



El Rodeo



Ellen Hopkins shares insights with aspiring writers

BY MARISSA ARMSTRONG AND SOL MENDEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITERS

Mrs. Zeko's 10th grade honors English classes and other English classes enjoyed a visit from *New York Times* Bestselling author, Ellen Hopkins.

Hopkins has worked as a professional writer for the last thirty years. Her repertoire includes twenty nonfiction children's books, three adult novels, and fifteen young adult novels, the first of which, *Crank*, was based on the real-life experiences of her daughter.

Hopkins' successful career in writing has led her to travel extensively, and she has spoken at many public high schools around the country. Before her emergence into the young adult scene, she traveled as a freelance journalist. "When did I know I wanted to do [writing] for a career? I was almost probably thirty before I decided I wanted this as a career," says Hopkins. She has also gone on many book tours for her bestselling work, as well as countless book festivals and writing events. She writes in verse because she has always been a poet and she likes writing differently. "I've been writing like forever..." Hopkins says.

Given her involvement in multiple genres, Hopkins now writes about two novels a year. She is now revising her two upcoming books for 2017, one of which is the sequel to her adult novel, *Love Lies Beneath* (2015).

Zeko's 10th grade honors English had the chance to read *Traffick*, which deals with five teens victimized by sex trafficking. The class wanted to go the extra mile to make sure that victims get the help they deserve; the students fundraised \$1550 to donate to the non-profit organization Ventana Sierra which helps at-risk kids.

Zeko reflected on the experience, "I think the students are extremely fortunate to meet a *New York Times* bestselling author and to hear her story. I was so impressed with my sophomores for raising \$1550 to help at risk youth get off the streets and into college."



Ellen Hopkins signs books for the students after teaching them useful writing tips.

Academic Decathlon team brings home the hardware



The Academic Decathlon team is proud of all its achievements for this school year.

BY MARISSA ARMSTRONG
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

After months of preparation, El Rancho's Academic Decathlon team competed in this year's two-day county competition on January 30th and February 6th. And finally, on February 11th, our team received the long

awaited results at an awards banquet held at Quiet Cannon Country Club.

The team ranked eleventh overall out of a total of forty-one schools across Los Angeles County. Though this was an improvement over last year's score, it was not enough to get our team to the state competition. Since only the top ten schools were allowed to advance to state, our

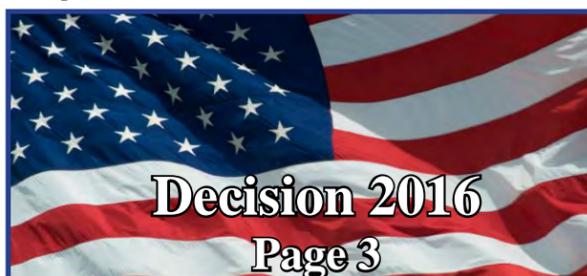
team was just shy of its mark.

Though the team will not be advancing to the state competition in March, our decathletes did not by any means walk away empty handed. Every member of the varsity team medaled in at least one subject, bringing home a grand total of 17 medals. As always, our team shines in the performance aspects of competition; Speech, Interview, and Essay. Every varsity team member brought home a medal in Speech. This feat is credited to the team's speech coach, Mr. Wlasick, as well as its overall coach, Mrs. Palomares.

The team also earned five medals total in the subject of Interview, our second best subject. And finally, we had one medalist in Essay and one in Economics.

An official list of the medals/medalists is as follows. Speech: Chris Ramos, Marcela Cisneros, Olivia Ball, Sidney Carroll, Manny Cruz, Marissa Armstrong, Mia Alvarez, Elizabeth Martinez, and Alexis O'Neal. Interview: Chris Ramos, Marcela Cisneros, Olivia Ball, Sidney Carroll, and Alexis O'Neal. Essay: Sidney Carroll. Economics: Mia Alvarez. The team's highest scoring member was Marcela Cisneros.

Though the team was just shy of achieving its goals for state this year, it has higher hopes for next year and even more of a motivation. On a quick note, the team would like to thank its many coaches for giving much of their personal time to improve the team: Mr. Wlasick, Mr. Francis, Mrs. Jepson, Mrs. Brown, and again Mrs. Palomares most of all.



Talking: The dating killer

talking

When two people are not exclusive with each other nor have established what they are as a couple, but have some sort of relationship.

"John and I go out a lot but we're just talking." or "We've been talking for months now but we're not together."

by Mike June 16, 2004

BY NAYELI HERNANDEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Talk-ing /'tôkiNG/ n. 1 The action of speaking; speech or discussion. 2 The most common relationship status in a world afraid of commitment: they've been talking for months, but it's not serious.

Dating and relationships have never been a teenager's forte, but it seems as if the idea of dating altogether is becoming an idea of the past.

The action of gathering up all of your courage to ask the person that sits next to you in chemistry out on a date has turned into "sliding into their DMs for a month and calling it 'talking'." The idea of a continuous string of dates between two people until they decide to, one: take the next step and go 'steady'; or two: part ways, is all but normal today.

Urban Dictionary defines "talking" as follows: When two people

are not exclusive with each other nor have established what they are as a couple, but have some relationship.

"Talking" gives people the opportunity to claim a title without actually committing to each other seriously. This perplexing idea has become a way for people to say to each other, "I don't want to be tied down to you, but I also want you to stay loyal to me and do everything a boyfriend/girlfriend does without actually giving you my full attention."

Often, people want to determine if the individual they have their eye on is right for them, but society has become so fixated on titles and possession that it is close to impossible to avoid falling into the idea of "talking." Whereas, a connection could have been proven after a couple of dates.

Most relationships have lost meaning and value because of this new concept.

Senior Christopher Glock believes that the idea of "talking" versus dat-

ing has transformed relationships into "material items to be envied by others."

"I guess people do [relationships] nowadays just to say they have a girlfriend, [or] say they have a boyfriend. Like, it's not really about connecting with someone or caring about someone. It's just about being able to have something like that," says junior, Guillermo Montoya.

Teenagers and young adults tend to focus on what is or isn't theirs. Relationships have become just another thing to have and show off to social media and the world. All of this flaunting could be considered a form of showing pride, but more often than not, the parading of relationships is a way of saying, "I want you to know this is mine, and you can't go near it."

In the case of "talking", all of the showing off to social media has become a form of "we haven't defined our relationship, but we're technically something." Even with all of the undefined vari-

ables, others have a mutual understanding that this means the pair is off limits because the idea of 'talking' has taken over the idea of being in a relationship.

Two people can meet and become a couple in a matter of days without any meaningful connection because society pressures people into believing that relationships or having someone to call theirs is a vital necessity.

The idea of being alone scares people so much that it has become better to get together with someone you barely know since it's such a crime if you're single for a matter of time.

"Talking" not only takes away from developing meaningful connections with another person, but it also contributes to the lack of social skills that stop people from continuing the beauty of dating.

It's 2016, stop "talking" and start dating.

Has Valentine's Day changed?

BY JENYFER LOPEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Has Valentine's Day changed? This question has been floating around and asked by many curious people on Valentine's Day, especially by curious teens.

Personally, this particular day has changed. Not in a bad way, but in a good way.

