



El Rodeo



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El Rancho High School

Monday, March 27, 2006

Volume 54, Issue 8

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Own Award Winning
Photographer



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Restroom Photo Creates a Stink

BY THOMAS MEDINA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

In a past issue of El Rodeo contained a photograph of one of the restrooms on El Rancho's campus in an entirely deplorable state. The ramifications of this event were quickly apparent. According to California Education Code 35186 complaints may be made to a school district on the grounds that the facilities on the campus are not safe, clean, or functional. The school would have been in violation of this act had it previously been considered a Williams school, a school which had previously failed a government inspection. However, the school was also required to show that they had cleaned up this restroom and were maintaining the minimal requirements set forth by the government.

However, the problem still remains as to how the restroom wound up in such a horrific condition in the first place. According to the assistant principal of activities, Adrian Ayala, "The level of graffiti on this campus is astounding. I have already spent this year's budget just trying to combat this problem; in fact, we're spending more money than ever before just to remove this graffiti. We even bought our own machine so we no longer have to call and wait for the district team to show up and clean up the mess."

The janitors work tirelessly to try and clean up all the bathrooms and graffiti all around campus. For the janitors that begin working on cleaning up the campus, it is not until almost noontime when they begin to work on something that is not related to cleaning up graffiti. There is an enormous problem within the student body itself to allow this much destruction to occur regularly.

"I know exactly why the restroom go to that condition too," said Mr. Ayala. "During the week where that incident occurred, I had four of the janitors working on fixing the gym floors so they were not able to perform many of their usual duties. It only took four days for the restroom to look as bad as it did."

Social Justice Club Demonstrates its Points

BY CHRIS GALLIZZI
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

If you remember the homecoming carnival, the social justice club made a pretty big appearance and received a lot of attention; they were the ones with the eight foot painted billboard of a girl hugging a bomb. During the time the club got the wrong kind of attention and was forced to hide away in Mr. Hartman's room thinking of a better way to get their message out and not to make any enemies in the process.

During lunch on March 23, 2006 the social justice club sold brownies and ice cream for \$1.50 also in the process the club passed out yers about statistics dealing with the current war in Iraq. They were hoping to get the attention of the El Rancho student body and raise funds in the process. Throughout the entire lunch period, a crowd of students was gathered around the Social Justice table. Not only did the club get recognition for their demonstration against the war from students, but also got



Teacher Theodore Hartman, advisor to the Social Justice club and advocate for human rights. The Social Justice club meets in A-201.

recognition from the faculty. Mr. Hartman felt that the turnout was amazing; he said "it's amazing how many kids were interested in what we were all about." Mr. Hartman also added "The club did everything the night before and that these kids have heart for sacrificing their time for a cause."

The demonstration was created in order to bring awareness to the school that this week marked the 3rd year anniversary of the war in Iraq. The club posted hand-painted signs with facts about the war such as "The number of U.S. Military Killed = 2,300 and "The number of

Iraqi Civilians Killed = 35,000."

The social justice club isn't just about anti-war propaganda; in fact, the club is currently whipping up new ideas on how to get more kids aware of their rights as students, for young women to know their rights, and for the school to get more of an understanding about free expression. One of the biggest topics the club wants to go after is the amount of military in uence there is here at the school. They want the students to become aware that the No Child Left Behind Act that President Bush has instated gives students' names to military recruiters and enlists their names in databases. Mr. Hartman also added that if you want your name off the list to stop by his classroom in A-208, which is one of the classrooms on the second oor above the office, to pick up a "Opt out" form.

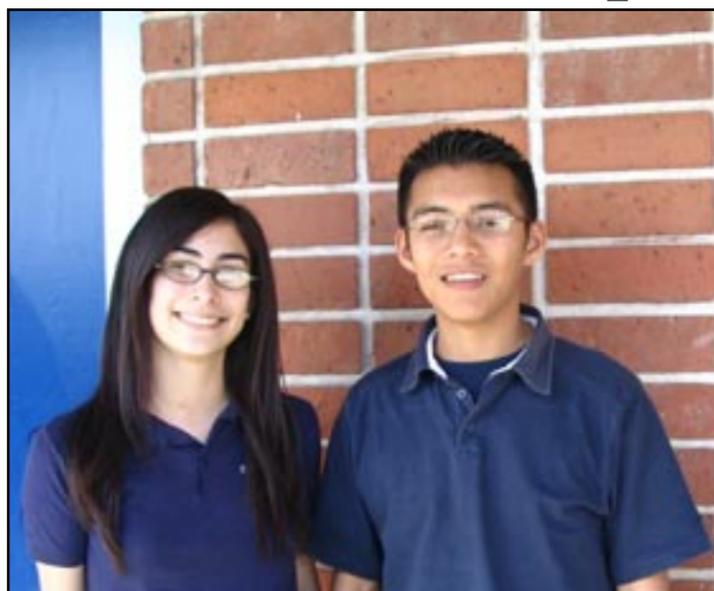
The Social Justice Club meets ever Thursday in Mr. Hartman's room. Everyone is welcome to join the club and support human rights causes and exercise their freedom of expression.

Bank of America Rewards Top Seniors

BY THOMAS MEDINA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

A week ago a select few students were surprised and delighted to discover that they had been selected as winners of the 2006 Bank of America Achievement Awards. Each school that wished to participate in these awards sent in a list of seniors and included classes and other information about the subjects the students had excelled in order for the people who decide who is eligible for these awards to discern which students belong in each category.

This program began in December when a committee selects nearly 15,000 of the submitted seniors from almost 1,200 public and private schools that, judging from their class history, are deserving of recognition. Committees than progressed into further subdividing the categories and found which students were eligible for which certificate awards in specific subject areas or for plaque awards in more general subject areas. These students then continue on to higher levels of competition until eventually finalists were selected and received scholarships from Bank of America that totaled up to \$280,000.



Seniors Veronica Chavez and Edgar Sanchez appearing after discovering that they had won the prestigious plaque awards.

"I was quite surprised that I had won such a prestigious award," said senior Veronica Chavez who won a plaque award for Liberal Arts, "to be honest I didn't even know I had been entered into this competition, it was a delightful surprise."

Indeed, many other winners had no clue that they were even entered into this competition, but were glad for the opportunity to possibly win a scholarship to help pay for attending college.

Each school received a predetermined number of winners in selected categories based on the magnitude of enrollment in the school and the number of seniors submitted by the school.

The three Plaque winners selected for the 2006 Bank of America Achievement Awards are: Edgar Gonzales-Science and Mathematics, Lacy Taylor-Fine Arts, and Veronica Chavez-Liberal Arts. The school was only allocated three slots

for selected Plaque winners.

There were many more certificate winners for El Rancho that were selected through the program. The twelve winners of the Bank of America Achievement Award certificates are: Robby Flores-Art, Darwin Moran-Computer Studies, Alfonso Suarez-Drama, Noelle Andrade-English, Fevedelia Ochoa-English as a second language, Adriana Espinoza-Foreign Language, Luz Michelle Escobar-History, Yesenia Ornelas-Mathematics, Janette Aldana-Music, Kristina Biado-Science, Gerardo Sifuentes-Social Studies and Edison Caba-Technology.

The students who received the honor of being plaque winners can also compete at the regional level of the program by filling out an application and submitting it to the program. These applications will then be sent to a non-profit organization which will select eight finalists from each category to compete in a discussion about their chosen subject. A panel of judges will then select the winners of the competition and award each of the finalists a scholarship for between \$500 and \$2,000 depending on what position they received in the competition.

