

Sports Results:
See how El Rancho's sports teams have fared against their opponents, including all their season records.



Court Cases:
Read about how students from the AP U.S. Government class put on mock Supreme Court cases.



Winter Formal:
Look inside to find pictures of some of the happy couples from El Rancho's own winter formal.



EL RODEO



El Rancho High School • Volume 55 • Issue 7 • Friday, February 9, 2007

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Decathlon Team Places Sixth in L.A. County

BY THOMAS MEDINA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

El Rancho's Academic Decathlon has once again proven its worth at the Los Angeles County Academic Decathlon taking sixth place overall. This prestigious competition pits over fifty schools from the L.A. area against one another in an arduous series of tests and performing arts. The overall theme of this year's competition was China. Of the ten subjects, only three of them are not multiple-choice exams; these events are Speech, Interview and Essay. The other events, Mathematics, Economics, Social Science, Art, Music, Literature and Super Quiz, are all multiple choice tests the students have thirty minutes to complete.

The Academic Decathlon team consists of ten people separated into three groups: varsity, scholastic and honors. These divisions are based upon the students' unweighted GPA. The varsity or C slot students were seniors Nicole Campos, Damian Gamboa and Carlos Manzano. The scholastic or B slot students were seniors Edgar Aguilar, Sandy Arias, Jackie Morales, and Steven Vega. The honors or A slot students were senior and team captain Thomas Medina, and juniors Javier Garcia and Diego "Chewbacca" Rubalcava.

This sixth place finish is a step down from last years ranking of fifth overall. However, the team did much better in the Super Quiz category this year, taking a stunning second place in Division I. Overall, the team did very well compared to most of the previous years. The best El Rancho ever placed was four years ago when they placed fourth in L.A. County.

"Decathlon was a great experience for my last year at El Rancho," said Steven Vega, "not only did I learn a great deal, but I grew closer to nine other students." The decathlon members spent innumerable hours at school studying. Last week, the decathletes were excused out of all of their classes and were at school studying for twelve hours, from seven in the morning to seven in the evening.

Most members of the team felt that the time spent together brought everyone much closer together. "They started out as ten acquaintances, but quickly turned into a true team," said Edgar Aguilar. "I am convinced that I made nine true friends."

"I learned if you kidnap ten people and lock them in a little seven feet by ten feet room for six months and force them to learn about China, you get a pretty tight knit group of friends," said Sandy Arias.

This year's team also had to cope with Mr. Doug Anderson's retirement from coaching decathlon. He coached the academic decathlon team since it began twenty-five years ago. "Coaching the decathlon was a new challenge for me and I was grateful to have the support from old coach Doug Anderson," said new head coach Mrs. Lam. The team finishing in sixth place is quite an accomplishment with it being Mrs. Lam's first year coaching.

Senior Damian Gamboa has a little advice for all of the future decathlon teams. "Procrastination DOES work, but only if you can use it properly."

Academic Success: The El Rancho Academic Decathlon Team, finished sixth overall in the Los Angeles County Academic Decathlon and also placed second overall in the Superquiz event. The competition consisted of ten different events and over fifty-three schools competed in L. A. County.

Campus Career Day a Smashing Success

BY ROBERT PRIETO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Most, if not all, of El Rancho students are looking for a promising future. Career Day began on Monday during second period, with guest speakers in the Little Theater, and continued on Wednesday in the gym, where a wide variety of white and blue collar jobs were offered. Career Day has been an annual tradition ever since El Rancho first opened.

Some of the representatives at Career Day were past students and faculty members, such as Tom Mikalson, who was an El Rancho teacher for eleven years and now is a real estate agent. Mikalson's presentation gave a few points on life, such as "listening to people will make them like you more," and "in the real world [emotional quotient] is more important than [intelligence quotient]." Another alumnus of El Rancho Abby Gonzalez, graduated in 1999 and started her career as a freelance journalist. As a journalist Gonzalez did the behind the scenes work at a Los Angeles based broadcasting station. Unfortunately, the broadcasting station went belly up and Gonzalez lost her job.

Gonzalez currently works in Whittier at the SASFA (State Adult Student Financial Aid) Youth Center, which helps teenagers get ready for the work force. Gonzalez said her job acts as a "stepping stone [for teens] to [acquire] the necessary job skills."

On Wednesday both juniors and seniors were invited to the gym to hear from representatives about a wide variety of careers. The experience was intended to



El Rancho students were invited to the gym to learn about various careers.

give students an idea of which careers are out there for students after high school. A few of the jobs included working for Knott's Berry Farm, the United States Coast Guard, or even attending the Montebello Beauty School.

Since the minimum wage has gone up most students will be fighting for a chance to step into the real world or at least get some spending money. It is not only the extra cash that is driving kids to become employed, but also the experience and a chance to be able to list their past job listings on a resume or even on a college application.

Some of the careers being offered

are both part-time and full-time jobs. Some of the popular part time jobs are working at Knott's Berry Farm, or attending the Montebello Beauty School. The more popular full time jobs include working for the United States Navy or Coast Guard. Without a doubt, some of these full time jobs will require some minimum education, such as a High School Diploma, and experience, such as swimming or past work skill.

Several students who are seeking part-time employment in Media Arts in Technology and Telecommunications are hoping to learn about broadcasting and journalism.

From Africa to America

Ms. Segal Recalls Life in Africa and Her Dreams of Becoming a Teacher

BY NADIA DOMINGUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

"I can't believe that I am teaching on the other side of the world and I'm still me." Teaching since blank, Ms. Segal has found it to be a childhood fantasy turned reality.

Born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, Segal identifies her homeland as the "city of gold," where every one is "friendly and inviting." "If you want to visit a friend you can just drop by without calling," she says. Although there is a pleasant amount of friendliness, there is also a large amount of crime due to poverty. "Almost everyone has gates, locks, dogs, and alarms in order to protect their homes," she continues. Though this is a harsh reality, it does not faze her positive view toward her beloved hometown.