February 14 is a day filled with love. It's a day where a husband decides to buy his wife flowers, a day where a wife decides to cook a fancy and romantic dinner for her husband.

Teen couples out there might spend this day differently. A boyfriend purchasing a giant teddy bear for his girlfriend, which girls love by the way, or a girlfriend purchasing a nice shirt or pair of shoes for her boyfriend.

It is all incredibly romantic, but there are a few differences as well. For example, back then it wasn't so important to people to spend this day alone, especially to girls who are single on Valentine's Day. Now, for some strange reason girls are feeling upset about this day because they don't have a special someone to spend it with.

Many opinions have been running through the minds of students here at school. "Personally, I hate Valentine's Day, it's a stupid holiday; I don't get the point of it", says Senior Annette Gomez.

Other students wonder if Valentine's Day is an actual holiday. "I don't understand what being someone's Valentine means, does it mean you two are going steady now or does it mean you two are going on a date" says Senior Marla Casillas. That thought is actually very right. The reason most stu-

dents around are not a big fan of this day is because some of them might not have had someone special to share this day with. Once they do, their thoughts may change.

To other students Valentine's Day is a special day for them. A few students believe that this day has not changed. Some students find that every year the same thing happens. The usual chocolates, roses, and teddy bears that say "I love you" on them.

The truth behind this holiday is that it is not all about spending it with one's partner. Valentine's Day is also a day where friends can spend the day together. Or a time where friends can be silly and buy each other chocolates or a little teddy bear.

Some people might have a different emotion toward spending Valentine's Day with friends, but it shouldn't feel strange at all. This day can also be a day to show your

friends how much you appreciate them for always being there and making them laugh when they are feeling stressed or beating up the boy or girl that gave them broken hearts.

As a result to the thoughts and opinions that people have for this day, I would say that for the most part, not many people believe that this holiday has changed very much.

Another thing, it's okay to not be with someone on this day. Sure being with someone might be a great thing, but so is having alone time. Being single is not such a bad thing. So, if you are going to be spending Valentine's Day alone go right ahead. Watch movies on Netflix, buy a giant bucket of ice cream, and just enjoy being on your own Valentine!

El Rodeo

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El Rodeo, the student newspaper of El Rancho High School is an open, public forum for student expression and an opportunity to discuss its audience's issues of concern. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the position of the school board, administration, sponsors, parents, student body or advertisers.

The Editorial Board, which consists of the editor-in-chief, section editors, and assistant editors, will determine the content of *El Rodeo*.

Student journalists on the *El Rodeo* staff will make every effort to publish following the legal definitions of libel, obscenity and invasion of privacy. Consistent with California Education Code section 48907, the staff will refrain from printing material that may incite students, be a violation of school regulations or disrupt school operations. At the beginning of each semester, journalism students will be reminded of the legal, financial and ethical implications of each article they write.

Ed Code 48907 affirms the right of high school newspapers to publish whatever they choose, so long as the content is not explicitly obscene, libelous, or slanderous. Also, there shall be no prior restraint of material prepared for official school publications except insofar as it violates this section.

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I'm, "Feeling the Bern..."

BY MICHAEL NEELY
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Anytime someone asks Independent Senator Bernard Sanders what he wants to reform in American lifestyle and politics, he responds with, "Let us wage a moral and political war against the billionaires and corporate leaders on Wall Street and elsewhere, whose policies and greed are destroying the middle class in America."

Sanders is currently running on the Democratic platform to assure a strong and steady campaign since politics in the United States is two-party driven and not choosing a political party today is committing campaign suicide. Out of every Republican and Democratic candidate, Sanders is the obvious choice for support of a Medicare for all, a tuition and debt-free college, abolition of the corporations and wealthy who have driven this country to poverty, fight for women's rights, care for our veterans and much more, in order to secure a more progressive America that cares for all of its citizens equally and ceases to favor the wealthy factions who oppress the rest of the economic ladder on a daily basis.

The senator endorses Medicare for each and every individual to assure that no one has to continue to be sick or die because he/she didn't possess enough currency. The Affordable Care Act is a start, but is only a law permitting affordable health

care, and we need free nationwide coverage. "Health care must be recognized as a right, not a privilege. Every man, woman, and child should be able to access the health care they need regardless of their income. The only long-term solution to America's healthcare crisis is a single-payer national health care system," says Sanders. His plan involves separating health insurance from unemployment which would provide innovation and entrepreneurship in every sector of the economy. Sanders's plan creates a more progressive America that will join other developed countries in securing health coverage for every citizen.

Moreover, Sanders desires college for every individual to be able to attend college without having to worry about not being able to pay the tuition or get into debt as a result of loans. His plan's payment would come from, "imposing a tax of a fraction of one percent on Wall Street speculators who nearly destroyed the economy seven years ago." Countries such as Switzerland and Britain have imposed a similar tax and the time has come for the United States to join the trend to assure the top wealthy do their share to help the lower classes and the middle class that no longer exists due to the wealth gap created by the billionaires taking advantage of our citizens to feed their greed.

Furthermore, the senator argues that the wealth inequality prevalent in this

nation is an enormous issue that needs to be reformed because "There is something profoundly wrong when the top one-tenth owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent." To cure this disease that is plaguing our land, Sanders will raise the minimum wage to force corporations to pay their workers fairly, reversing trade policies like NAFTA, which has driven down wages, forcing corporations to pay their taxes and not going overseas, expanding social security, breaking up huge financial institutions and several more steps.

Also, he strongly endorses women's rights, especially regarding a woman's control over her body, allowing access to vital medical and social services, and guaranteeing equal pay for equal work. These issues exist due to the Republican Party's consistent effort to prevent women from ruling their lives involving: abortions, birth control, and the wealth gap that exists between men and women. Abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctor and we have no right to interfere, and birth control would prevent an abortion so it perplexes me as to why Republicans would block both. Women are only paid about 76 cents for every dollar a man makes and it's high time this inequality has been equalized.

Lastly, Sanders argues that our veterans have been treated insanely poorly, and it's immoral to do so since they're

the ones who have put our lives on their countless times. "Instead of cutting benefits for the men and women who have served our country, we should ask the most profitable corporations and the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share." To guarantee justice and care for our veterans, he will strengthen the VA health care system, make comprehensive dental care available to all veterans, and provide pre-deployment and post-deployment support to family members and service members.

All of these reforms to the ubiquitous issues in our nation and more can all be seen on Sanders's website. Many candidates simply complain about what's wrong with America, Sanders does so as well but also proposes legislation and acts on how to fix these same issues. His rebellion against wrongdoings in the country date back to his Vietnam protests. This man is exactly what America needs, an honest, hardworking, everyday man who understands how it feels to have to perform an insurmountable amount of labor to make barely a living, who cannot be bought out and only accepts campaign funding from anyone generous enough to donate. It's time we elect a leader, not a puppet who does corporations' biddings. As it firmly states at the bottom of his website, "Paid for by 2016, not the billionaires."

Best Republican Nominee?