Calderon's *Affair* Wins an Honorable Mention

BY GUSTAVO CORDOVA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Last Saturday, March 18, Junior Rachel Calderon-Navarro competed in this year's annual Spotlight Awards Visual Arts Competition in Santa Monica and her photograph went all the way to the semi-finals. Chosen out of 600 entries, she received an Honorable Mention and a \$250 scholarship for her photograph entitled "Bear Affair."

The awards were six thousand dollars for first place, three thousand dollars for second place, and the third place prize was split between the five contestants who received an Honorable Mention. Surprisingly, she did not even know about the prizes until after the contest and found the experience much more gratifying. After participating in the contest, she said, "Before all this all I used to do was post my pictures on a website and now that people and actual photographers have seen my pictures and like them it gives me the confidence and makes me feel that that I have a chance to make it out there in photography."

After all of this, not only did Calderon-Navarro win an award, but a potential buyer approached her and insisted on buying her photograph for \$500 to hang up in his own home.

Usually, Calderon-Navarro spends her time trying to capture every special moment by taking pictures with her beloved digital camera that goes anywhere and ev-



"Bear Affair" taken by Calderon at last year's Saint Hillary's Fair won an honorable mention award.

erywhere that she does. It was when she went to the annual Saint Hillary's Fair during the summer, that she captured the prize-winning photograph. When her former A.P. European History teacher Mr. Smith encouraged her to enter the contest, she went through her collection of photographs and "Bear Affair" spoke to her.

The photograph, as described by Mr. Crone who attended the event, "was at an unusual angle and the composition with so much sky in it and the bear, it was a unique way to capture what could have been a regular ol' carnival shot." Apparently, Calderon-Navarro considers carnivals and fairs "photo gold" because of the crazy colors and unusual



Rachel Calderon-Navarro with her trusty camera companion.

sights, not usually seen. After getting her feet wet in her first competition, she surprised herself on how well she placed and now seeks to pursue this career path even further.



Musquiz takes time out of her busy schedule to pose for a picture

All-Star Athlete Hopes to Continue Competitions in College

BY MARIJKE TORRES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Basketball and volleyball are the two major sports that senior Sherise Musquiz has played since her freshman year at El Rancho. Softball on the other hand, Musquiz has been playing since she was 6 years old. Sherise has been on varsity for all 3 sports since her freshman year. When Musquiz was 16, she stopped playing Travel ball, which is the same as baseball.

Musquiz's best friends are Jill Lapiere, Victoria Martinez, and Monique Viduya. They support her and are proud that she has achieved so much in only 4 years. Besides hanging out with all of her best buds, Musquiz loves to sleep. "I don't have time for other hobbies, just sports." Other than her friends, Musquiz's parents are big supporters for her. As well as being another support system for her, Coach Matthews has been pointed out as her favorite teacher. "He's coached me since my freshman year." Around Sherise's sophomore year, she realized her passion was playing sports.

Since Musquiz is a senior, she already has plans for the future. She hopes to go to the Hawaii Pacific University. "It's my dream school." She's just going to be taking basic courses for her 1st year at college. "I hope to play sports in college too."

Other than basketball, softball and volleyball, Musquiz tried out for water polo. "I went to practices the whole summer, but then I just switched to basketball and played in league." In the past October, Sherise had won athlete of the month. "My most memorable moment was when our volleyball team won 10-0."

Sherise may be very athletic, but also adds a great deal of feminism. She was nominated as winter belle princess this year. Her high school years have been really great and rewarding, but she also has a most embarrassing moment as well. "During a skit in the night pep rally my junior year, I got tripped and fell in front of everyone...it was so embarrassing! But I made a lot of great and close friends during all of the sports I've been in, and I'm going to miss you all."

The NCAA Final Four! Who Will Win It All?



"Duke, Villanova, Connecticut, and Memphis will make the Final Four and Villanova is going to win it all."
Augie Palomera, 12th grade



"I think that Connecticut, Memphis, Texas, and Villanova will be able to make it into the Final Four and Connecticut is going to win it all."
Mr. Saucedo, Teacher



"My picks are Connecticut, UCLA, Duke, and Villanova and UCLA is going to come away with the title." - Richard Ayala, 11th grade



"Duke, Connecticut, Memphis, and Villanova are going to be in the Final Four and Duke is going to win."
Mr. Reyna, Teacher



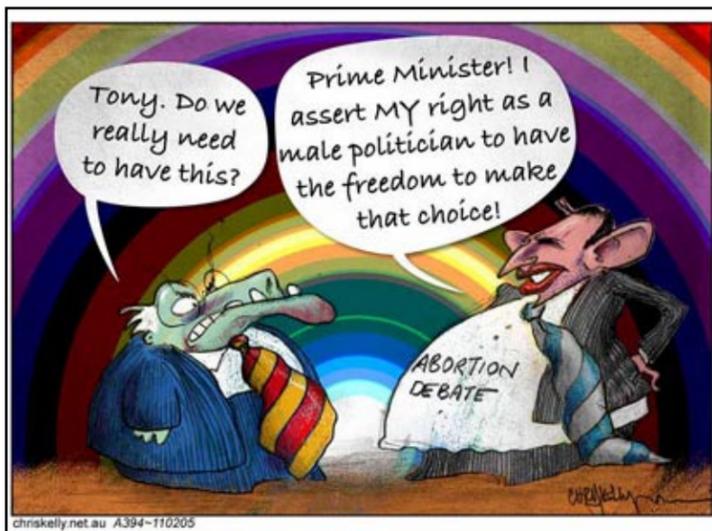
"The Final Four will be Connecticut, Duke, Memphis, and Villanova and I'm picking Connecticut to win."
Hugo Garcia, 10th grade

Round 1: Roe vs. South Dakota

By MARIA RAMIREZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

In America, we no longer have the freedoms that we once took for granted. For years, there has been many arguments about whether or not abortions should be banned, yet there is still no solution. The government has been trying for years to find a solution that satisfies society in the national battle against Roe vs. Wade, which gave women the right to choose to have an abortion. I wonder if there is any solution to abortion. The most recent and controversial of these abortion bans, the South Dakota Abortion Act, was just passed. The bill states that all abortions would be banned and punishable in the state of South Dakota. The bill also states that it's a felony for doctors or any other medical official to perform abortions; the penalty is of up to five years in prison. I am against the bill because it bans all abortions. Don't think I am for abortion, but these operations should at least be allowed in cases involving rape or incest or if the pregnancy poses a threat to a women's health.

In addition, another problem is while a majority of the people in South Dakota may fa-



vor a ban, a clientele for abortion still exists. A CNN article stated that over 800 patients a year cross state lines to get treatment. This means that since women aren't able to get an abortion in South Dakota, these patients travel to a neighboring state to get it done. Also, the odds are greater in that they might get an illegal abortion, even with all the risks that involved. So, the Bill actually has no effect because abortions will still exist. The bill that South Dakota lawmakers have passed may shake some people out, but not in the direction the lawmakers favor because of the fact that the ban allows no exception to abor-

tion. People are more in favor of the goal often stated by President Bill Clinton, which was to make abortion "safe, legal and rare."

In conclusion, I guess that the only solution to abortion is to change people's behavior, which requires changing basic attitudes to eliminate not just the availability of abortion, but also the demand for it. However, of course, that is not happening any time soon. You can't change how everyone thinks. People should just have the right to choose because if they don't get to choose then they will still end up getting abortions done illegally and endangering their lives.