At a young age, Segal knew that she wanted to teach. "I would always pretend to be my sisters kindergarten teacher and boss her around. At the age of ten, I would take the fifth grade kids and teach them how to dance," she goes on. Because of this love for leadership, it only made sense to be a teacher. She received her honors bachelors degree in teaching at the University of Witwatersrand in English and drama in South Africa. She went on to teach dance and eleventh and twelfth grade English at a high school in Johannesburg. She also taught creative dance and movement at Central Theatre for disadvantaged kids. She recalls that "the first time I was asked to teach these kids, I was so glad because I could give something back. I could attempt to fix what was wrong and give them joy through dancing." She states that the last six years of teaching in South Africa were especially meaningful because "Nelson Mandela became president and schools became racially mixed. Before that there was a division between white and black and colored and Indian. Now school is for everybody, anyone goes." The school system in South Africa "is very different from the U.S. because there is a final at the end of twelfth grade that determines whether or not you attend a university. The kids who don't take that exam take an easier exam then move on to technicons, which



are like junior colleges in America."

Undoubtedly, America is a big influence in South Africa. "American culture has never been foreign to me," says Segal. Since the first language isn't South Africa is English, it is no wonder they show the same popular television shows that they do in the United States. "They show American soap operas, Seinfeld, The Simpson's, and CNN. They also have the same restaurants like KFC, Mc Donald's and Pizza Hut" she continues. When asked what there is to do for fun over there she states that "the teenagers go to parties, raves, and clubs, but are watched very carefully as far as drugs go."

At last, it wasn't until six years ago that Segal decided to move to the United States. Although most people leave South Africa for political reasons, she came to be with her children. "I knew that my kids were going to move over here and I wanted to live on the same continent as them. I didn't want to be one of those grandmothers that was only able to show pictures of their grand children to friends, just because they lived so far away. I knew that I still had time to make a life for myself here." On arriving, she received her masters degree from the University of Phoenix and renewed her teaching credentials. When asked to compare students from here to those in South Africa, Segal

responded "the kids are culturally different, but overall, kids are kids wherever you go. There are always the quiet ones and the class clowns."

Though Segal lives a content life in the U.S., inevitably, she sometimes misses home. She misses her dad, brother, and close friends. Even though she has made new friends, she "will never replace the old." She also "misses the friendliness of the people. They would always greet you wherever you went." Segal especially misses the bread and chocolate there. "The bread has so much more texture compared to America bread. The chocolate is also a lot creamier and richer," she adds. Because she at times misses home, she tries to visit once a year. She visited two summers ago and stayed with her brother. "I joined in with his life, looked after his baby, and cooked. I also taught dance at the Market Theatre and Dance Factory."

Although she feels adoration towards her native soil, she now feels like a visitor whenever she goes. When asked if she would ever move back she confesses that she wouldn't. "I thought I would, but it's harder to imagine now because I've made my life here." Overall, Segal wants "students to feel good about themselves and their potential, never frightened about learning," no matter where she is teaching.

On the Job: Michael Bonilla

KARISSA GUILLEN
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Often during the high school years, students tend to search for job opportunities; Michael Bonilla is one student who became an employee of Del Taco.

Bonilla is currently a junior at El Rancho, who had been hired a month ago at the Del Taco in the Pico Rivera Towne Center. Bonilla did not think that he would get hired, because he had never applied for a job before; lucky for him, he was one of the first to apply.

"My parents did not want me to apply for a job because they said it would interfere with my studies and bring my grades down," says Bonilla. "When I had finally convinced my parents to let me apply for a job, they gave me two weeks to prove to them that I can keep up my grades."

Bonilla had always wanted a job, but had never taken the opportunity or the time to actually apply for one. At school Bonilla always heard about how students loved their jobs and how they love to spend their money on anything they wanted. He then got inspired and wanted to earn money of his own instead of asking his parents for money.

When Bonilla found out that he was approved for the job, he was excited to finally have an opportunity to earn money for his car "Melinda". "At times [work] gets tough and very tiring because I am always busy and don't have much time," says Bonilla, "But I get through it."

Other students from El Rancho who were also hired at Del Taco are Carina Padilla and Max Estrada. Padilla wanted a job because she needed money for a trip that she is planning to take later in the year. Estrada enjoys his job because it does not interfere with school, baseball practice or his girlfriend.

Even though at times Bonilla finds working at Del Taco difficult, he manages to cope with it. "I enjoy spending time at work because all my co-workers are now my friends and they are fun to be around."



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Stop Feeding the Gulls!

Students Need to Pick Up After Themselves



BY CHRIS GALIZZI
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

About two weeks ago, El Rancho students and faculty members sacrificed a Saturday to clean up our campus. But sadly their efforts went down faster than a kamikaze plane. Students displayed the hypocrisy of their accomplishments when even as Pride Day came to a close, Mr.

Romero had to pick up napkins and bottles from students who had just finished their free pizza.

The campus has become so filthy that a new species has flown to El Rancho – seagulls! After lunch you can see students covering their heads with backpacks and books trying to protect themselves from being defecated upon by these huge birds. Often after lunch the quad looks like a deserted dump; you can see bottles, wrappers, nacho cheese, and ketchup packets spilled everywhere.

In my opinion no kid really wants to live or even associate

themselves with a filthy environment, but I feel some of our students have become too dependent on someone else to pick up after them. The sad thing is that our custodians keep catering to these students. Every lunch these offending students dump their trash and about ten minutes after the bell rings the custodians come out and clean the entire quad. Well I feel this

habit needs to be broken. Guidance officials should be patrolling the campus during lunch and should ticket anyone that litters.

Maybe students are learning from this sad situation that no one really cares and that as long as this image is maintained then everything is just fine. Remember “Monkey see, monkey do.” If students see adult authorities not caring about an issue immediately then why should they act as responsible young adults?

This trash issue isn't only being clean it's also about individuals taking responsibility for their role in their environment.

Hey! How 'bout Some Props? Celebrate Some Recent Campus Successes

BY SANDY ARIAS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

I am tired of hearing everyone complain about El Rancho. No one has anything positive to say anymore. If you ask me, El Rancho is not as bad as most people paint it to be. We got students being featured in the LA Times, AP teachers that do wonders with their students, and an Academic Decathlon team that doesn't do so bad either.

Litter fills the halls, but who cares? The students don't seem to care. Most seem to be right at home in their filthy environment.

What goes on outside of class is nowhere near as important as what goes on in class. El Rancho doesn't do so badly academically, as can be seen in the passing rates of the students who take AP courses like Calculus. El Rancho is home to a long list of experienced and intelligent teachers such as Mr. Francis, Mr. Meza, Mr. Wlasick, and Mr. McMullen just to name a few.