BY TIM RIESGO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

There are many options when it comes to choosing who the best Republican nominee should be for the 2016 Presidential Race. When I think of the potential candidate who not only can lead but benefit the citizens of America, Marco Rubio is definitely that person. Rubio believes in making college more affordable, not increasing the minimum wage to help small businesses, and repealing Obamacare.

If elected, Rubio plans to make college more affordable, not free. Many citizens complain that college is too expensive, which is very understandable, and they would rather have college be free. Though by making college free, taxes will be raised and Rubio does not believe in hurting America with higher taxes. Instead, Rubio wants to create a system where students are informed of how much money they will make for the major they choose, and if that is the right career choice for them. To pay off student loans, Rubio wants to make the amount small for citizens who choose a career that does not make an adequate amount of money and only a bit higher for those with a higher paying job. This method will prevent people from choosing majors that will lead to no work and help them not waste time and money.

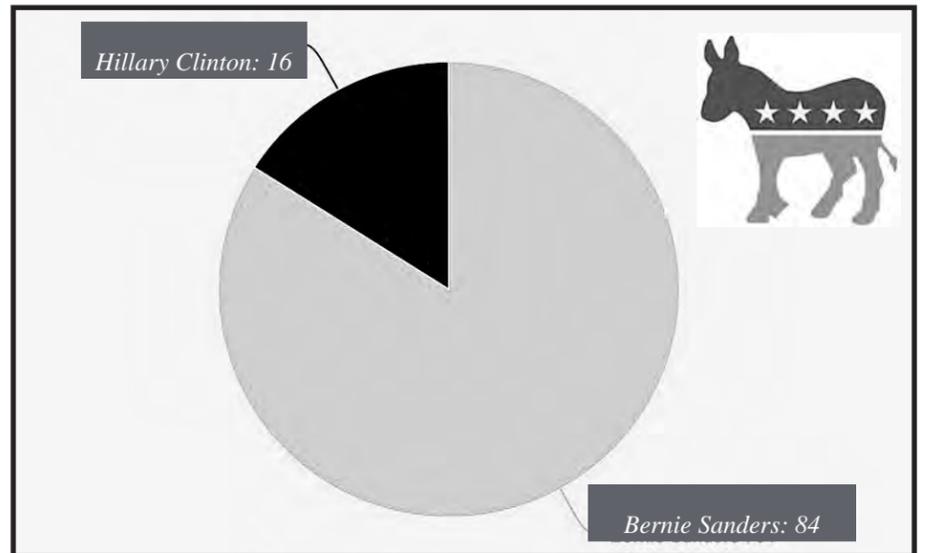
Another plan Rubio has in store for America is not raising the minimum wage. In fact, he believes that the government should eliminate minimum wage as it is an outdated system and only hurts small business and job growth for Americans. Workers should be able to negotiate their wages with their employer based

on the skills they bring to the table, not what the government says they should pay an employee. This idea only encourages American citizens to increase their skills rather than to be the bare minimum. If an individual has the skills of a \$15 an hour employee they deserve it and should work even harder to get higher wages.

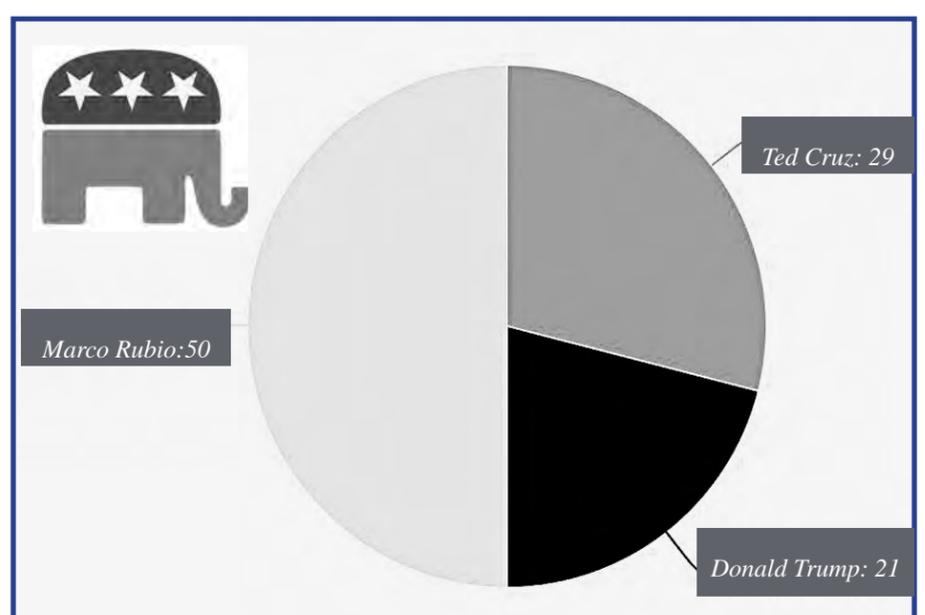
Finally, Rubio wants to repeal Obamacare. Obamacare is an overpriced and poor health care plan that not only hurts hard working families; it also affects the youth. Forcing the citizens of America to pay three times the amount they would pre-Obamacare is ridiculous. Healthcare should be a free and competitive market to help promote lower costs and higher benefits, not the lousy benefits Americans receive today. Not to mention that with Obamacare, most hospitals do not want to take patients with their Covered California plans because they will lose money. The people of America should have a choice of whatever healthcare package best fits their budget similar to car insurance or any insurance out there. Obamacare does the opposite of its purpose, putting financial stress on families in America.

Rubio has provided the citizens of America with great plans for the future. Republican voters in this year's primary should definitely not overlook Rubio, as they will be missing out on an excellent opportunity he has given them. Candidates like Donald Trump are not the answer to creating a better America, but with Marco Rubio on the ballot, Republicans' desires will be met.

Student Poll: Who would you like to see win the Democratic Primary?



Student Poll: Who would you like to see win the Republican Primary?



Math @ lunch tutors assist students



Mr. Melgar and math tutors educate students during lunch on a Friday in the quad.

BY MARTIN ZAMARRIPA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Math is not the most important thing on a student's mind during lunch, however any student can easily pay Mr. Francis a visit in I8 for help or advice. He is always more than happy to help. "Math in the quad" is a new idea developed by Mr. Francis and Mr. Melgar that involves both teachers and past students of both teachers tutoring students that search the assistance. "Math in the quad" can easily be spotted by the flagpole out in the quad during lunch.

"Mr. Melgar and I were in a meeting at another campus two weeks ago. We learned that counselors would set out tables outside for the students so they could go up to them if they had any questions. At the moment a light bulb lit up, and I said, 'Hey, why don't we bring math to the quad'" said Mr. Francis. He also added, "I asked Mr. Melgar if he was in on the idea and he said yes. We agreed that I would take

one day, and Melgar would take the other."

Although it was not advertised much, previous calculus students did participate on the first day of "Math in the Quad." "It did not contain many students the first day only because it was our first time trying it out and it was not advertised as well. We hope to students and faculty to spread the word once it's more of a topic or with this article" said Francis.

"I did not think it was going to work well based on the fact that it is math, but once I passed by the quad I realized that I did need help on one of my math problems," said Jacob Amavizca. He also added, "So, I mean, I believe with more time into "Math in the Quad" students will begin to notice and eventually participate in it to receive the help they need."