Is the CAHSEE a Fair Requirement?



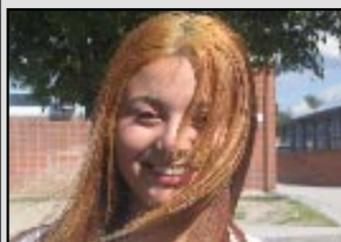
"It's stupid 'cause why should we have to pass it if we pass all of our other classes?"
Issac Corral, 11th grade



"No, not really, because the kids that don't know the stuff can't graduate if they don't pass the test."
Andres Martinez, 11th grade



"No, we're already required to pass other stupid classes."
Jessica Elizalde, 11th grade



"Yes, because it tests your knowledge."
Veronica Castro, 11th grade



"No, we should just be able to graduate with all the credits we've earned."
Brittany Espinoza, 11th grade

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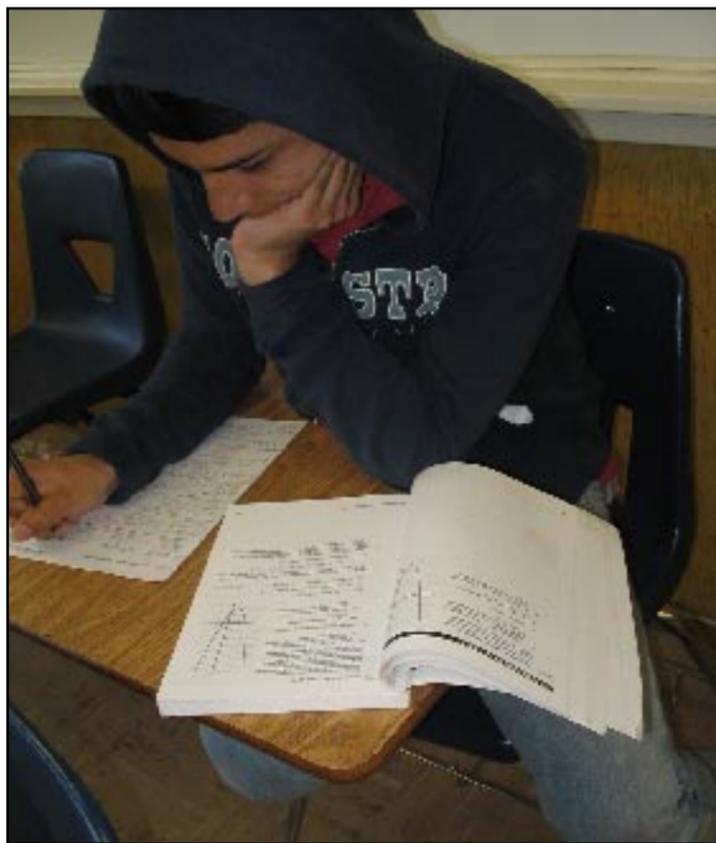
4x(16-y+gh)= The Rest of Your Life?

Passing algebra proves to be a major hinderance to graduation rates.

By SOPHIA DUNCAN
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

I would love to have a chat with the chump that invented high school graduation requirements. I would also like to wake from the dead the man responsible for "okaying" algebra as one these requirements, just so I can feel the satisfaction of punching him. In fact, the mighty minds behind the senior requirements of geometry, chemistry, midterms, and lousy English writing prompts that don't allow you to write to the best of your abilities can queue up for my fist, too. One thing that really bothers me though is that fact that we must take classes to learn things we will never use in our future.

Algebra, for example, is useless to a majority of the students that take it. I've never heard of anyone using hypotenuses or order of operations while filing their tax returns. It's just extra knowledge serving as a barricade between smart, intellectual people and their careers. Students looking into other careers are stuck when they cannot calculate the distance between *a* and *g*, because without algebra they don't graduate. I do agree that technology is advancing rapidly; therefore, algebra is a great tool. It expands your mind and all that, but if we really wanted to expand our minds, we would make reading books a requirement, too. Or maybe bring back those school field trips that allow experiencing the Holocaust rather than hearing a teacher drone on about it.

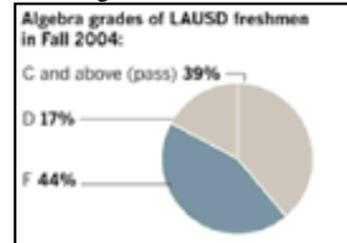


Sophomore Bryan Gonzalez works hard on his algebra just to get by.

Algebra is a great tool for those kids seeking careers in science and engineering. Why force all students to take and pass this class when only a selected few will go on to use it in their professional careers? They're just wasting time and energy on something they'll never use again. I'd have a different mentality if every student passed algebra as if it was art class, but that's not the case. At Birmingham High School in Van Nuys, 44 percent of the 48,000 ninth graders that took algebra unked, almost twice as

many as in English. Seventeen percent passed with D's. A girl named Gabriela Ocampo tried six times to pass, but never did. There is less than four months until the class of 2006 walks across the El Rancho football field in ugly, tent-like robes to get their diplomas, but last year's graduation rate in California may discourage some students. Thanks to the Los Angeles Times' six-day, front-page series on high school dropouts, we realize that the decreasing graduation rate isn't caused by

a factor, but by many factors. California graduates only about 71 percent of its seniors on time. Latino and African American graduation rates are 60 percent and 56.6 percent respectively. In addition, the six largest unified school districts in southern California, including L.A. Unified, graduate only half their incoming freshmen class on time.



But, you can't just point an index finger toward administration and "bad" teachers, or toward students' sloth and indifference. Nor can you blame the negligent parents that neither encourage nor punish their kids. Nor can you blame the supposed "difficulty" of certain classes. You can't prey solely on the lack of funds or students' desire to fit in with the "cool" crowd, rather than the thick-rimmed glasses one. Ultimately, all of these things contribute to make a senior's chances of graduation slimmer.

Honestly, I think we should bring back auto mechanics and welding classes. There have to be classes for those students that aren't so intellectual, but want to get somewhere in life. Nowadays, knowing how to weld and fix cars is crucial and a high-paying alternative to more complicated, industrialized careers.

Here Come America's Next Top Comedians: Josh & Alfonso, Lifelong Partners in Comedy

BY ABBY JAIME

EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Growing up as the youngest in a family of five, junior Josh Gonzales has never had the spotlight on him or had his fifteen minutes of fame. Since there's a five year age gap between him and his older brother, Gonzales felt shadowed by his accomplishments. He tried baseball for Pico Boys and football for the Pico Rivera Dons to try and outshine his brothers. Although he excelled in sports, it was an area his older brother had already covered. Realizing this, Gonzales set out to find an area of his own to conquer.

For a while he just hung out with friends and learned to play guitar, but didn't have too much to look forward to. This year, his counselor suggested taking a drama class with Mr. Wlasick. He was intimidated at first; just talking to a girl was hard enough, but now he had to be at the front of a class of about 30 students acting out of the ordinary. On his first time on stage Gonzales "couldn't stop shaking" and had mixed emotions. After a couple of weeks he began to take pleasure in the class.

He developed a good connection with senior Alfonso Suarez, a Thespian veteran and is looking forward to a profession in acting. Suarez, being fond of Gonzales, began to teach him all the small secrets of performing. With such a good role model and teacher Mr. Wlasick, who, according to Gonzales, is "a very good teacher," he was bound to get rid of his stage jitters and let his exuberant personality out onstage.