Football gets the most recognition at this school. However, after a horrible season, people were quick to highlight El Rancho's losses. Most students forget that our volleyball team

was league champions last year, cross-country almost won CIF in recent years, and that water polo often splashes its way to victory.

Many students tend to forget that the El Rancho band even exists. The band manages to play at football and basketball games, pep rallies, field shows, concerts, and houses a winter and spring drum line as well as a color guard. The approximately two hundred students in band usually place first in every event or at least top five. Any recognition? No, I don't think so!

Choraleers kill their vocal chords trying to represent El Rancho in various competitions only to be mocked by most of the student body, especially the male participants. American Idol is so popular, yet singers on campus that rival Kelly Clarkson's vocals are ridiculed simply for trying to bring home trophies for El Rancho.

This negative attitude has infected everyone. Every year the students seem to care less and less. As the student population increases each year, more and more students get lost in the massive, faceless crowd. Still, El Rancho students have a lot more to be proud of than most of them realize.

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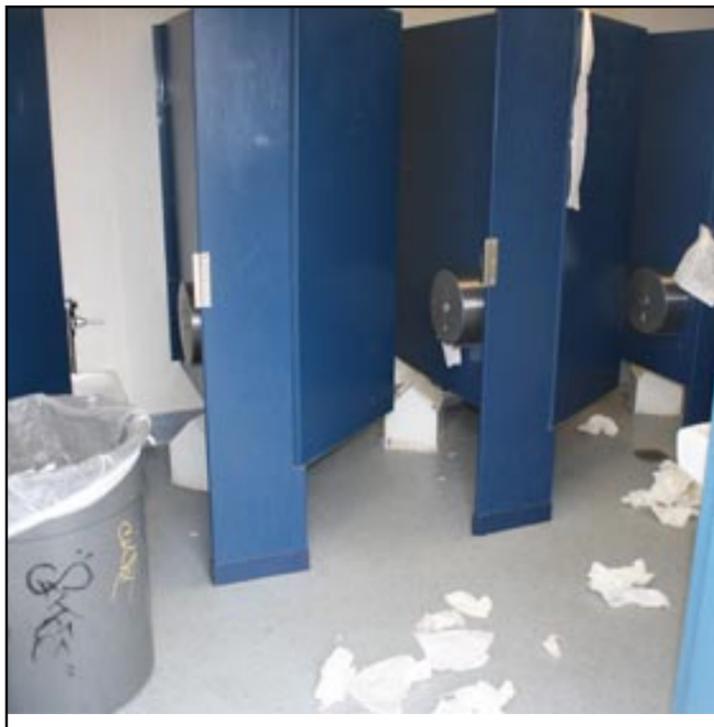
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El Rodeo is published twice a month, except during vacations, by the journalism class of El Rancho High School, 6501 S. Passons Blvd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660.

Has Don Pride Gone Down the Drain?



BY ALEJANDRA MOTA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

A filthy environment is not safe for anyone. Yet the restrooms at El Rancho have become just that once again—FILTHY! So, whose fault is it?

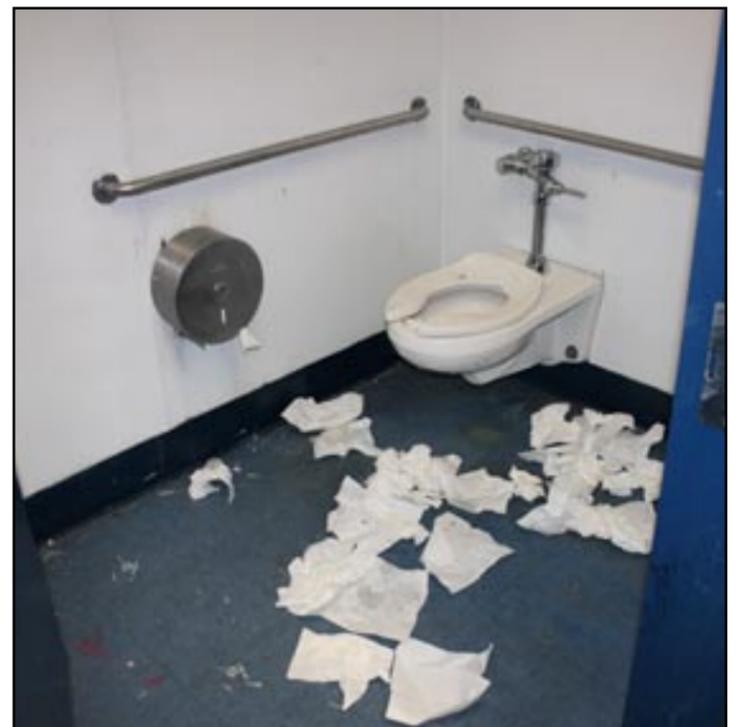
As you enter some of the restrooms on campus, the first things that you'll notice are the reek of urine (more so in the men's room than

in the ladies), and the graffiti on restroom walls and stalls.

Another issue is the lack of paper towels and toilet paper. Yet, stacks of clean paper towels have often been found in trashcans or on the floor unused and untouched.

Some of the restrooms do not even have paper toilet seat covers, which are supposed to be in stalls for sanitary reasons. Sometimes the covers are stocked, but some careless student has thrown them all on the floor.

The lack of toilet seat



covers puts our health at risk—but when they are available, they are thrown on the floor. We, the students, are at fault. We should pay more attention to our restrooms and help improve them rather than dirtying our surroundings.

So where is the pride, Dons? Pride Day shouldn't be the only day to beautify our campus. If we are all aware of our filthy restrooms, why hasn't anything been done? We do not clean up our mess daily, but we sure do contribute to it everyday. Is it

really necessary for us to dump napkins on the restroom's floor when there are trash cans inside? And graffiti may be art to some of you misguided students, but, please not on our campus!

Keeping our restrooms clean should be a priority.

If it really matters to us, we can resolve this problem ourselves, without having to depend on dean supervision. Next time you decide to use any restroom on campus, remember to keep your surroundings clean, not just for

Water Polo Star Ready to Travel Across Country



Senior Kristen Rodriguez has been in Girls Waterpolo for four years.

