is I'm not a trouble maker. My motto is 'You shouldn't trouble trouble if trouble isn't troubling you'."

# What Are You Thankful For This Year?

By MARIKE TORRES  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER



Francesca Wartner- I am thankful for my grandparents for taking me and my little sister in during family problems. They truly are the only people that are there for me."



Peter Rico- "I am thankful for my skate team, because without them, I wouldn't be where I am today."



Idelisa Imbert- "I'm thankful for my grandma taking me in for adoption."



Kimberly Valdez- "I am thankful for having such a united family, my friends, and my yell leader."



Fierros shows off his "pimp" ride to impress all the ladies.

## "Pimpin" it in Baby Blue

By CINDY MENDOZA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Senior Juan Fierros has a baby blue Toyota Celica.

Fierros works at Disneyland and has been working all summer to earn money to purchase this vehicle from his aunt. She had been selling it for about \$1,250.

Fierros's main purpose for buying this car is simply for his transportation to school "I was sick of those long bus rides back and forth to school and then back home," says Fierros.

This senior doesn't plan on keeping his Celica forever. He hopes to one day to save money so he can purchase either a Maxima or a 1996 Super Sport Impala so he can

"cruise in style," says Fierros.

Fierros spent about \$ 2,060 on his Celica which includes the payment for the car, the sound system, and most important for his insurance, because no one wants to get caught by any police officers without insurance.

"The only reason I put my new \$ 400 radio in was so I didn't have to hear that annoying static anymore," says Fierros. He says that is the only thing he will keep when he gets a new car.

For those that really know Fierros know he is a really nice person who receives average grades, but he is still the type of person that will never give you a ride unless you have some gas money for him.

So if you ever see a baby blue Celica bumping its radio don't ask for a ride unless you have some fresh cash in your pocket that will go to his gas tank.

## Huck Finn Returns to Pico Rivera

By TONY CHAVARIN  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER



Huck Finn starts off with two of El Rancho's cheerleaders.

Pico Rivera stepped outside on November 5<sup>th</sup> for the return of the historical Huck Finn Parade & Jubilee. Beginning at ten in the morning, the parade started its path from Jackson Street, making its way down Passons Boulevard (representing the Mississippi River) towards El Rancho High School. The parade featured a variety of floats and marchers. Audience cheered for the appearance of many community organizations, service clubs, and schools, along with Pico Rivera's oldest living resident at the age of 104 years old. The parade also featured the El Rancho High School homecoming princesses, king, & queen, mascot, and pepsters. Once Huck Finn arrived at the high school, partakers and audiences joined the Huck Finn Jubilee at the Don Stadium. The Jubilee presented children's activities, games, a Huck Finn look a like contest, and a pumpkin pie-eating competition. In addition to the festival, entertainment guests such as The Windy Ridge Bluegrass Band made a performance.

# November Students of the Month

By JENNIFER VASQUEZ  
AND RUDY VARGAS  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITERS



Christopher Neely 9<sup>th</sup> grade:

Neely plays the clarinet in El Rancho's school band. Even though heavy metal and classic rock is what he enjoys listening. When asked how he likes to spend his spare time, Neely answered "ummm, watch T.V. use the internet, talk to friends, and stuff like that." Neely would like to attend the University of Stanford. He would like to be an Airspace Engineer. "Sounds like fun", Neely answered after being asked why he chose that career.



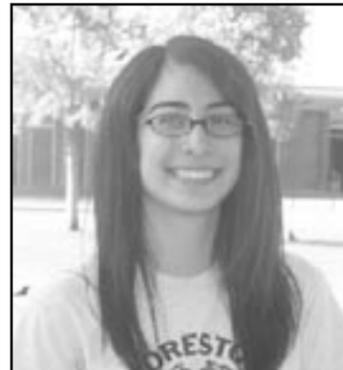
Javier Garcia 10<sup>th</sup> grade:

Garcia has always liked science; his dream is to go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology to become an Astronomer. On his spare time Garcia likes to read, but stated "I really don't have spare time because I have a lot of homework for team," although he has time for Cross Country. "It's a great sport. It gave me discipline." Garcia replied after being asked about his experience with Cross Country.