Gonzales not only looks up to Mr. Wlasick and Suarez, but he also looks up some of today's biggest stars in tinsel town, such as Mel Gibson who began his career in South Wales, Australia in such films as, *Mad Max (1979)* and *Tim (1979)* which he garnered him an award for Best Actor from the Australian Film Institute, which is the same as an Oscar. He made his debut to the U.S in 1984 in *The Bounty*. Gonzales's other inspiration is Russell Crow, who also began his career in Australia's film industry as a child star, but got his big break in *Romper Stomper (1992)*. From there Sharon Stone picked him for her own film *The Quick and the Dead (1995)* and began his career in Tinsel Town.

Thanks to the people that helped him and through following his role models he is now home on stage. Gonzales' plan for his near future is to surpass his expectations in the role of Dr. Zubistki in *Fools* by Neil Simon. According to Gonzales the play's main theme is "love conquers all." Gonzales thanks his father. So next time you might catch this heartthrob in *Fools* or even in the Lunch Bag theatre.



Drama stars Josh Gonzales and Alfonso Suarez stand together contemplating the true meaning of comedy.

BY SANDY ARIAS

EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Alfonzo Suarez, known as funny man Lunchbag headliner, started a Drama student as a freshman. After four years of plays, musicals, and improvisation on stage, Suarez now passes on the torch to his counterpart, Joshua Gonzales. Suarez is in charge of directing Lunchbag theatre, El Rancho's version of Saturday Night Live, and invents the onstage games and skits, but after he graduates Gonzales will take his place. Even though these two thespians are good friends and seemingly behave like acting brothers, their styles are very different.

Alfonzo Suarez is a natural comedian. He says, "I don't try to be funny," but admits that after performing for El Rancho audiences for four years, "I know what makes them laugh." In addition, growing up, "I was always the stupid one, the comedian in the family," he says. Suarez also looks up to famous comedians like Robert Williams and Jim Carrey; "Nothing beats *Dumb and Dumber*." Suarez has intense passion for making people laugh because he says, "Laughter and happiness can heal all." He plans to attend Groundlings School, which offers classes in improvisation, and where many MADTV and Saturday Night Live performers got their start. He eventually wants to write with Gonzales for his own TV show. Whenever he is onstage, from his impressions of South Park characters to his facial expressions, he evokes laughter from the audience.

Suarez owes much of his success to Mr. Wlasick because he taught Suarez how to be comfortable onstage. Suarez easily molds himself for he is multitalented. He takes interest in any kind of art: he is a member of Choraleers, plays drums in the band Skalabaza and base in Loaded Dice, and can pull a mean *plie*. He dresses outlandish so when people see him walking down the street wearing a neon purple jacket with coke bottle sized, sun over sunglasses and tight jeans, they will say, "Hey that's that guy! That's Alfonso!" His wardrobe reflects his personality because as he puts it, "I'm stupid and loud and all ha-ha-ha." He says, his uncle Jose, who is a dancer and actor, heavily influenced him. "He was my idol before Mr. Wlasick," Suarez says.

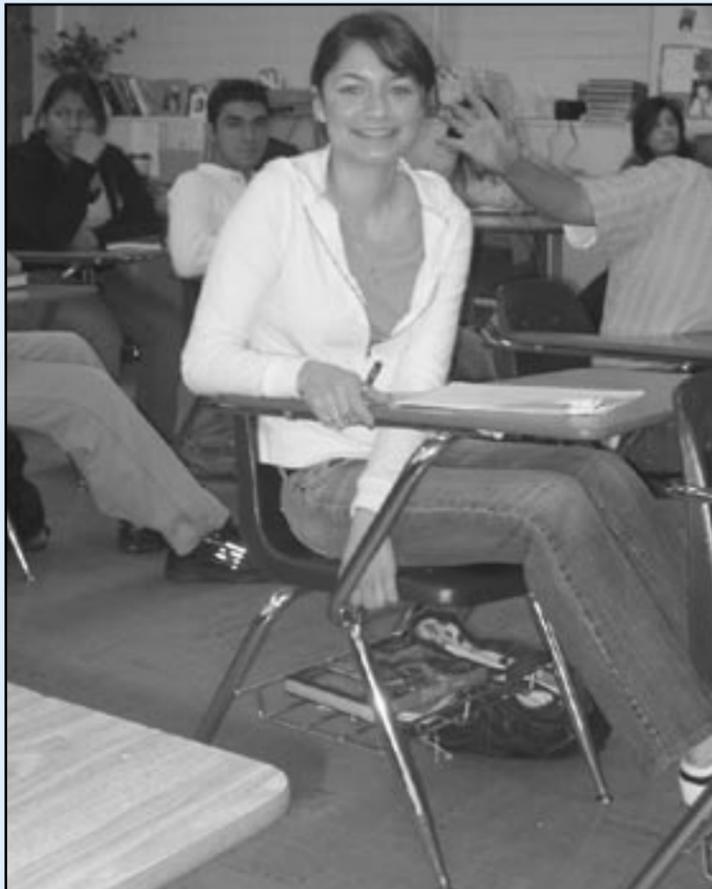
As the school year ends, Suarez comes closer to one day working with big name comedians, but also moves away from his Little Theatre roots. Lunchbag will lose one of its most experienced and talented actors, but Suarez has complete faith in his successor. He picked Gonzales to take his place because, "Josh is my partner, my buddy. We're always doing skits together onstage."

Getting to Know your President: A Glimpse into the Life of ER's A.S.B President

BY STEPHANIE CHAVEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Thought your life was hard? Think again. Valerie Velasco isn't just a senior at El Rancho but also the A.S.B President and a receptionist at a local real estate office. How does she do it all? Well like she said "I'm always on top of the game, whether it is work, school or my board of education meetings." She's a senior now and has always loved being involved in school activities, which of course is why she is now the A.S.B President. When asked if it was all worth it Velasco responded, "Of course I love going to all the board of education meetings and representing our school, the responsibility can be a little overwhelming but in the end it's rewarding!"

Velasco, just like any other teen, loves hangin' out with friends, going out to dinner, shopping, and of course going to parties. That is, if she has time. Velasco on top of all this has always maintained to 3.01 average. Velasco is an organized person who knows how to manage her time wisely. She loves math and managing her money. She plans on being a businesswoman and maybe one day owning her own restaurant in Hollywood. She is still uncertain as to which university she will attend because she is still waiting on her acceptance letters.



Velasco works hard to meet all the demands of her busy lifestyle.

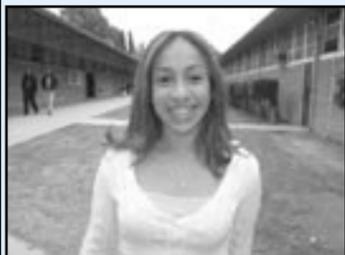
Velasco knows this is her last year and when asked how she felt, she responded "O my God, I feel excited, nervous, and depressed I feel excited to graduate, nervous to finally being able to go out into the real world and face life as it is, and of course depressed to leave the Ranch." Velasco is a great person who will always be remembered for

having a great smile and for her outstanding personality. Velasco, unlike many, has experienced some things others never will such as representing the whole student body as the President. Velasco says, "I've learned a great deal of responsibility from all my teachers and even from some of the students. The Ranch will always be in my heart."