BY ROBERT GARAY
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Leading girl's water polo to a promising league championship this year is senior Kristen Rodriguez. Her tremendous success in the sport can be attributed to the amount of hard work spent in the pool and the sacrifices she has made.

"At times there are sacrifices we must make because

of practices or games, but we know it's for the over all good of the team," Rodriguez said. Feeling confident and fired up this year, Rodriguez believes her team is prepared to handle the best the league has to offer.

Rodriguez was first interested in water polo after talking to the head coach nearly four years ago and has been playing ever since. Rodriguez says, "What I love about water polo is the team

effort it takes to score and the feeling afterward knowing the trust and help from the others on the team made a difference."

In water polo, teamwork is most important and with the trust and support the girls have for each other, it's no mystery why they are one of the most dominant teams in the league. "I consider the team like a second family; we fight, learn, and grow together," Rodriguez says, "There's no where else I'd rather be than fighting along side my sisters on the team toward a championship."

Thinking about her future, Kristin made a life changing decision. A few months after graduation, she will be traveling to the other side of the country to attend the college of her choice.

"I will be moving across the country to attend Utica College in New York," said Rodriguez, "I know it won't be easy moving away from my friends and family, but I feel its worth it considering Utica's exceptional water polo and academic program."

Other than water polo Rodriguez is currently involved in El Rancho's Associated Student Body program. "I wanted to be part of A.S.B to be more involved with the school and to just help out where I can."



Team Captain Jose Dominguez hopes to make this season successful.

Team Captain Seeks a Successful Soccer Season

DAVID TORRES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Being his senior year, Jose Dominguez will soon have to say goodbye to the soccer program at El rancho. He has been a part of this team for the past four years. Dominguez as mentioned above plays soccer in the position of right forward or striker.

Dominguez has been playing for twelve years, with club teams such as LA United and Guerreros Azteca. He began playing the sport at a young age because, "I would watch soccer games on the TV with my dad and after the game was over, I would try to do the moves that the players did during the game. My two favorite teams are America from Mexico and Arsenal which is an English team."

Dominguez, in his spare time, and like most other athletes, loves to work on his soccer skills. He also spends his time with his friends, and often goes out with his girlfriend. "My favorite move is 'the Snake' which was first brought to the soccer world by Ronaldo de Assis Moreira who is better known as Ronaldinho Gacho."

"My skill has become better because of the Saturday morning practices that we have had and because this program has great coaches. In the past three years though, the team has improved because we became more united. This is because before, we would play as individuals, but now, especially this year, we have been playing more as a group of friends and especially, as a team."

Dominguez also has a

younger brother who plays soccer; his name is Emilio and he is currently a junior, but he is also on the varsity team. Dominguez said that Emilio has influenced his game play because, "People would always say that he is better than me and these words would motivate me to try even harder and to become a better player overall. The only downfall in my soccer career would be that sometimes I would over work myself which would bring me injuries which would stop me from playing."

"School has also taken time away from me for playing, but without education, one really doesn't have a secure occupation or a place to receive money from. Luckily though, whenever I feel down I always have my girl friend that supports me 100%."

Dominguez's brother said, "I have helped my brother out because I would make him juggle the ball on times when he had nothing to do and I also helped him improve his shooting accuracy and strength. However, I cannot say that he has not done anything for me because on and off the field he is always there for me whenever I need advice or support. I can honestly say that he is a really good brother."

Coach Correa said, "Dominguez does a great job as a captain because he keeps other teams members on the same page. He is a strong leader overall and this is probably because of his experience with the sport. His relationship with his brother is very interesting, however it is also a relationship that works somehow."

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League

Cy Vasquez:
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League

Miguel Perez:
2nd place in
League

Tony Fernandez:
2nd place in
League

ER's Wrestlers Overpower Opponents on the Mat



Wrestling team captain Billie Rivera attempts to pin his opponent during league finals on February 3rd.

BY JAZMIN DIAZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The boys wrestling team ended their season on a decent note. The boys managed to wrestle their way into third place in league with a team record of 3-2; however, some of the boy's individual records exceeded that of the teams. Five out of fourteen guys will advance onto CIF in Los Oso's in two weeks, and five others will be serving as possible alternates to represent the Del Rio League.

Everado Sanchez, Jose Marquez, Armando Cerda, Josh Bello, and Chris Hidalgo will all get to travel with the team to the individual CIF championships; however, there is no guarantee that they will receive

the chance to wrestle. "I would have liked more 3rd place results and less 4th place results; they have to train everyday and hope they get lucky and get to wrestle at CIF," stated Alvarado.

Captain Billie Rivera managed to pin his way onto obtaining 1st place at the 215 weight class. "I feel awesome, great," exclaimed Rivera, "all my hard work and training has paid off, and it's a really good feeling." Captain Cy Vasquez also managed to obtain a seat to CIF, by placing second in league. "It's great that I placed again this year, but I didn't get first," remarked Vasquez. Last year Vasquez managed to win first in league, but this year he would have to settle for second after losing to Cal High.

Junior Joe Salas on the

other hand was a little more bitter than proud. "I feel upset, disappointed. I should have beat Pioneer," confessed Salas. Although this will be Salas' second trip to CIF, he will have to wrestle twice as hard because he has to prove himself capable of surpassing a 3rd place league victory.

"One year, one day at a time, don't think about it yet," preached Coach Alvarado to the wrestlers. Luckily the boys will have two weeks to get their act together. They will get to train long and hard before setting out to CIF in Los Oso's Calif. There, the boys will have to go up against not only some of their old league competitors but some of the top wrestlers in the surrounding vicinity before advancing onto Masters and State.