Many students tend to not have the motivation to ask for help in math, but it becomes easier when a table filled with tutors is set up in the quad. "Well, personally I'm too lazy to go to a classroom for help,

but once I came across Mr. Francis in the quad helping others, I sat down and began getting help since I was already there. This seems like a good idea because it helps students like me that don't have the time or are too lazy during lunch to receive help on my math work. Eventually, people will want to come since it is near and in the quad," said Thespian and senior, Anthony Cervantez.

"We hope to become another mean of resource to students. Many students tend not to get enough time during lunch to get their food and come to the class to receive help," says Melgar. He also added, "Mr. Francis and I have an interesting view on helping students, and we are willing to try anything to help students succeed in Math."

Stop making excuses. Help is around the corner. Be to sure catch Math at lunch twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays in the quad. If interested, Francis will be out on Tuesdays and Melgar will be out on Fridays.

Teen Court members tackle more cases

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Such as every month, Teen Court sprang into session with its members ready to try any troubled juveniles on February 3rd.

This month's cases involved a young girl charged with petty theft and a young man charged with possession of cocaine. The young female was given 50 hours of community service as the judge and jury viewed her as an honest person committing a mistake. The young man, however, was given 145 hours due to his attitude and the degree of the actions perpetrated by the minor. The young man also shared with the court his unhealthy relationship with his father and throughout the session showed signs of disrespect and

made it very evident that he did not want to be there. These actions also played a role in his charges. The jury decided to send him and his family to counseling in hopes of bettering their relationship.

During this session, foreign exchange students and teachers from China participated in the jury and observed the court process. The pupils and teachers discovered Teen Court through the school's website and were welcome to be a part of the February session. Many El Rancho students and community members came to witness the meeting. Members of the crowd were allowed to participate in questioning the defendants and speaking out their view of the cases.



NEXT STEPS FOR COLLEGE APPLICANTS:

- SUBMIT SAT/ACT SCORES
- CREATE PORTALS
- CHECK PORTALS/EMAILS
- CHECK FOR FAFSA/CSS DEADLINES FROM YOUR SCHOOL
- SUBMIT FAFSA/CSS
- CHECK FOR TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS
- APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS
- MAY 2ND: SELECT A SCHOOL
- TAKE PLACEMENT TESTS (SEE IF YOU ARE EXEMPT FROM ANY)
- APPLY FOR HOUSING
- ENJOY LAST MONTHS IN SCHOOL!

TIPS FOR UNDERCLASSMEN

- RETAKE ANY CLASSES WITH D OR F
- TAKE RIO HONDO CLASSES TO SAVE \$
- BE INVOLVED IN CLUBS
- HAVE A LEADERSHIP POSITION
- VOLUNTEER @ ONE PLACE CONTINUOUSLY
- SEEK TUTORING HELP FOR ANY CLASSES YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH
- SEE YOUR COUNSELOR MONTHLY
- VISIT THE COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER
- STUDY FOR SAT/ACT
- SIGN UP TO TAKE SAT/ACT
- JOIN BE A LEADER OR COLLEGE BLUE PRINT (JUNIORS)
- RESEARCH COLLEGES WITH YOUR MAJOR/INTERESTS
- VISIT SCHOOLS
- SEEK RECOMMENDERS/ MAKE CONNECTIONS
- TAKE SUMMER SCHOOL CLASSES
- STUDY AND GET GOOD GRADES!

Sam the Supreme is Simply Irresistible

BY JULIAN LOPEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

From one of the least known freshmen to arguably the most well-known senior at El Rancho, Samantha Chavarria, A.K.A. Sam The Supreme, is simply irresistible.

A lover of anything that is the color burgundy, sushi, and women, Samantha is full of good times and positive vibes. She enjoys spending her free time in the Los Angeles Flower District or at local museums, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Although her spirit is adventurous, her idea of the perfect Friday night involves spending the night cuddling with her dogs Jake and Tobi. Sam enjoys solitude and doesn't need anyone to make her day because she is her favorite person.

Her self-made nickname 'Sam The Supreme' is her way of distinguishing herself from the other Samantha's on campus. She believes that she is the supreme Samantha out of all those on campus because she is just great to be around. Once you get passed her awkwardness and her jokes full of bad puns, you'll understand why she is the supreme.

The qualities that Sam looks for in her dream girl would be that she is around the same height as her because someone taller would make her feel weak and small. She has to have goals, Samantha only wants to be around people with ambition. Sam's dream girl has to like coffee and sushi because Sam loves those things. Her dream girl also has to be funny. Sam doesn't want a boring person, even if she is pretty. Sam just can't handle a dry personality.

Samantha is a member of El Rancho's ASB. She holds the role of senior leadership and takes part in all school events. It has shown her how to be responsible and be a team worker. She enjoys ASB because



Sam thinking about her future mamá.

she can go to all school events and work to make events memorable for everyone.

Although Sam is a laid back girl, there are still certain things that grind her gears. One of her biggest pet peeves is when someone else walks into the restroom when she has to powder her nose, because it makes her uncomfortable. Also, a girl with bad personal hygiene is a big turn off for her. She can't

stand when girls have yellow teeth and do not take good care of themselves.

You can always find Samantha on campus in the morning with her coffee mug. She loves any coffee, whether is dark or light, she'll drink it. She once drank straight espresso for an entire week without knowing and almost died.

Sam one day hopes to own a café and become a personal chef.

Andrew Gomez: A modern Renaissance student

BY SAMANTHA QUIRARTE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Former California Association of Youth Courts (CAYC) Student Chairman and El Rancho Alumnus, Andrew Gomez, hopes to make an impact as a prospective law student.

As president of Teen Court at El Rancho from his junior to senior year, Gomez transformed the then one-year-old court system into a well-known organization across the state. "[Partnering] with Mr. Elias and [making] the El Rancho Teen Court the face of California teen courts is truly an honor I never thought would happen," says Gomez. The former club president led the group into many state conferences, quickly growing the reputation of the school group across the state.

Gomez was elected onto the CAYC as a board member, and then as Student Chairman, the youngest in history at age seventeen, for his remarkable achievements with El Rancho's Teen Court. As

Chairman, Gomez had the opportunity to work among many hard-working and honorable court officials, such as the honorable Judge Wesley, the presiding judge at the Los Angeles Superior Court.

As a psychology major at Concordia University, Gomez plans to use psychology to attend law school. El Rancho Teen Court Judge, Judge Horan, advised Gomez to seek a major other than Criminal Justice, a common law student major, this way, "[he] can finish law school being knowledgeable in two fields of study."

With a background in law, Gomez plans to use his knowledge to become a defense attorney in the near future. Gomez says, "I feel that my law background in high school has given me a good start to take into law school." Gomez also says that his interest in the field of law will allow him to "get paid for having a hobby, not a job."

Although college life has been rough, Gomez continues to grow and mature as an adult. "I was not ready to be out on my own my freshmen year when I at-

tended Concordia University Portland," says Gomez, "Whether I wanted to or not, growing up and acting more mature was a part of my college life." Being involved in the Speech and Debate team and working part-time at Disneyland has helped Gomez learn to provide for himself and understand the new responsibilities of adult life.