Hualoa'a Who are You Taking to Sadies?



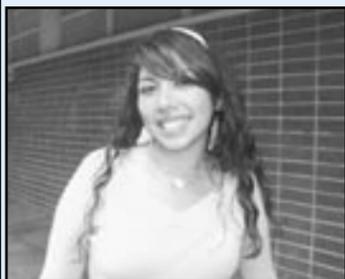
"I want to ask my ex. but I'm still not sure."
-Junior Mariel Sanchez



"My boyfriend, I've already asked him."
-Junior Yesenia Gaytan



"My boyfriend."
-Senior Stephanie Moreno



"My special friend J.J."
-Sophomore Yarely Arenos



"Were going with friends."
-Sophomores Crystal Conde and Jewliza Candia



"I'm taking my buddy Billy."
-Junior Marijke Torres

Welcome to McDonalds: Do You Want to Super-Size That?

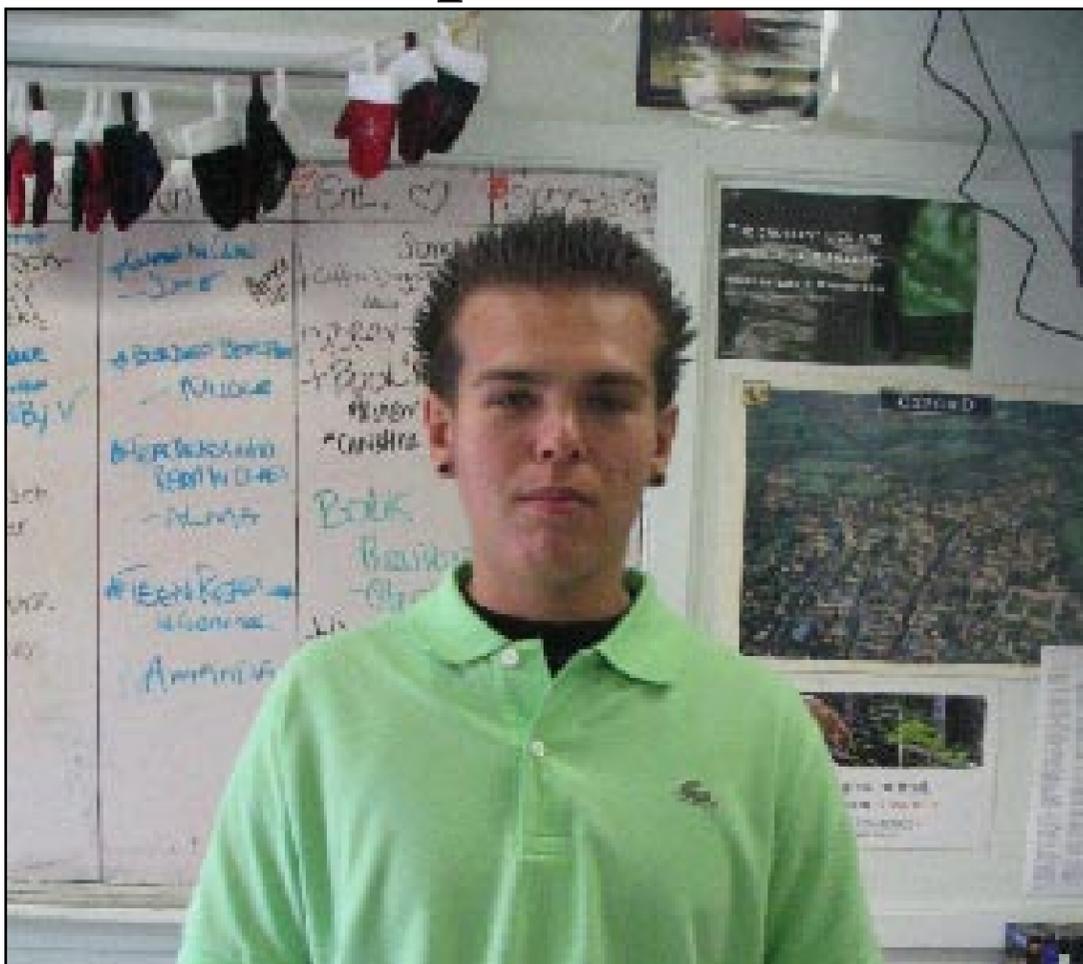
BY SAMANTHA ESCALERA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Christian Chavez, a senior at El Rancho High School was recently hired at McDonalds. He was working at Urban X, the store located in the Pico Rivera Towne Center. He explained that working at Urban X was "really difficult and not worth it."

"On my first day, they almost fired me for chewing gum. They overworked us all and it was not worth it," said Chavez. According to Chavez, "working at McDonalds may not be cool, but I wasn't about to get treated like that."

He is working at the McDonalds located on Telegraph, and until the one on Slauson opens, he'll be there. He is currently under training but he still gets paid.

Chavez is a dedicated student and one of his favorite subjects is Math. He will be graduating in June and has already been accepted to a few colleges, such as Cal State Fullerton, Fresno State, and Cal State Long Beach. He plans to major in engineering. For now, he is working and trying to save money to buy himself a 2006 Mustang GT. He isn't going to buy it all himself though; his dad is going to help him out too. He keeps his balance by staying on top of his



Christian Chavez is a hard working student who is determined to let nothing get in the way of his goals.

grades, working, and his social life. Currently single and ready to mingle, during his spare time, he likes to party and just hang out with his friends. When he isn't working, he also enjoys working

out. If he has trouble getting to the gym he just runs a few laps around the track. He plans to get his car soon and when he does, he says, "I'm gonna be ballin." Most people refer to him as a funny,

good-looking guy. Close friend, Valerie Velasco says, "He's totally awesome and always has a smile on his face." So when you see this guy walking down the hall, don't be too shy to say hi!

Dr. Martinez: Prepping for His Future

BY: SUMER SANCHEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Kevin Martinez, a junior at El Rancho is a very goal-oriented person. Martinez is currently working part time at Presbyterian Hospital in Whittier where he helps his fellow nurses and gains experience in the medical field "I love working at the hospital," says Martinez. "I've always wanted to be a doctor and it's just my luck that I would be able to learn so much from such great people." Martinez has been working at Presbyterian Hospital for the past month and already knows that the medical field is where he wants to be.

Soon after meeting Martinez, you just know that he is going to college. "Working and being a good student isn't that difficult. I enjoy what I do and I work hard for what I want. It's as simple as that."

Before working to become a doctor, Martinez's has plans for his immediate future. He also has his hopes set on graduating from high school next year with high honors.

Working at Presbyterian Hospital is not only a good place for Kevin to get a feel for his



future occupation but it is also a good way to save up some money for college. Martinez is planning on attending the University of San Diego which is a school that is known for its education in medicine, which for Martinez is very exciting. "I want to go to San Diego because it's one of the best medical schools, and if you can, then why not go to the best?"

Working hard, planning on attending college, and hoping to graduate with high honors are good motivations to keep Martinez's striving for nothing but the best. Martinez isn't going to let life just pass him by. He's going to go out and get what he wants and he wants to become a doctor. It goes to show that even in the present you can still plan and be ready for the future.