Loupe Awarded Athlete of the Month

BY SELISA PONCE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

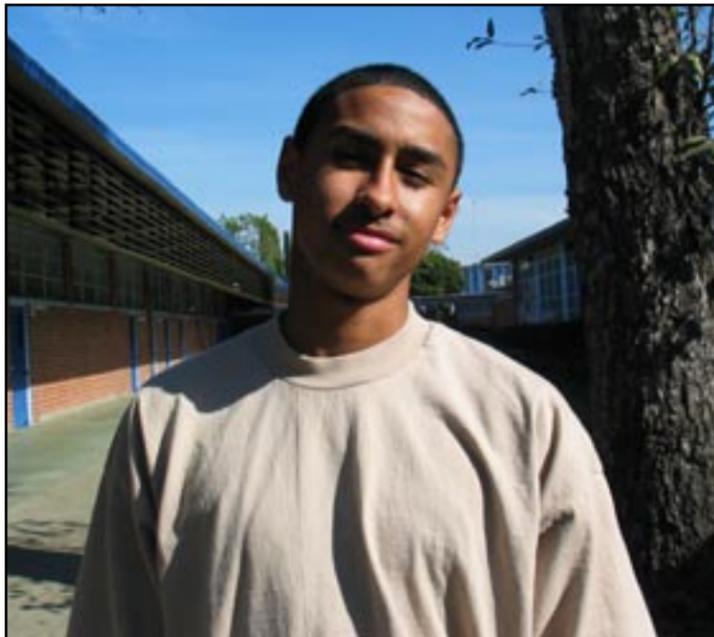
January's Athlete of the Month, senior Matthew Loupe is living the high life. He happily gets to play on Varsity Basketball, maintain a 3.33 G.P.A., and spend time with his loving girlfriend.

On the court, Loupe gives off an intense amount of energy and tends to leave almost everybody awestruck by his absolutely amazing basketball abilities.

Varsity Coach Ray Elliott believes that Loupe is a "tremendous young man" and is much more than just a great basketball player, but also a wonderful role model for the rest of the Varsity basketball team.

Fellow teammate, senior Abner Morales, speaks very highly of Loupe and considers Loupe to be "very funny, extremely energetic, and even a little loud." Morales is genuinely happy that Loupe was the lucky athlete to win the award. "I believe that he definitely deserves to get this award," said Morales, "he plays very, very hard and he never quits."

Senior David Talavera,



Senior Matthew Loupe received the January Athlete of the Month award for his achievements on the basketball courts.

another fellow teammate, wants to send a warning to the Del Rio League because "Matt is ready to beat them all." Loupe's "immense energy both on and off the court" should put fear into the rest of the League since this skilled athlete may be one of their biggest threats.

Besides dedicating him-

self to basketball and his studies, Loupe makes sure to make time for his girlfriend. He does not have that many hobbies. He spends a lot of his time practicing basketball. However, he always makes sure to make time because the most important thing to him is being with his loving girlfriend

whenever he has a spare moment.

After he graduates later this year, Loupe plans on going to Cerritos College to get all of his General Education classes done. Coach Elliott hopes that Loupe is "successful in whatever he chooses to do" because he knows that Loupe is more than capable of accomplishing even the most difficult tasks.

Next year's Varsity team players are going to have a hard time living up to the high standards that Loupe has set. "Matthew Loupe treats everyone the same and isn't conceited about his amazing basketball skills," said Morales. The returnees will definitely have to push themselves hard to prove themselves worthy of earning this prestigious award next year.

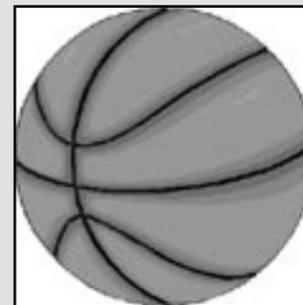
In the end, Loupe's hard work has definitely brought him what he deserved. "I've played all my life and I am very surprised that I got this award." A great award given to a great guy, there's no better way to end the month of January than to make Loupe the luckiest guy on campus.

Sports Results



Boys Soccer:
vs. Cal High
ER-2 Cal -4
Overall, 7-2

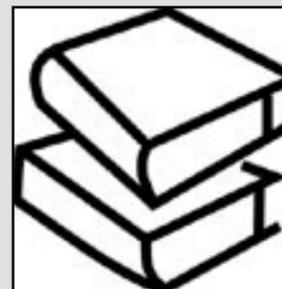
Girls Soccer:
Overall, 5-12-4



Girls Basketball:
Overall, 12-9



Wrestling:
League, 3-2



Academic Decathlon:
Superquiz Relay,
Tied for 1st with
47 points

Girls Water Polo: Overall,
16-8

A Winter Wonderland

A Winter Dynasty

JAZMIN DIAZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

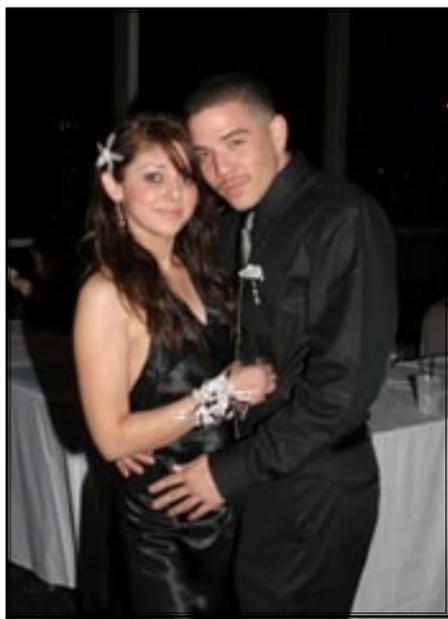
Students, teachers, athletes and anxious parents filled the Don gymnasium on January 24. This basketball game would be a little different than the others; this halftime the Winterbelle Queen would be announced. Miss Jacky Fuentes, Winterbelle 2006 would pass on her throne onto one of the six anxious seniors. Little did Fuentes know that she would be crowning someone from her own family, her younger cousin Elaina Velasco.

Velasco is a very active senior here at the Ranch. Velasco has participated in TEAM, Social Justice, swimming, wrestling stats and is currently a Pepster, a Yell Leader to be exact. Now, Velasco can add her Winterbelle title to the ongoing list of accomplishments.

Seniors Stefany Sanchez and Danielle Rios were also named Winterbelle Princesses. Sanchez has participated in softball, volleyball, and ASB. While Rios has participated in Track and Field and ASB here at the Ranch.



Elaina Velasco and her date pose for a night of fun, memories, and victory.



Cristina Alvarez and Edgar Cordeo get closer for a evening of dancing.



Winterbelle attendees assembled for a photo to commemorate an evening worth remembering



Jesus Curiel and Christine Mayer pose for a memorable night.



Diane Aguayo and Christian Nuñez savor the delicious appetizers.