Upon graduating from Concordia, Gomez plans to attend law school, although he is unsure of the rest of his plans. Gomez says, he "will either take a year off to pay for some college debt or go directly to law school." Although he is unsure of plans, Gomez knows that Law school is definitely in his plans.

Gomez's actions have made a lasting impact on the community of Pico Rivera and the California Teen Court system. As a prospective law student, Gomez hopes that he can one day make an even bigger impact on the court system and bring justice to those in need.

Chef Luna awarded by LA County for his service



BY ALEXIS REYNA PARRA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

This past January, El Rancho High School's very own Chef Luna was awarded "Best of the Best Educator" at the #Pride58 Gala.

The #Pride58 program was created by Assemblymember Christina Garcia to recognize those individuals, businesses, and organizations that make a positive impact in their community. For one to be accepted, an individual or company/organization must first be nominated, and Luna was chosen by a student and then later voted for by the community.

"Aside from being a wonderful chef and teacher, Chef Luna is a humanitarian who serves his community in many ways," says the student who nominated Luna. At least six times a year Luna along with a large group of current and former culinary arts students go out into Downtown Los Angeles to feed not only the homeless people but animals as well. They not only prepare homemade meals for the population but also take essentials such as clothes and toiletries.

"People think that in [Culinary Arts] they're just going to learn how to cook, but it is about sharing the humanity that we're supposed to have with each other...That's what the award is about," says Luna. He adds that "This award means a lot to me, to be recognized by students and peers. I feel very appreciative that I have a big network of people that act as my support system, not only here at El Rancho."

Luna's students not only get a better understanding of the food industry, hands-on cooking experiences, or life lessons, but they also get an adult who cares for them and makes himself available to them at any day and time.

"This award isn't just my award, I feel as if it's our award because I would not be getting this if I didn't have the support system that I do and if I didn't have everyone that helps me out," says Luna.

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Nikesh Kumar and Anelizze Castro:

By ADRIANA CARCHIPULLA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Since middle school these two lovebirds, Nikesh and Anelizze, have been enjoying their time as a couple. Wow! What's their secret? Kumar advises couples that recently have gotten together to "keep it real, and to always be yourself." He advises to «not be a chameleon and try to be what you think the other partner wants you to be.» Castro says, «to make sure you're enjoying yourself and to make sure you're actually happy otherwise it's just not going to work.»

Kumar and Castro usually like to go to the town center and just hangout, "any time together is fun" says Kumar. Castro loves receiving candy and stuffed animals for Valentine's, and in fact her favorite Valentine's Day gift from Kumar was a "stuffed cat" which Castro loved. Castro is not like the usual girls who only expect to receive gifts; she is also a giver and loves to "give hugs and candy and things Nikesh loves." For Valentine's Day Kumar and Castro usually hangout and go eat, "the celebration is just technically about eating for us," says Castro while laughing. Kumar and Castro clearly have something very special to still be together and happy after four years; so do not be afraid to ask advice to this amazing couple!



Jackie Santos and Ben

By ADRIANA CARCHIPULLA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Ben and Jackie have been together for about one year, and "it's been an amazing and great year," says Higgins. This Valentine's Day Santos and Higgins plan to "take a helicopter to the beach and have a romantic dinner there," says Santos. Higgins also says that he "love[s] giving Jackie flowers, cars, chocolates, islands, and many more things because she deserves it and is the love of [his] life." Although Higgins and Santos have done so many things for Valentine's Day, it was not always like this. Higgins and Santos say that before they were together "Valentine's Day



Vincent Cuevas and Vincent Cuevas:

By ADRIANA CARCHIPULLA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Vincent Cuevas and his lovely soul mate "have been together all [their] lives," says Cuevas and always make it work. For Valentine's Day they "love to stay at home and watch romantic comedies," says Cuevas. This past Valentine's Day Cuevas and his soulmate decided to make Valentine's Day a little different by "going to a restaurant and ordering a milkshake, which [they] shared with each other with two straws, while [they] stare into each other's eyes," says Cuevas. He and his significant other do not care about going all out for Valentine's Day because all they care about "is spending time with the love of [their] lives," says Cuevas. Although Cuevas and his significant other are amazing together, they did have one negative experience.

One day when Cuevas and his soulmate were at a restaurant, Cuevas's soulmate "got up and left the table and I had to pay for the entire bill!" said Cuevas. This just shows us how even though a couple could have problems, they could still be amazing, just like Cuevas and his soul mate.

Throughout the years of being together, they have decided that the best thing about each other is that "[they're] so alike" says Cuevas, "we're into the exact same things and love the same things," says Cuevas. Cuevas knows he will last forever with his soulmate and just wants him to know that he "loves you."



Robert Quijada and Stephanie Anguiano

By ADRIANA CARCHIPULLA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Valentine's Day is Anguiano's "dad's birthday" so for the past Valentine's Day they "haven't been able to really celebrate Valentine's Day together." While Anguiano celebrates with her dad, Quijada "just walks home." After being "together for almost two years" Quijada and Anguiano finally got to spend their Valentine's Day together. They "celebrated [Anguiano's] dad's birthday and [Quijada] was there too."

Apart from the things they do, they also love candy. Anguiano loves "getting chocolate and bears" and Quijada loves "eating candy because it is bomb." Valentine's Day is not the only day Anguiano and Quijada share times together. They also enjoy doing plenty of fun things when possible. In fact, one of the most memorable dates they had was at "Disneyland and Golf n Stuff because it was really fun and nothing went wrong," said Quijada. Quijada advises couples that "girls are always right in the beginning but then slowly guys do not always have to agree with the girls."



BFFL: Delgado and Espinosa

BY SAMANTHA BERROSPE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

en Higgins:

was not important to [them].” Valentine’s day is not the only day they show their love for each other. They take the opportunity to show their affection every day. In fact, the most memorable date was when Higgins took Santos to “ a deserted place with a hot tub filled with flower petals and surrounded by candles in the middle of nowhere” says Santos. “I just like pleasing her and giving her what she deserves,” says Higgins. The lovely couple always compliment each other and they love each other’s smiles, eyes, and tallness,” says Higgins and Santos. Higgins and Santos advise couples to always be truthful like them because they “never have arguments and always agree on everything.”



From finger painting and nap time to college applications and athletics, seniors Nicole Delgado and Cristina Espinosa are best friends who have lived their lives in sync.

The girls have been friends for over fourteen years, and now that senior year is coming to an end and college is right around the corner, they’ve realized how important the power of friendship is. Lucky for them, a little separation won’t kill their undeniable sisterly love for one another.

At ages three and four, Delgado and Espinosa met by a random chance of fate. Delgado’s brother pushed Espinosa’s sister causing both of their parents to run to their child’s aid. After that incident, both parents became friends, and ultimately that was the start of Delgado and Espinosa’s friendship.