Thomas Medina 11<sup>th</sup> grade:

Medina's freshman and sophomore years he joined wrestling. Medina did not join this year because he is taking Academic Decathlon. Medina is the Vice President of the Math Club. Medina has also joined Modal United Nation and the Gadabouts. "I don't have a clue, maybe Stanford because my brother goes there" Medina answered after being asked what college/university he would attend. Even though Medina is very busy he has time to watch Comedy Central.



Veronica Chavez 12<sup>th</sup> grade:

Chavez is not interested in sports but has joined the Leo's Club CSF, Outdoors Club and Math Club. When asked what college/university she would like to attend Chavez replied "I really would love to go to Stanford. Beautiful campus and the atmosphere is perfect. I'd like to be a lawyer. I'd get pay to argue." Chavez does not really have spare time but when she gets a chance to hang out with friends or watch T.V., she takes advantage of it.

## Dons Lend a Helping Hand



By SAMANTHA ESCALERA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

El Rancho High is holding its annual canned food drive this Thanksgiving to help needy families in Pico Rivera! Jonathan Mojarro, who was in charge of last years food drive, is also in charge this year.

Every year El Rancho holds this food drive to help feed the less fortunate. If each student contributes at least three cans, they would help feed 100 needy families in Pico Rivera. This canned food drive will be held as a class competition. Whichever class collects the most cans by the end of the drive will receive class points in reward.

Currently the seniors are in the lead with the most donated cans at 302.1lbs. In second place are the juniors with 161.43lbs. In third place are the freshman's with 5.77lbs. The sophomores come in fourth place with .92lbs.

To donate, turn in your cans to the activities office. Meat products are worth double points. Bent and rusty cans do not count. So remember to bring your cans and help those in need.

# Sophia's Fiction Corner: *Five Shines*

By SOPHIA DUNCAN  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Much more than half of the earth's population spends a good part of their youth wandering city streets and local hangouts on a search for the one person that, with the slightest touch, can cause giddy shivers to crawl all over their bodies. It's love they look for, the kind of depressing love that only actors can fake on screen.

The remaining peoples spend their youth either within the walls of their own minds or in search of something more than the cliché idea of "true" love. She could honestly admit this with a groan, but before a chance meeting just a little over seven months ago, she was one of the many that sighed themselves to sleep after another long day of trekking for love. It was routine. Faking romances to make them seem like a reflection of the relationship portrayed in *A Walk to Remember* allowed her enough room to believe the outplayed movie lines she and he both spat towards each other's desperate ears. In that way she found that if a lie is sincerely repeated over and over again, it becomes one of the only things you'll ever believe. "Friendships" at that time were no better. They were lunches at McDonalds and the oblivious attending of Saturday-night shows. There wasn't a trace of any types of real bonds and genuine smiles were rare and awkward, like red balls let out into the sea.

October and broken trust brought Michelle Yanez, an Long Beach native sheltering herself from Barlett, Illinois' small-town self pride. Fourth of July when



they left their sanity for a twenty-person dance pit at a downtown Los Angeles warehouse show, scripted life was no longer an issue. It was Michelle that squeezed herself into the gaping hole her failed "love" search had left, completely filling all extra space she had never bothered to fill. Unknowingly, Michelle exposed the fact that that she was a more fulfilling alternative to a companion. She was her Placebo-crazed soul mate that could not help but revamp and complete her life.

Just a month into the friendship, they spent a day journeying across the little town in search of nothing. The two girls were never happy with what they did.