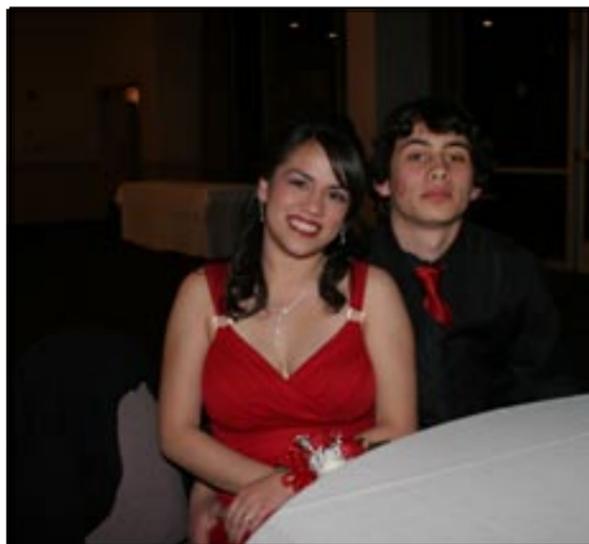


Nick Razo, Jennifer Cerda, and Armondo Montes grace their presence at the dinner table.

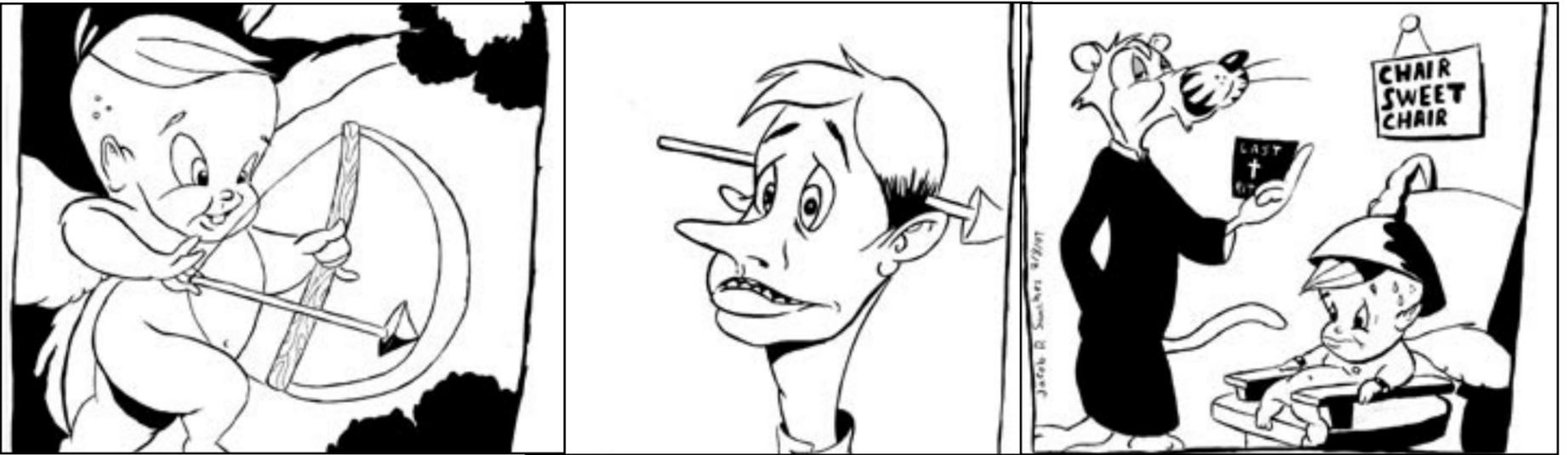
A Winter to Remember

JAZMIN DIAZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

It was a night to remember for most El Rancho students. Although there were a few complaints about the food and the music, it was a memorable event for those who were lucky enough to be accompanied by the right person. Friends mingled, ate, took pictures and danced the night away in a simple yet beautiful room. For those Seniors it was a bittersweet moment, knowing it was one more event to check off the list of dwindling senior activities. The freshmen looked astonished and amazed at the arrival of their first major high school event. Little do they know, their freshman Winter Formal is only a stepping stone compared to Senior Prom.



Sara Lopez and her date pose for a quick pose.



Hopeless Romantics Pour Their Hearts Out

To: Erick

I just wanted to tell you how much I love you! Happy Valentines Day.

From: Rosalinda

To: Josh,

You have always been there for me when I needed you the most. Nothing in the world can show or say how much I love you.

-Alexandria Alusha

To: Julie

I remember the first day I met you in the park. It feels just like yesterday. Now, six months later, we have become closer. I love you so much.

From: Mauricio Samayoa

To: All My Girls

Hey girls I just wanted to wish you guys a Happy Valentines Day. I hope our last year at the Ranch is the best ever!

- Gina Mariscal

To: Mayra C.

Muah, muah muah muah, muah, MUAH!

Love, Angel T.

To: My Waterpolo Honeys

I love you girlies! We have been through a lot this season. It was like a rollercoaster, but through it we stuck together and came out on top. We are strong girls... I mean women and we should be proud of each other for making it this far through these long 4 years of our lives. For my seniors, this is it we have accomplished so much and I know that it'll continue in the future I love you guys!

- Salina Cardenas

Hey Love,

I just wanted to wish you a Happy Valentines Day. I hope you like my poem:

You're the cream cheese to my bagel.

The tapatio to my sopa de vaso (cup of noddles)

The nacho cheese to my Hot Cheetos

The chile verde to my Casa Garcia nachos

The carne to my burrito

You're the ketchup to my fries

The strawberry filling to my pies

I'm your Burger, you're my cheese

So be my girlfriend,

Won't you please?

- Daniel Alcala

To: Everyone We Love,

Even though we can have drama, the good times are the best times and we always have fun. On Valentine's Day, single or taken you're all in our hearts.

Tons of Love, Piscilla & Claire

To: Courtney

I love you my princess, hope we have a great Valentines Day. Muah.

To: Michelle Lerma

I love you Michelle! You're the best thing that has ever happened to me.

-Aaron Rodriguez

To: Tracy Banuelos

Hey well, just wanted to wish you a happy Valentines Day. I'm sorry I can't tell you face to face but I really like you since that one day we met hopefully I'll ask you out one of these days.