As the years went on, both girls became closer and closer, until they realized that they were each other’s best friends in middle school. “I had other friends, but I would always find myself going back to Nicole. I always felt like myself when I was with her, and she would always be there for me,” Espinosa says. Even when they couldn’t hang out together, they would still be there for one another. “Sometimes when we didn’t hang out or talk to each other for a long time, Cristina would reach out to me and we would talk. It didn’t feel like we had stopped talking,” Delgado says when she and Espinosa went through a little dry spell in their friendship during the seventh grade. Despite having a little fall-out, both girls managed to rekindle their



friendship and become closer than ever. A unique tradition that both girls do is that every year on the day of each others birthday, they call the birth-

day girl at exactly 12:00 A.M. Even if that following day they have morning swim practice, they never forget to call even if it means staying up late.

Although this is their last year in high school, and the thought of both girls separating for a very long time is nerve wracking; they both agreed to keep in touch even after they leave. “We will most definitely still be friends when we leave for college. I mean it’ll be tough not seeing Nicole for a very long time since I see her every day, but that will make seeing each other during vacations even more special,” Espinosa says.

As the years go on, time is limited for these seniors; both girls love to spend their most of their time playing various sports in and out of school. The aquatics pool tends to be a place where both girls spend their time. With swim and water polo being a very challenging sport to play, these girls devote all their time into succeeding and making sure they improve every practice. Luckily, both Delgado and Espinosa are in the same sports, making them closer than ever before.

When it comes to Delgado and Espinosa’s friendship, they’ve realized that no matter what college they go to or where they end up in the later future, their friendship will never die. As Delgado says, “Having a best friend is good because it’s nice to have someone who you can tell everything to, and someone that can relate to what you’re going through since they’re living at that exact moment.”

da and guiano:

Justin Bieber and Maryline Carchipulla:

BY ADRIANA CARCHIPULLA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER



Since releasing his *Believe* album, Justin Bieber and Maryline Carchipulla have been together. For Valentine’s Day, Bieber and Carchipulla make it really special by “taking Justin’s private jet and going to Italy to get some lasagne and then flying to Paris for a romantic stroll.” This year, Carchipulla says she is very excited because “Justin always surprises [her] with something new and crazy.” Like on their last date, Bieber took her “skydiving and on a trip to the Amazon, just for fun.” Their favorite part of their relationship is that

they are “always happy, laughing, and enjoying each other’s company by just having fun,” says Bieber. Bieber and Carchipulla love spoiling each other with gifts, and “it’s always a surprise. Last time I bought him some Yeezys and he absolutely loved them,” says Carchipulla, but Bieber says he “always gives plenty of gifts to Maryline to show [his] love for her; so she can’t choose a favorite gift.” Before having met each other, “there was no reason to celebrate Valentine’s Day,” says Bieber and Carchipulla. Bieber and Carchipulla advise couples that have just recently gotten together to always “try to overcome any obstacles that come up in order to be as happy as [them].”



Retana hates Democrats... and Republicans!



BY MICHAEL NEELY
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

From preaching the beautiful gift of capitalism to watching those amazing John Wayne movies and *Levi* jeans videos, economics teacher Mr. Retana has loved sharing his non-communist ways with the students at El Rancho High

School for the past twenty-two years.

Retana's favorite hobbies include sitting at home watching his TV and hanging out with his crew playing poker. He enjoys eating pizza (the good kind like Brickhouse), watching his favorite movie for the thirtieth time, *Inglourious Basterds*, and marathoning through the *Harry Potter* films on Freeform (ABC Family).

The few times he's not watching his favorite movies, he is enjoying college football or rereading his two beloved stories: *Max Schmeling: An Autobiography*, a reflection of a German boxer and *Up from Slavery*, a recounting of Booker T. Washington's transition from zero to hero. Retana favors biographies more than fiction because "They're real events with real people. We all have a story to tell, and we hide who we are because we're afraid of being judged." Ironically, he doesn't enjoy reading too much since he, "wants to be fed a ton of information at once. I hate buildups; just tell me what I want to know already!"

Retana is one of the few teachers in the world who loves his job, claiming that the kids at El Rancho, "are well-behaved, especially compared to the 90s when the school had a really bad gang problem." However, "the pay still sucks, facilities are terrible, and worst of all, no one is coming to save us."

Regarding the soon-to-be-opened Magnet School in Pico Rivera, he says, "it's poorly planned, but can still be salvaged; we need to make the choices best for everyone" because schools favor certain students, such as the top of the class who will be attending this school.

The current presidential race has gained a lot of attention from Retana. When asked who should be president, he replies with, "me." He believes Donald Trump possesses the capability to be president, but won't be since, "It would not work well for us because other countries would hate us even more." If he had to pick a Democratic candidate, he'd pick Hillary Clinton because "it would be having Bill [Clinton] again, and he was a great president." Also, he claims that Clinton will win the presi-

dency since people will eventually come to their rational senses and know Trump is not a good contender and instead vote for her.

When it comes to voting, Retana is an active member, voting on everything except the primaries, since he isn't registered with a political party claiming they both aren't entirely right about everything. Also, he does not vote for judges because, "people will vote for certain candidates because of their ethnicities; we already have too many Latinos in charge of everything, we don't need more."

Retana's path to teaching was not a clear one. He received GI money from his army service as a young man, lived on his own, and received a part-time job as a teaching assistant. He helped an older math teacher who, "was just awful with kids; I looked at what she was doing and told myself that I knew I could do a better job at it than her." Eventually, these words would create his future along with raising his three children.

He is not the type of man who has an entire future planned out for his kids; in fact, he wants them to pursue their dreams no matter what they are and only asks that they can sustain themselves and their future families with the money they acquire.

Retana is sure to be remembered by his insane smile, love for John Stossel videos, and teaching his students who actually killed Biggie Smalls. He brings tremendous humor into the classroom and is adored by his disciples for being charismatic and reminding them to refrain from, "that darn Socialism and Communism." His most inspirational words are: "Boxers or briefs? Why can't I just go commando?"

Diaz discusses his journey at the "Ranch"

BY ALEXIS REYNA PARRA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

After graduating in 1999 from "The Ranch", Mr. Justin Diaz never thought he'd find himself back, but here he is, half-way through his eleventh year teaching visual arts.

"It just kind of happened. There was an opening for an art position here, and my brother was the band director at the time, so he let me know about it," Diaz said. He continued to say, "I didn't know if I was going to like it or not, but I liked that I knew the school and was familiar with it and all of the students. I was obviously a student here so... It makes me put that little extra effort into everything because of that personal connection."

Coming back to El Rancho High School as a teacher and working with adults who were once his teachers is interesting. Diaz says, "It was initially a little strange, but in the end, it turned out to be a really amazing experience because I have learned from them not only as a student, but as someone that works with them."

Before this school year, Mr. Diaz could have been found in room A205 teaching classes, such as Digital Imaging, Photography, Animation, and Video Production. This year, however, if he's not in A205 he could be in room G-2 teaching AP Studio Art. "AP Studio is a challenge because AP Studio Art is really for students who are more experienced with the process of being an artist and making artwork on a personal level. It's a challenge for me too because I have to let them

have individuality yet still push them meet the requirements of this course," he said. Diaz adds, "The students are so diverse in their styles and skills. It's definitely a challenge, but it's also exciting to work with them and to see what they come up with."

Besides being a visual arts teacher, Diaz is a Link Crew advisor and has been since the program was brought to the campus eight years ago. Link Crew is a mentorship program where upperclassmen are given the opportunity to mentor the incoming freshmen class to ensure that they have an easy and safe transition into high school.