So they walked with the singing boy and Greengale turned to Gammy turned to a street name she'll never remember. They were constantly among cars, rows and rows of them, just walking and singing for the things they passed. He took her hand to cross a street on the way back home and she took Michelle's while he sang into the almost-silence, "Fly like Jesus swept you off that crutch..." It hit her while he Matrix-moved alongside parked traffic, she opened her mouth to sing, but instead began to chant, *we are in love, we are in love*, like it was the only thing that ever mattered. For at that time, they were happy. They were madly happy and

spinning and singing and grasping onto things when they fell.

"This room was never our scene," she said while they lay weaved into blankets in her bed, still spinning, still gasping their laughs. Where had the singing boy gone? She wondered if he still felt what we had before. *We are in love*, she meant to yell, but she didn't. They let five a.m. light shine through. The spinning died, as did the chant; semi-smiles settled over them and Michelle sang into the almost-silence, "Fly like Jesus swept you off that crutch and love was an issue we worked to kill, for glass love was the only thing you knew..."

## Book Review: *My Friend Leonard*

By CHRISTINA RUBALCAVA  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

In *My Friend Leonard* James Frey gives readers a view of life after rehab, during jail time, and after his jail release. A true and amazing story, *My Friend Leonard* gives depictions of James Frey's struggles and the ability to overcome them. It is a true story of a father-son relationship so heartfelt every reader will feel the pain of the outcome.

In *My Friend Leonard* tells the true story of the life James Frey lived in with Leonard, an older man whom James met at the rehab clinic he attended. James Frey and Leonard were recovering coke addicts, bringing them closer and making them the best friends they became.

During his post-rehab life, James travels to Chicago to start a new life and meet some old friends. When James first arrives in Chicago, he receives the shock of his life. Slowly recovering from this tragedy, James becomes involved with the lives of some old friends, friends which get drunk every night. The struggle to stay clean affects James in negative ways, making it harder for him to fall in love. James believes that he doesn't deserve to be happy because of the rancid life he led for more than 10 years.

James' best friend and non paternal father Leonard teaches him to enjoy life, and staying sober for the first time. He also teaches him to "live boldly", encourages him to pursue his passion of writing, and provides him a life of protection under a veil which Leonard could supervise. Both of their careers have flourished beautifully, and then suddenly Leonard vanishes for more than a year, causing James to worry. Nearing the end of the book, Leonard reappears. When the reason of Leonard's disappearance is revealed, the book opens up in unexpected emotional ways.

*My Friend Leonard* gives readers an emotional picture of the life James Frey. James Frey shows once again what a young and brilliant writer he has become, writing his new challenges without becoming boring or losing interest. Along with displaying such maturity, warmth, and humor. James Frey will keep you reading on and on without wanting to stop.

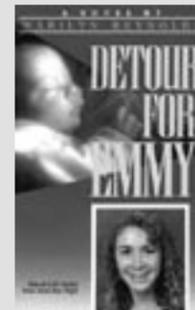
## Instrumental Beauty



By JOSE FLORES  
EL RODEO CONTRIBUTOR

Six metal strings that rest gently on wood  
Bold in beauty it shines proud and it boasts  
Its crisp sound sings to my soul like one should  
Dictating its beauty in solemn notes  
Over taken by passion, hands possessed  
Fingers move to the universal beat  
Head swaying, notes wailing, hear tapping feet  
Relevant to music we become one  
Our kindred spirits burn in unity  
Through profound sound worlds hatred is undone  
Together we sing harmoniously  
But time has come; our session must now end  
And wait until I can hold you again