- Anonymous

To: My Mango,

Hey you, you know the reason why this gram is here but hey it is still a cute way of saying I Love You. We have gone through lots of tears and smiles, always next to each other. Thanks. Je t'aime avec tout mon Coeur.

Lots of Love, Your Orange.

To: Olivia

Roses are red. Violets are blue. Nothing is more beautiful than you. I love you Olivia.

From: Braultito

To: Chipmunk,

Well it has been an awesome 9 months with you. I just wanted to say I love you and thanks for always being there for me.

-Teddy Bear

To: My Fatty,

It's been a memorable past 11 months, we've been through so much, both good and bad. You've helped me through a lot, and I appreciate you for it. Just remember I love you mucho beaucoup.

From: The Queen

Seniors Take on the Supreme Court

BY ROBERT PRIETO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The nine justices approached their chairs and stood. The Chief Justice stepped forward, asked the petitioner and respondent if each was ready, and declared that the Court was now in session. The AP Government students took their seats inside the Little Theater and the nine justices prepared to hear the attorneys' arguments.

AP Government and Intro to Law teacher Ben Meza is having his senior AP students participate in simulated Supreme Court cases. Meza says, "Some of the cases are real case. Some are federal court cases, but not necessarily Supreme Court cases; the case might have gone to the court of appeals or the district court level. They are all real cases or are based on real cases."

One case, Chase Harper v. Poway Unified School District, pitted the petitioner's (Harper's) attorneys, David Torres and Joty Kaur, against the respondent's (Poway Unified School District's) attorneys, Stefany Sanchez and Jennifer Goodson. The case concerned Harper, who had worn a T-shirt, with the words "Homosexuality is Shameful," to school. Harper was suspended from school because he chose to wear the shirt on Poway High



Seniors Denise Barrios, Andrew Palacios, Bianca Ortiz, Jessica Jennings, and Nicole Campos sit and await to hear their next trial.

School's "Day of Silence," which celebrates sexual orientation rights. Harper claimed that his freedom of religion and freedom of speech were violated because he was suspended. Torres and Kaur argued that Harper was simply expressing his religious views and did not direct the message at any individual person and therefore he was not promoting violence or hate behavior. Sanchez and Goodson claimed the T-shirt was disruptive, because the school was offended, and the school's handbook of rules

clearly stated that derogatory connotations were prohibited by school policy. On Monday, Chief Justice Bianca Ortiz stated that the mock Supreme Court had ruled, in a six to four decision, in favor of the respondent.

Meza has been having senior team students take part in simulated Supreme Court cases for about twenty-five years. The Supreme Court simulation gives students "a hands-on look at the Supreme Court" and forces them "to do research on First Amendment cases, either freedom of

speech or freedom of religion." The justices get the opportunity to write legal briefs and the attorneys get the chance to formulate persuasive arguments.

Meza has his students perform the activity because he believes "the judiciary is probably the hardest concept of American Government for students to grasp." Meza thinks the simulations help students to "get a better understanding of how the Supreme Court works." In Soto v. D.C. Board of Medical Examiners the Court had a six to three decision in favor of the petitioner. All the other cases, Preston v. University of Colorado in a seven to two decision, Southworth v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin in a unanimous decision, and Armstrong v. Beaufort County School District in a eight to one decision, ruled in favor of the petitioners.

Meza says that he has "been impressed in grading the papers of the justices." "I've been impressed with [the justices'] insight and the number of cases they themselves are familiar with. I think the attorneys have done a good job in answering the questions the justices have because it's an impromptu," said Meza. Every year Meza enjoys the mock Supreme Court cases and he hopes that students learn by taking part in the simulations.

Ask

Amber!

Sabrina Ramirez-17

I'm planning on going to Cal State L.A. in the fall and I was wondering if I should live in the dorms or stay at home. Since the college is close, I think I'm more on the staying home side, plus my mother wants me to stay home. She worries about me too much and does not trust that I can live on my own. Where should I live?

In order to grow up and become independent, you need to leave home. Even if the college is 2 blocks from where you live now, you should really get out and experience college life. You are going to have to provide for yourself. You will learn- not only academically, but you will mature so much by just moving out. From what I am told, people that live in dorms, especially for their first year, do better than students who live at home. You're going to have to sit down with your mom and tell her you have to live in the dorm while attending college. You are not going to be her baby girl forever. It will probably be easier to convince her because the college is close. You can visit her anytime you want. Focus on your life and what you want to make of it. Moving into the dorms would be your best bet on success.