Diaz believes, "Link Crew is a really valuable program and is somewhat underrated in what we do for the school environment."

"We obviously have our shortcomings but as much as it is possible Link Crew really does a great job of making it easier for incoming freshmen to feel comfortable, which is a difficult job." Diaz strongly believes that it's not only important for the freshmen to receive benefits from this program but also the juniors and seniors that take on the leadership position. In fact, one of his favorite things about Link Crew is that, "There is no preconceived idea of what kind of student we want in our program because we want a sampling of everybody." Diaz says that in Link Crew, "It's fun seeing the connections made between Link Leaders and their freshmen, but also between the leaders themselves."

When Diaz gets time to himself, especially in the summer when he's not teaching or training new Link Leaders, he spends more time on his personal art; mostly paint-



ing and drawing. He does a lot of figure drawings, which are drawings of the human figure. "I'm much better in the summer than I am during the school year," he says.

He also enjoys a good movie now and then. Diaz says that his students somewhat make fun of him for being so critical of movies, but part of what he wants them to learn from him is that, "They should look at everything with a critical eye." Besides being an artist and movie critic, Diaz also enjoys cooking although at times it might not turn out so well.

As a student, Diaz's most memorable part of high school was being a part of Academic Decathlon. "At the time,

we performed the best that any team had performed at El Rancho, and they have since surpassed us by a lot," he says. But as a teacher, one of Diaz's most memorable moments involved, "A few years ago, we did a really big art show featuring all the art classes and performing groups. We did it all together as a department, and the culinary classes even made snacks for everyone. It was definitely a highlight, and I would like to do it again."

"El Rancho is a fantastic place for the arts, both visual and performing. Take advantage of the really great programs here," Diaz says.

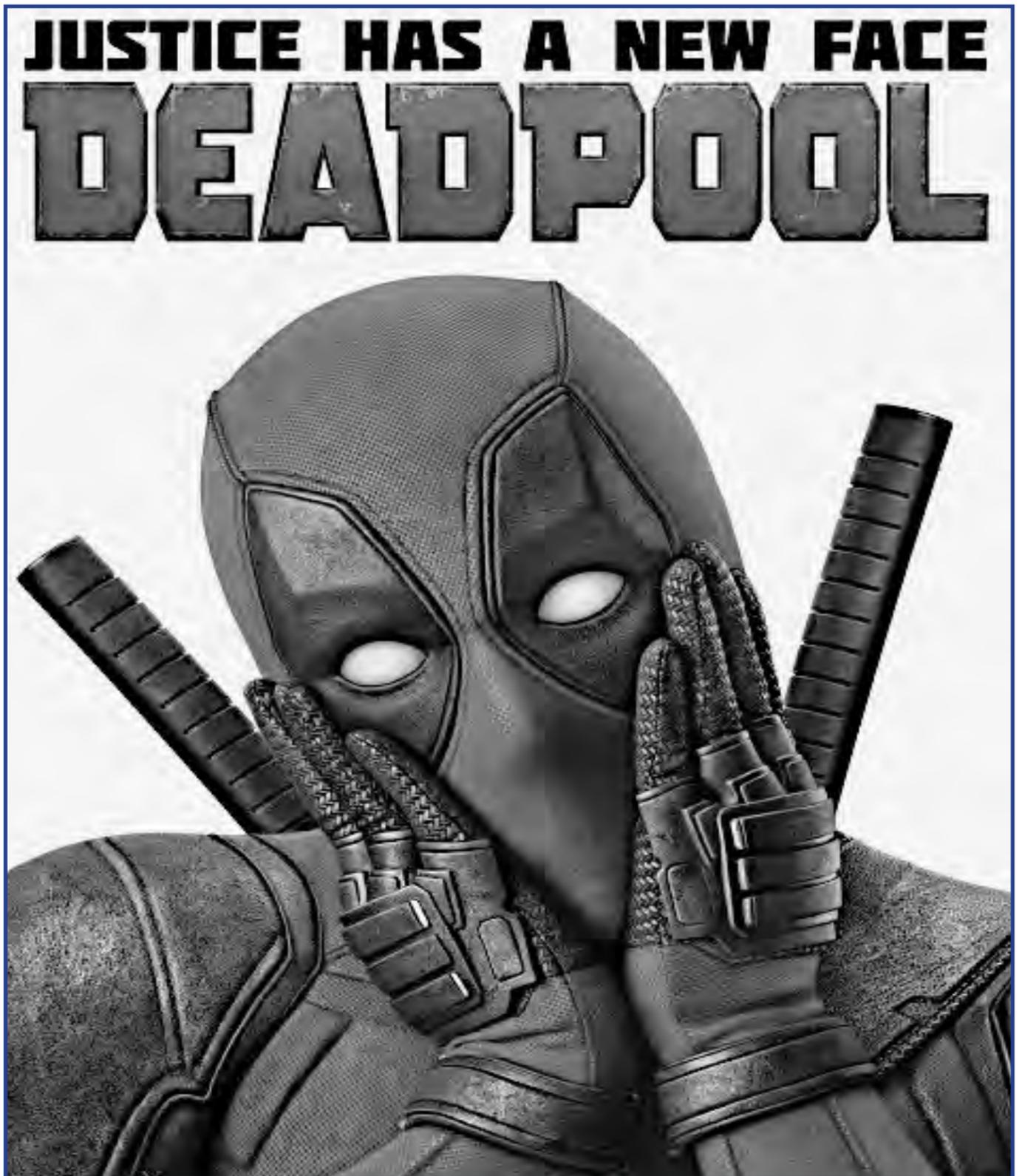
Deadpool kills it with irreverent humor

BY ERNESTO HERNANDEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The film *Deadpool* truly demonstrates the crisp flow and diverse forms of superhero films. Not being a typical movie from comic books, Deadpool himself makes a modern twist to being a hero because of his unorthodox methods of doing good. The characters from the comics refer to him as “the merc with a mouth” because he talks a lot and rarely stops. He is known for breaking the fourth wall; the movie is also involved with him breaking the fourth wall. He tends to be rude and not care what he does because he thinks problems solve themselves or the way he resolves situations are the best.

—The director, Tim Miller, and the actor who plays the role of Deadpool, Ryan Reynolds, introduce a modern twist to the antihero which involves killing the villains he fights, resorting to murdering his primary targets. The film was released on February 12, 2016, and tells the story of a man who is love stricken with a prostitute, and their relationship is built upon who has suffered the worst in their lives. He fights a guy who turned him into a mutant to cure cancer he had used extreme torture methods. Meanwhile, two X-Men members, Colossus, and Negasonic Teenage Warhead, encourage Deadpool to join the X-Men, as all superhero groups or teams do with new recruits. He told them he doesn’t want to join them, but he would like their help and possibly, just possibly think about joining them.