## Fifteen and in Love



By KARINA MUNOZ  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

"*Detour for Emmy*" by Marylyn Reynolds is one of those books that you can read over and over and always think of as an interesting book that gives you advice about what not to do. Many teenagers fall in love at least once. In this case it was Emily Morrison, a high school student who falls in love with a boy named Arturo (Art). They seem to be doing great in their relationship. Emily is happier than she's ever been. She feels she has everything she would ever want, a guy by her side and what she valued most: her education. Having all honors classes and being the main voice in her Harmonics class she had a great future ahead of her. She and Art have plans for college and a future together. They find themselves lost in love and the time Art had been waiting for comes ..... "God Emmy you're ready. Don't tell me you're not ready. I need you so much. Please" Art says..... "It hurt like anything but I didn't care we belonged to each other" Emmy says. As time passes Art and Emmy go to school and are together at nights. One day the feeling was there and the moment was right so, Emily and Art gave themselves to each other one more time but this time it was carelessly. Time passes and Emily starts feeling sings of pregnancy so she lets Art know and instead of listening he turns his back on her. Emmy finds herself lost and alone. Having an alcoholic mother, a criminal brother, and a jerk as a boyfriend, Emmy feels confused. As months pass Emily's belly gets bigger. One of her options was abortion, but she couldn't do it. She decides to have the baby with or without Art. It seemed like yesterday that Emily was happy with Art and school was perfect, but now she finds herself alone and scared. Remembering what Art had told her made her feel worse, "I love you, Em I'd never do anything to hurt you," he said. Then Emmy finds herself alone, and in pain in a hospital delivery room thinking "What happened to my life?" "What's next?" This book gets better as you read it. It is a good book and interesting but at the same time it gives you advice about not believing everything a person tells you. It is a book that shows you the importance of being aware of your actions and always knowing that actions have consequences and the way to prevent many future problems is to think before you do anything.

## Don Runners Dominates League; Takes 5th Straight Title

BY ADAM GONZALES  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Dons Boys Cross Country team has had more than a successful past seven years. The Dons have taken five consecutive Del Rio League Championships, and six of the last seven. 2000 was the year the Dons didn't win league as Cal High won that year.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Dons went into La Mirada Regional Park to defend their four consecutive Del Rio League Championships. The team was led by Seniors Julio Jimenez and Manny Mejia. The Dons dominated the finish line as Manny Mejia won the race with a time of 15:28. Junior, Luis Guevara followed Mejia with a time of 15:37; Julio Jimenez had the same time but placed third. After this the Dons completed their feat of an acclaimed fifth Del Rio Championship in a row.

With the Del Rio League Championship win, the Boys Cross Country team is now third all time in consecutive league titles. Football has the most consecutive titles with twelve.

Coach Ray Elliot took over the team in 1998 and since then the Dons have won the last six of the seven Del Rio League Cross Country Championships. Before



Boys Cross Country team completed their fifth consecutive League Title on November 3<sup>rd</sup> to Mt. San Antonio College 19, the Dons return to Mt.

the 1999 league championship the Dons hadn't won since 1988. Coach Elliot's secret to success is a simple one as he stated, "hard work and dedication." The Dons have won six league championships in seven years but Coach Elliot said the best win was this year's because "the boys are to going to State."

Last Saturday the Boys Cross Country team traveled

to compete in the CIF Prelims. The Dons placed first in the heat in part to Manny Mejia who finished the race with a time of 15:51. Mejia was followed by Julio Jimenez and Luis Guevara who finished with a time of 15:52. The Dons were also the fastest team at the Prelims finishing with a total time of 80:17. This Saturday, November

San Antonio College to race in the CIF Finals at 9:25 am. The Dons will compete against top teams in division 1 such as first ranked Royal, second ranked Murrieta Valley, and third ranked El Toro. The Dons are currently ranked fourth in the Division 1 Boys Cross Country Polls. (November 7 poll)

## Water Polo Team Suffers First Round Loss at the Hands of Cerritos



Dons lost 1st round CIF game

BY STEVEN CAUDILLO  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Boys Water Polo team went into last Friday's first round CIF game on a high note. They were just coming off a dominating win over the Santa Fe Chiefs and had a full week of rest. The Dons knew they were in for a great challenge because of their familiarity with their first round opponents. This was the Dons fourth meeting of the year with Cerritos. The previous three were all close games decided by a combined 11 goals. Cerritos won the first two meetings of the year by five goals a piece and won the most recent meeting by only one goal. The Dons lost all of the previous meetings because of their lack of execution for all four quarters and many mental lapses.