Nemo Collection Is A Dream Come True

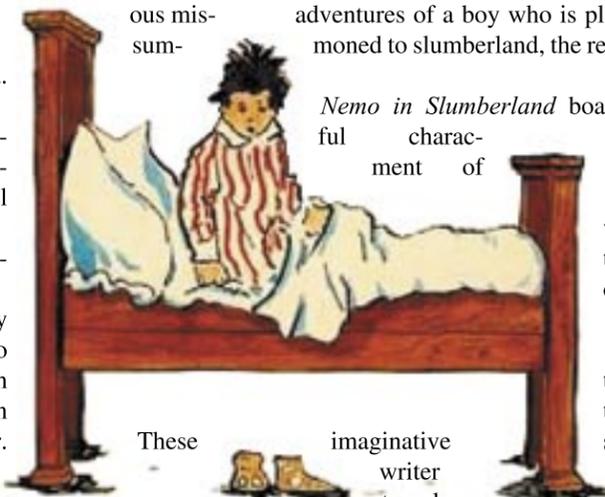
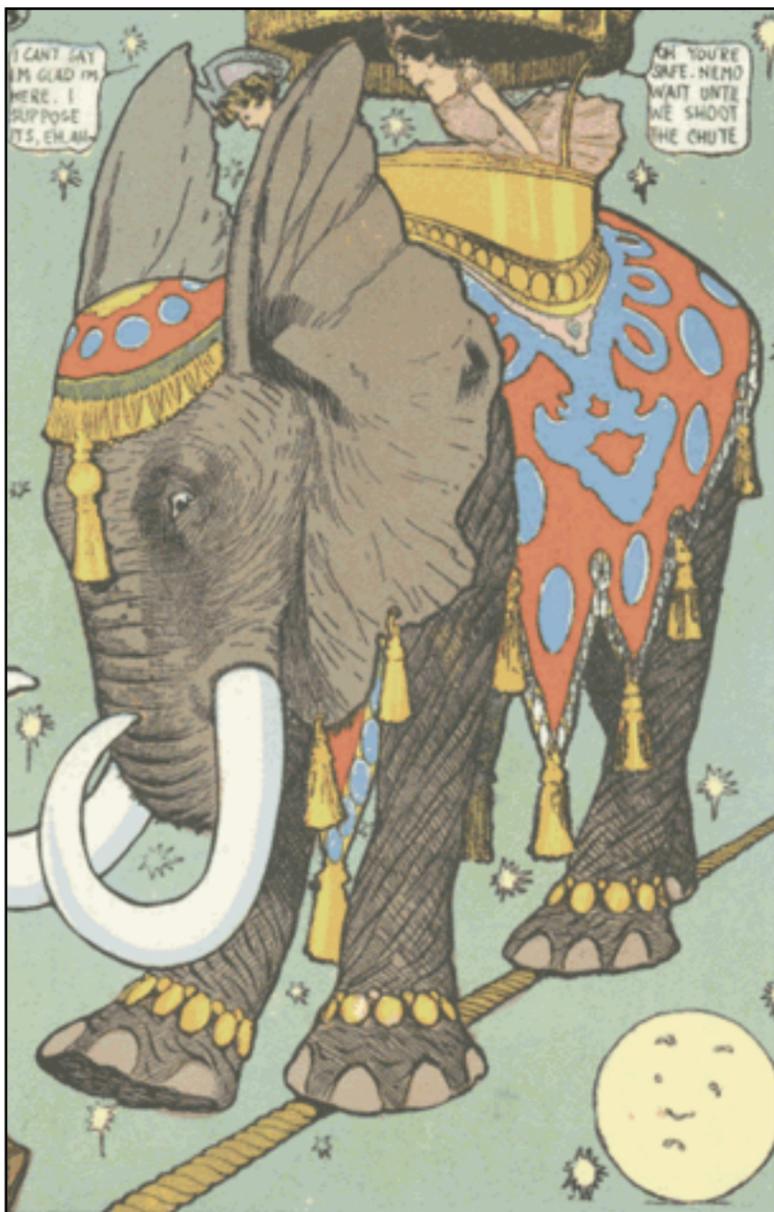
By JACOB SANCHEZ, EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Often cited as the father of animation, Winsor McCay's crowning achievement was his masterfully drawn *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, a comic strip that graced the pages of *The New York Herald* from 1905 to 1911. Publisher Evergreen has released the complete run of *Little Nemo in Slumberland* in a robust volume certain to satiate the appetites of cartoon connoisseurs who have grown dissatisfied with wallowing in the doldrums of contemporary comics. *Little Nemo in Slumberland* revolves around the various misadventures of a boy who is plagued by cryptic dreams in which he is summoned to slumberland, the result of eating unhealthy foods before bed.

Little Nemo in Slumberland boasted an ever expanding stable of colorful characters, and the almost panel to panel experimentation with perspective to worlds in which they could unfurl in an ethereal manner. What Surrealist writer Andre Breton called "a purely imaginative mental construct." The strip was timely, coinciding with the rising popularity of Sigmund Freud's writings concerning psychoanalysis, and presaging the Surrealism movement that would revolutionize the art world later in the twentieth century. McCay's curious characters and equally interesting locales echo the emphasis on the unconscious that Surrealist artists such as Salvador Dali held in common.

However, nothing is perfect, and *Nemo* is not without its flaws. McCay appears to have considered the letters and speech balloons in his strip to be of little importance, as suggested by his crude execution of both. In addition, McCay's lavish landscapes often overpower the characters, creating cluttered panels.

Perhaps the pinnacle of comic strip art in the twentieth century, *Little Nemo in Slumberland* has yet to be surpassed by any other Sunday strip.



Smokin Aces Delivers Death in Spades

By BIANCA ORTIZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

If you like enthralling, action-packed, bloody, funny movies then *Smokin Aces* may be right up your alley. *Aces* is filled with A-star celebrities including Ben Affleck, Alicia Keys, Common, Jeremy Piven, and Ryan Reynolds. The basic outline of this movie is about a druggie magician, Buddy "Aces" Israel who snitches on the mob. When the mob boss Sprazza learns about Israel's deal with the FBI he puts a million dollar hit on his life. The only catch is that Sprazza wants Israel's heart. FBI agents (Ryan Reynolds) and (Ray Liotta) are against the clock to keep Israel alive because assassins (Alicia Keys) and (Ben Affleck) are out to win a million dollars. Because the hit is so high a swarm of assassins fight to win the million dollar prize.

This movie was actually pretty good, although the blood scenes were just a little too violent for my taste.

turned out to be very funny including Bateman's character who has a taste for women's clothes. This movie mainly focused on the action scenes which were greatly choreographed. Although I give this movie three stars out of five, I do not recommend that you go see this movie with family. *Aces* should be seen with a group of friends that enjoy an interesting and an action packed movie.



A Foreign Sound Inspiring New Generations

By AMBER SCHMIDT, EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Since his first release in 1967, Caetano Veloso has remained a consistent hit-maker in his enormous, culturally diverse home country, Brazil. His musical breadth rivals that of Frank Zappa, and as a poet, Brazilians adore Veloso for his lyrics the way Americans love Allen Ginsburg, another passionate and witty observer of modern life. His poetic and polemic works are true masterpieces. As Caetano says, "I make my records as a painter would paint his canvas." Veloso is mainstream—a bossa nova man who went psychedelic and came back. While other pop icons of the '60s and '70s have passed into obscurity, or the great beyond, Veloso continues to produce new music and tour.

Caetano's Malian voice and acoustic guitar has inspired artists such as Beck and Jack Johnson. His urbane style in his music is a refreshing break from the usual over-recorded guitars and overly pulsating drums. He has a relaxing, almost meditative approach to music making. While conveying culture, he uses musical elements from American blues and folk though mixing in Malian tropicalismo. Veloso has been a catalyst for many of the artists today. Artists from everywhere use his music to remind them that there is more you can do with music— not every sound has to originate from one style. Veloso's smart satin voice transmits assurance and sensuality, but it is important to remember that for Brazilians, he's much more than a singing star. He is an intellectual, a voice of conscience through whom Brazilians have been mediating their lives for three decades.

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