Let's Talk Tacos



BY SANDY ARIAS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Otoniel Gomez works at Rancho Restaurant, a taco place located in Pico Rivera on Beverly and Rosemead Blvd. He usually works on Mondays, Thursdays, the weekends, but sometimes fills in for his fellow employees. When his parents opened the place they looked for someone who had flexible hours and could work for less pay, and their son seemed to fit the description. Gomez started to work for his parents in eighth grade at their other business, but working at the taco place is completely different. Before, he used to cut up meat at his parents' small market but now he has to cook, clean, work the cash register, prepare and deliver the food, make "horchata" and "Jamaica," and water the plants. He deals with the customers constantly, and says, "It's a drag because you have to be super friendly to everybody even when they act stupid." He also hates the smell, because after being surrounded with "tons of meat and oil for a few hours, you start to smell real bad," he says. According to him, the best thing about working there is, "you get free food."

His coworkers make the job less boring, too. Because so few people actually work there, they all became friends and there are hardly any conflicts between them. They pull pranks on each other. Gomez remembers when, "Alex the butcher popped out of nowhere with a chicken and a crazy look in his eye. It was weird and a little scary."

He saves up all his earnings for college but uses twenty bucks here and there to go out. He tries to work as much as he can because he wants to help his parents any way he can especially since they manage two businesses. He says, "Even though I get tired and sometimes I don't feel like working, it doesn't matter because I do it for my family."

El Rancho Book Fair

What Book Did You Buy at the Book Fair and Why?



BY ABBY JAIME
 EL RODEO STAFF WRITER



Zaira Palomar 12th-
The Four Agreements,
 by Don Miguel Ruiz
 "It was recommended."



Jose Garcia 12th
 A sketch book
 "To draw"



Elmer Sigaran 12th
East of Eden by Steinback
 "I read *The Grapes Wrath* and liked his style of writing."



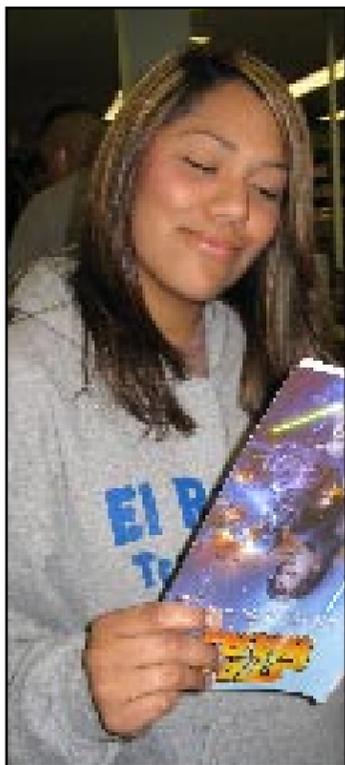
Zaira Palomar 12th
The Four Agreements,
 by Don Miguel Ruiz



Kristina Biado 12th
The Prince by Machiavelli
 "Because I like
 Florentine History."



Steve Francis and Tor Ormseth read *Goedel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid* to an El Rancho Mathematics Class.



Stephanie Moreno tries to show the camera her "reading skills" at the book fair.



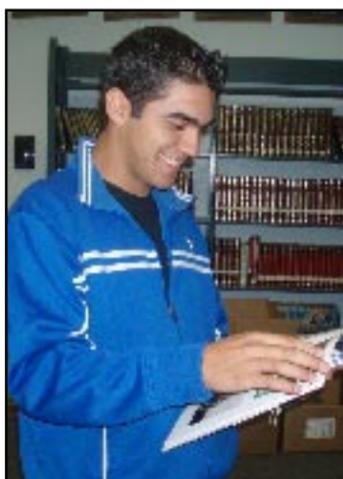
El Rancho students shop the bargain bin to get the best deals.

Borders Book Store Hosts its Annual Book Fair

NICOLE MECADO
 EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The annual Borders Book Fair was a success this year. A lot of students recommended and bought books. Purchases by students and staff raised over \$10,000 which meant that El Rancho gets a thousand dollars. Ms. Chodos said "it's so nice to see a student recommend books to other students. It shows a lot in their test scores when they do better in reading. This is the best part of the year." It's an exciting

event of the year for her, the best seller this year was the note book. Another book that did really good was the Japanese anime. Mrs. Chodos says "it was extremely generous of the staff that donated money and books to the school library". She herself bought twenty books from the book fair. A lot of music icon books were sold as well, such as Bob Marley, Metallica and Tupac. This year's a lot of teachers put in really big orders for their classes. Borders Book Fair was an enormous success for our school library.



Book Give-away in the Quad

BY: SUMER SANCHEZ
 EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

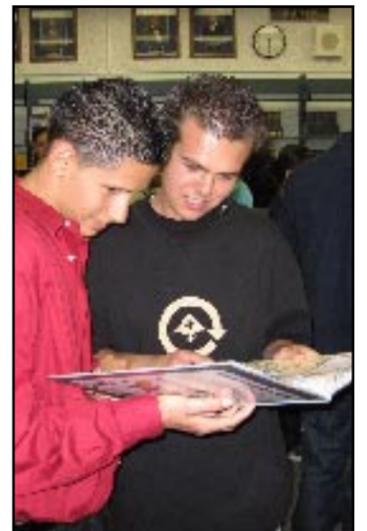
This year's annual Games in The Quad for Teen Read Week were hosted by the library on Tuesday March the 7th. The students of El Rancho gathered around the stage in the quad during lunch to get a chance to win one of an assortment of books including *Speak*, *My Bloody Life*, *A Child Called It*, *Da Vinci Code*, *Skateboarding is Not a Crime* and many more. The book giveaway included some questions as simple as, "R.L Stein is the author of what books?" and any of the students that participated and got the right answer received a free book of their choice.



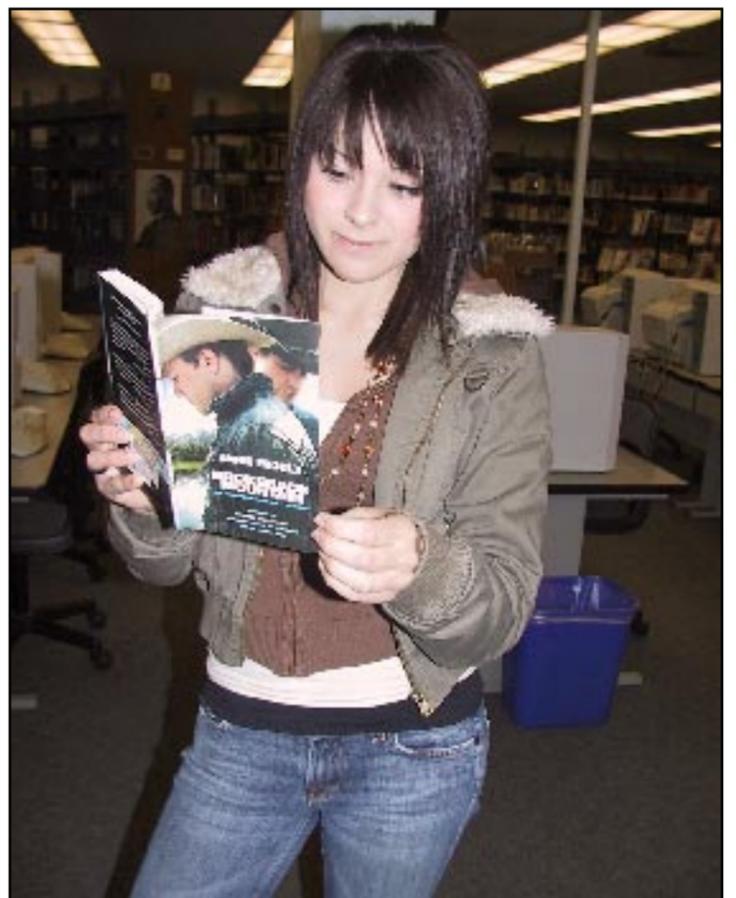
Superintendent Norbert Genis reads *The Giving Tree* to Freshman.