The majority of the movie was outstanding from all angles including some scenes that went into slow motion; those scenes help bring detail to what looked difficult to understand at regular speed. The actors in the movie proved outstanding with the roles they fulfilled. Reynolds said he wanted Deadpool to make it to the screen after the “disaster” of *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and wanted him to be as rude, crude, mean, jealous and anything else that relates to his comic book roots. T.J. Miller did a marvelous job of being the example of a bad friend because he treated Deadpool like crap and wagered on him dying from his cancer. The scenes where he acts like he has no idea what happened is just incredible for a movie character not to care at all but to make the viewers laugh. The movie had numerous hilarious moments that just made it «magical» in a



Courtesy of Google images

way. This movie has revolutionized what makes a parody movie due to references to other comic book movies and themes. The film makes its viewers feel as if they are right in the middle of the plot due to the specific camera angles Miller chooses.

The negative impact of the movie is the appearance of Stan Lee. Lee is supposed to be the «big man» of Marvel, so he is meant to be in something respectable. In this film, he is a DJ rapper or some announcer in a very wrong location; he should have

received a better role or place in the film.

Nevertheless, *Deadpool* is a fantastically directed and extremely humorous film that anyone 17 and older will enjoy.

Jasymn Perez Strums On



Jasymn Perez on the verge of writing her next song.

BY MARISSA MESTAS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Jasymn Perez has always had a passion for music. Perez started off with the piano at age ten and realized piano was not her thing. As she listened to her favorite musical artists like, Prince Royce, Romeo Santos, and Bruno Mars, she ditched the piano for an instrument she admired the most: the acoustic guitar.

«My first instrument... was the piano, but I didn’t follow through. I didn’t care for the piano. The guitar was what I wanted to learn.» And that is what she did. Two years ago, Perez followed her dream and began to play her favorite instrument.

“I always found the guitar as the most beautiful instrument.” «I just started to play some basic tunes now; I try to learn how to move to different cords. I do get frustrated if I keep making the same mistake over and over again, but I take a break, and once I’m ready I go back to try again till I get it.»

In addition Perez says, “I perform

for a group of friends, and, I volunteer at a retirement home. I get really nervous and shy, but once I get comfortable enough, I start to play just fine.» Perez explains, she also explains how she tries to challenge herself by singing and playing, but as of now, Perez just practices doing both and trying out new chords.

Although Perez has eight classes she attends to for school; she still manages to practice new music on her guitar. «I practice a few times a week for a couple of hours, whenever I have any free time.»

“My aunt was a singer in a restaurant for a while. My cousin had gotten in a band and was always playing with his guitar.” “I started teaching myself by going on YouTube and watching tutorials. I would practice often and y mother would always encourage me to sing and play. “Besides playing guitar I really love to draw and paint. When I’m not playing guitar I’m drawing things that people want me to draw for them.”

Lady Dons look to rebound next season

By TIM RIESGO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The girls basketball varsity team's season came to an unfortunate end when it lost in the second round of the CIF Southern Section playoffs to Diamond Bar High School on February 20th. However, the Lady Dons concluded this year's season undefeated in the Del Rio league and look to come back stronger next season.



The girl's varsity basketball team celebrates its incredible undefeated league season.

Boys basketball finishes 5th in Del Rio League play

By MATTHEW MARROQUIN
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The varsity boys basketball team finished the Del Rio League in fifth place after Pioneer beat Cal High for fourth.

Playing an away game against Santa Fe, the Dons put forth an impressive effort, but unfortunately, fell to the Chiefs 70-56. Coach Ray Elliott believes the Dons performed well but could have "done bet-

ter." He also says that players Noah Losoya and Rodrigo Sermeno performed exceptionally well and that he "truly enjoyed" this season as a result of the players.

Despite their shortcomings, the Dons were able to keep their competition on their toes as a single basket decided the outcome of five of their last seven games. The team finished the league with a record of 4-6 and will no doubt continue to push themselves further toward success.



The boy's varsity basketball team huddles up after the end of its last game.

Girls water polo team exceeds expectations



Girls water polo prepares to score a goal

By MATTHEW MARROQUIN
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The girls water polo team has completed its run in the Del Rio League and has finished in a gratifying third place.

"We definitely could have finished in second place," says varsity coach Xenia Castillo after their final game against La Serna. With a final record of 3-2, Castillo attributes the team's solid performance to such players as Mia Carbajal, who she describes as "a well-rounded player" who can play both offense and defense assertively and skillfully. The coach also emphasizes the ability of the team's number one player, Sara Polanco as well as Zurisadai Pulido.

Castillo concludes that the team exceeded expectations and that next season "will be even better." Varsity girls water polo played two games in the playoff season: a win against Paso Robles, 7-6, and a loss to King, 21-1, which knocked them out of CIF.

Boys soccer playoff hopes falls short



Emilio Gonzalez passes the ball to his teammate, Efrain Chavez.

BY TIM RIESGO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Hoping to continue the legacy of champions, the varsity boys soccer team finished the regular season with an incredible league record of 8-2 and became Del Rio League Champions once again. The boys were working diligently to make it far in CIF, but unfortunately suffered a 1-0 loss to Jordan High School in the 1st round of the CIF southern section playoffs.

The team brought in a new coach this year, Gerry Goyenaga, who set high standards and brought the team where it belongs.

Senior Emilio Gonzalez, who was able to experience

a year with previous coach Mr. Picon, says, “[Goyenaga] is bringing everything back, all the skills that Picon had.”

Gonzalez is proud in what the team brought this season. “We always have each other’s backs in every game. If we are losing we don’t give, we fight forward. We have a lot of underclassmen, but that just means that we have young leaders which will be good for the future.”

Junior Christian Arteaga says, “We were always in game mode for games. We took one game at a time and focused on making the best of it.”

The ending to the boys soccer team was unfortunate, but the team continues to keep its head high, as the roster is filled with younger and promising players for seasons to come.

Klaudia Hernandez’s last goodbye



BY KATHELEEN MADERA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Senior Klaudia Hernandez has dedicated seven years of her life to playing soccer and says, “I don’t regret any second of it. At one point I was playing on two teams outside of school.” Her plan was to tryout for water polo since she had experience in the sport, but decided to tryout for soccer. “I am happy I decided to stick with soccer because I hold a lot of memories being on the team.”

For the past four years the girl’s soccer program has undergone several coaches.

“Even though we had a new coach every season, as a player one doesn’t see how it affects oneself, but the team as a whole. There is a lack of consistency in the methods of training which affects how each individual player learns.”

“Being on the soccer team has allowed me to make new friends and new memories. Every player has her own personality making the team more diverse, but we always got along.”

After tearing her ACL the beginning of her junior year, she barely recovered in time for her senior year soccer season. “I was only able to play the three last games because the coach wouldn’t let me play the previous games, but I don’t regret joining the team.”

The advice she would give to the underclassmen players is to “look on the positive side and always give it your all. If you don’t have the drive for the sport, then why be in it. Also, to take care of yourself to avoid injuries and if you do get injured to wait until it heals completely, something I didn’t do. Finally, have fun.”

Varsity wrestling makes a short run in CIF



BY TIM RIESGO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

After pinning its way to the Del Rio League Championship with an overall record of 3-2, the Varsity Wrestling team looked to continue its hot streak in the CIF playoffs. However, in the first round of the double elimination playoffs, the Dons strong playoffs hopes fell through and failed to qualify for Masters.



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