With that in mind the Dons knew they had a great shot to move on to the second round of CIF. In the first half the Dons played well and executed on all parts of their team game and led at the half 7-6. The second half was a completely different story for the Dons as they came out like the team that played Cerritos the previous three meetings. The Dons once again were unable to execute smoothly for all four quarters, ultimately leading to their first round knockout in the CIF playoffs. "Honestly, I think we ran out of gas in the second half, we had a very strong first half. We executed very well," said Coach Francisco. The Dons finished the season with 18 wins and 12 losses.

Although the Dons didn't succeed in capturing the CIF title, they still met two of their goals that Coach Francisco set out for them this season. "Despite all the adversity we faced at the beginning of the year (losing two starters) we reached two of our major goals, finishing second in league and being ranked number 8 in the final CIF poll. The one goal we didn't reach was making the quarterfinals, however CIF gave us a higher ranked team in the first round than we deserved."

## Dons Lose Out on Last Playoff Spot



The Dons leave the field after losing 23-13 to La Serna

BY ADAM GONZALES  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Last Thursday night the El Rancho Dons Football team played the La Serna Lancers in a game which can be titled, "The Battle for Third Place." Third place was so significant because the winner of the game would ultimately get the third and final spot in the CIF-Southern Section Division VII playoffs.

The game started out on a sour note for the Dons as La Serna player Anthony Rivera had an 80 yard return on the opening kickoff. La Serna went on to score 12 points in the first quarter, while El Rancho failed to score in the first. El Rancho Senior running back Giovanni Sandoval had a two yard rushing touchdown.

The Dons defense was tumbled by La Serna's rushing attack. The Lancers managed to gain a total of 217 rushing yards.

The Dons managed to score 7 points in the second quarter and 6 points in the fourth quarter, but eventually this wasn't enough as they lost 23-13. With the victory La Serna advances to the CIF-Southern Section Division VII playoffs.

The Dons ended their season on a three game losing skid after winning their first two league games.

The Dons finished the season with a league record of 2 wins and 3 losses, and an overall record of 4 wins and 6 losses. They finished fourth in the Del Rio League, behind La Serna, Cal High, and Santa Fe.

## Lady Dons Repeat As Del Rio League Champs

BY STEVEN CAUDILLO  
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The Lady Dons volleyball team entered this season as defending Del Rio League champs. The Lady Dons clinched the league title a few weeks ago against La Serna. The Lady Dons didn't have much trouble with the Lancers defeating them effortlessly 3-0. The talent or experience wasn't the dilemma for the team this season, it was their ability to adjust to their new head coach that was in question. Under Coach Lawson the Lady Dons didn't skip a beat from last year's Del Rio League championship team.

"The teams experience is what carried them to a back to back Del Rio League Championship," said Coach Lawson. They finished this great season with an overall 20-5 record and a perfect 10-0 record in league.

The Lady Dons played

their first CIF playoff game last Tuesday against the Highland Bulldogs of Palmdale. They completely dominated the Bulldogs in every category. They were no match for the talented Lady Dons. "This is one of the most talented hardworking teams I've ever seen," said Coach Lawson.

On Thursday they played the second round game. The Lady Dons faced Upland High school. The game was close throughout but the Lady Dons just couldn't seem to give over the hump. They lost the first match 25-17, the second one 25-16 and the last match 25-19. Upland was a good team but we didn't have our best game," said Coach Lawson. Although Coach Lawson and the Lady Dons had greater expectations regarding CIF, they have nothing to be upset about because of all their achievements and miraculous play as a team this season.



Lady Dons Put up a perfect 10-0 League record this year