Mr. Francis reads and describes a very interesting book to a class for Teen Read Week.



Chritian Chaves and George Torres enjoy their time looking at all the books.



Lauren Vausquez picks up a scandalous copy of Ang Lee's homosexual love story.

Watch Out! *The Hills Have Eyes*

BY AMANDA CARRILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

It seemed like a rather odd Hollywood decision to have French filmmaker Alexandre Aja (Director of "High Tension") be the one to take a stab at American cult classics, like Wes Craven's 1977 "The Hills Have Eyes." However, Aja has stepped up to the challenge and delivered what is sure to become a horror classic in itself. This new, highly entertaining, cutting edge version of Wes Craven's 1977 classic has no problem letting you know just how nasty this horror



The Hills Have Eyes will leave you begging for your mommy and daddy.

ick is with it's brutally vicious opening sequence that sets the vile, merciless tone for the rest of the movie. Aja along with fellow writer Gregory Levasseur has succeeded in creating a gut-wrenching, violent horror film for the new generation of horror film enthusiasts. Watching this film the intense, never ending escalation of suspense and apprehension makes it a bit difficult to watch as the characters experience the nail-biting journey into the heart of terror. Aja and Levasseur have managed to refashion and update Craven's chilling classic's to terrify yet another generation of movie lovers everywhere. Thanks to the new screenplay "Hills" is a far cry from being the cheesy, predictable ick that most people expected it to be. "Gruesome" doesn't even begin to describe the horrors that the audience will be revealed to, from complete dis-

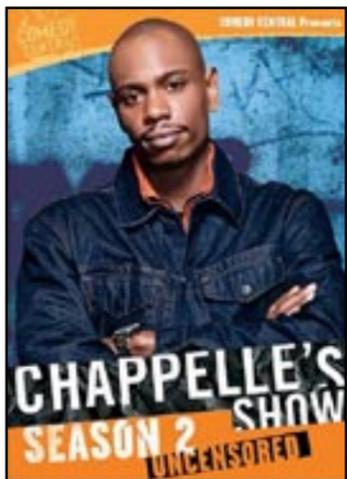
memberment to suicide and extreme shotgun violence, Aja has not only pulled out all the stops on this one, he's annihilated them. Possibly one of the best decisions Aja made while updating the film was keeping most of the original dialogue and action sequences intact while still adding an unbearable sense of dread throughout the entire movie; from start to finish every scene oozes with tension. Hundreds of miles away from civilization, while crossing somewhere in the southwestern desert a suburban family's vacation goes terrifyingly awry when they take a shortcut and their camper breaks down in what seems to be a bleak, seemingly uninhabited wasteland. But sometimes appearances can be deceiving. As the day fades to night they begin to realize that they're not the only ones trapped in the vast emptiness of

the desert. Only a short distance from them are the haunting remnants of a 1950s government atomic bombing test site. The abandoned homes sit still filled with the remains of typical 1950s style furnishings, right down to test dummies sitting perfectly poised at the dining room table it is obvious that this is no ordinary town. The deformed residents are starving, cannibalistic mutants who will stop at nothing to pick off the family one by one. Shooting, beating, and barbecuing them alive, the cannibals feast on the human flesh of each of the family members one by one enjoying the gruesome mayhem of the killing spree at hand. Miles away from any sign of civilization, the family must now fight against the bloodthirsty subhuman cannibals who track, torment, and destroy their prey in the most vicious, grisly ways for their survival.

All You Need For a *Block Party*: Some Kanye West and a Little Bit of Dave Chappelle

BY MONICA ALDERETE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Dave Chappelle's *Block Party* is an entertaining, unscripted movie in which comedy and hip-hop music come together. Famous for his comedy, Dave Chappelle organized a concert in which famous hip-hop artists attended as well as many of Chappelle's town neighbors and fans of his. Many of the artists included the talented Erykah Badu, Kanye West, Common, Mos Def, Kool Rap, John Legend and many more. During the concert, many of the artists came together and combined their voices to make an outstanding sound of which will make you step into beat. This movie will surprise



Dave Chappelle makes a comeback.

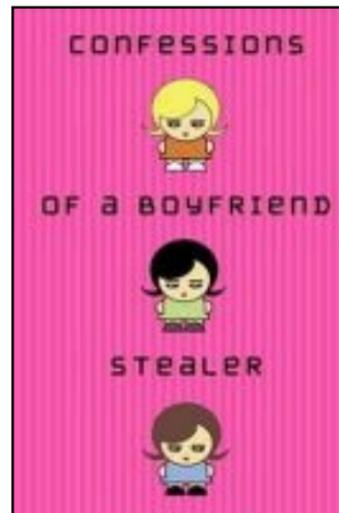
many whom would expect to see Chappelle deliver some more raw bits, but instead *Block Party* has more of a concert feeling than a comedy. Nevertheless, even

though it does not contain much of his stand-up, this movie shows how cultures can come together as well as music. As Chappelle says, "A comedian wants to be a musician and a musician a comedian, but they both need each other". With scenes in Ohio, and in various areas in Boston and New York, *Block Party* gives us a glimpse of the neighborhood as well as the people who live in it. Nonetheless, some of the scenes in this movie seem to have no point other than to take up time. The movie is an all around good movie with moving music and voices that will make you think twice about politics or everyday life. *Block Party* is a movie for anyone who enjoys hip-hop as well as Chappelle's comedy.

Warning: Boyfriend Stealer on the Loose

BY STEPHANIE CHAVEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Robynn Clairday's novel *Confessions Of a Boyfriend Stealer* isn't an ordinary young adult novel about a girl telling her story. *Confessions Of a Boyfriend Stealer* is a book written in blog form. While the main character Genesis tells her side of the story; other girls listen into what she has to say and instant message each other about what they think. Genesis steps into a hard situation when her friend's boyfriend decides to hang out with her while on a ski trip. Genesis is caught up in an unexpected situation that she has a hard time dealing with. She's one of the "Terribles," the elite group of girls who are the most popular in the school, so of course she has the right to be terrible, right? She has always hung out with these "cool" girls at school and they soon became the "Terribles." When CJ, Genesis' friend, realizes that her boyfriend is cheating on her with another girl, she's determined to



Don't leave your boyfriend alone!

find out who it is. While Genesis is safe and away from her friend's wrath she doesn't know what to do. If she goes back home she is officially no longer a "Terrible," but how can she let someone else take the fall? *Confessions Of a Boyfriend Stealer* is a book that deals with everyday problems in a teenager's life. Read it. It gives you some great pointers and great advice; that is, if you plan on becoming a boyfriend stealer!

Rockabilly Goes Gator



McMurder plays the cello too.

BY ALISSA CAREY
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Their music is upbeat and lively; while the subjects of their songs are, well, mostly about necrophilia, as some of the song titles prove (ex. You Look Pretty Dead). The Coffin Draggers show the fun and wild side of necrophilia, the side you've never seen before! While singing about topics that would make the average person cringe, they get the crowd moving and the place jumping. Their sound is a unique; they mix rockabilly, goth, deathrock, and to keep it interesting a bit of instrumental to create their own sound- which they call "Death-Rockabilly." The Coffin Draggers

are: lead singer and bassist Gator McMurder, who has played with many bands of different genres; drummer and back up vocalist Jesus Christ, who hates playing drums and only does it for the Coffin Draggers and their fans; and guitarist and also back up vocalist, Jose S. Sleeping. Jose has broken guitar strings with many rockabilly acts ranging from original 1950s rockers to present day revivalists. Live, the members of the band are playful devils and dish out witty comments to the crowd. Onstage they try to give off a satanic ambiance but offstage they may be the friendliest and liveliest people to ever ride around in a hearse. While playing a set they also take breaks every so often to toss merchandise - of both the Coffin Draggers and Gator's former band Bea's Pickles- into the crowd; so one of the few questions left is whether to buy a shirt or other merchandise or wait 'til Gator (the lead singer and all around nice guy) starts tossing shirts and other merchandise into the crowd. Remember, if you ever get the opportunity to see the Coffin Draggers live in action, don't be afraid to say "hi"...they won't bite.

What was the Last Movie You Paid to See?



"Date Movie, bad choice."
-Anitta Ramirez, 12th grade



"King Kong."
-Richard Franco, 10th grade



"I've never payed for a movie."
-Francine Rodriguez, 12th grade



"The Hills Have Eyes."
-Nicolas Raya, 12th grade



"Chicken Little."
-Alyssa Escarcega, 11th grade

Dons Try to Serve up Championship

Boys' tennis team shows they are ready for league play.



Team captain Brandon Flores hopes to lead the El Rancho Dons Boys' Tennis Team to a league championship.

BY STEVEN CAUDILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Dons boys varsity tennis team is coming off a mediocre season in which they finished in third place in the Del Rio League.

This season, in Coach Henderson's eyes, is expected to be drastically different from the past season. Coach Henderson's two main goals for the team to achieve this season are, "To win league and go to CIF as a team and as individuals." In order for this year's team to reach these expectations they will need to make a few improvements, "we need to improve on better footwork because it builds consistency, and what is also important at

the varsity level is developing a better mental game because it improves our strategy on how to out think our opponents."

The Dons played preseason games to prepare for their quest for the Del Rio League championship. Coach Henderson elaborated on the importance of preseason by saying, "The value of preseason isn't winning or losing, it's my chance to experiment with the team to find our starting lineup."

The Dons went into this past Thursday game undefeated and were looking for their second victory in league play on the road against the Chiefs of Santa Fe. The Dons dominated and won easily 15 to 3.

Baseball Team Hopes to Hit it Big

Dons Optimistic About League Play

BY ADAM GONZALES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Dons baseball team comes into this season with very high expectations for success.

Last season the Dons had a 16 win and seven loss season. They captured the Del Rio League crown by posting an impressive 14 wins and 1 loss record.

Last season the Dons made it into the CIF playoffs, but unfortunately loss in the first round. This year Coach Price and the Dons baseball team hope to once again take league, and make it into the CIF playoffs.

The Dons finished up preseason with a 1-2 record. Last week the Dons played their first game of the season against Montebello, and also their League opener against La Serna.

According to Coach Price, the toughest teams in the Del Rio League this year are: Cal High, Whittier, and La Serna.

This year's high explosive offense is going to be led by Albert Nolasco, Rudy Dominguez, Enrique Navarro, Steve Herrera, and Dominic Sanchez. The top pitchers on the Dons' roster are Rudy



Chris Ramos prepares for the opposing pitcher's pitch.

Dominguez, Jeff Adame, Johnny Garcia, and Marcus Ramirez. The two best defensive players on the team are Erik Garcia, and Enrique Navarro. According to Coach Price the best overall players on the team are Rudy Dominguez, and Albert Nolasco.

The Dons hosted the Cardinals of Whittier this past Wednesday. The Dons dominated right from the first pitch and defeated the Cardinals handily by a score of 4 to 1. The Dons' next game will be this upcoming Wednesday against the Santa Fe Chiefs. This game should be a good road test for the Dons early in the season.

Upcoming Sporting Events

Boys Tennis:
3/28/2006 vs. La Serna home, 3:15pm
3/30/2006 vs. Whittier home, 3:15pm

Boys Volleyball:
3/29/2006 vs. La Serna home, 4:30pm
3/31/2006 vs. Whittier away, 4:30pm

Track:
3/30/2006 vs. Cal High

Swimming:
3/29/2006 vs. Whittier home, 3:15pm
3/31/2006 vs. La Mirada home, 3:15pm

Baseball:
3/29/2006 vs. Santa Fe away, 7:00pm

Softball:
3/28/2006 vs. Downey away, 3:15pm
3/30/2006 vs. Schurr home, 3:15pm

Softball Team Posts a Perfect Pre-season



The girls' softball team hopes for a perfect season this year.

BY JANELLE DORAME
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Starting off pre-season with a record of 6-0 and 1 tie, the Lady Dons softball team only has room for improvement. In the last 7 games, the Lady Dons have managed to score 38 runs and have only had two teams score two unearned runs." Our infield is solid and the offense isn't too far behind, we're an awesome team and this season is going to be fun," says returning player, Vanessa Gonzalez." This year is looking great for these girls," Coach Clark says, "We're going to make it through the season, win CIF and run for the Title." Captain Jill Lapier adds, "This is our year, we are going 18-0" With the girls gliding through pre-season, they can't wait for April 4th and their first league game against La Serna. La Serna is currently ranked number one in the papers. Although the game against La Serna is important, having lost to them last year, the most anticipated game of the season is going to be against Pioneer High School. "We can't wait for that game, its going to be a good one," says starting shortstop, Stephanie Gonzalez.

Volleyball Team Looks to Dominate League Play

BY STEVEN CAUDILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Dons boys varsity volleyball team is coming off an amazing season. Last year they obliterated every opponent in league play resulting in a perfect ten win, no loss record. Overall they were just as dominating, losing only two games to an astounding nineteen wins. The success didn't stop in the regular season, it also continued in the CIF playoffs. The Dons won their first two CIF match ups and were destined for a third. Unfortunately though, they lost a tough grueling game to the Hemet Bulldogs. This was a game that they should have won in the fourth set but were unable to seal the deal and eventually lost in the fifth set.

Although the loss was extremely disappointing, the Dons and Coach Picon expect similar success for this season. Coach Picon touched on the season ahead and what she expects out of her team this season by saying, "Our goals for this season are to go undefeated and win the CIF championship." Those aspirations don't seem too farfetched for a team that continues to show improvement in preseason play.

Coach Picon elaborated on the team's great play in pre-season by saying, "Right now in pre-season we are dramatically improved from the end of last season." With that in mind the Dons have plenty of reason to look forward to a story book season. They will open league play on March 29th at home against the La Serna Lancers.



The Dons open up league play next week.



Swim Team Hopes to Repeat Success

BY STEVEN CAUDILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The El Rancho Dons swim team is coming off an exceptional season in which they finished second in the Del Rio League.

"Having my kids succeed in league has always been my number one goal," said Coach Francisco.

So far the Dons have been decent in preseason play. The captains of the team are Seniors A. J. Abrego and Allen Flores. Not only is this pair of captains recognized for their leadership qualities, but they are also key cognates in the Dons success in terms of wins.

The Dons first league swim meet was this past Thursday against La Serna, unfortunately the Dons came out of the meet unvictorious and winless in league.