El Rancho High School
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El Rodeo

School board votes to move forward with new school construction

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Farewell Mrs. Nasouf

Career counselor, Mrs. Nasouf, bids farewell to the Ranch

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FEATURES

Johnny D. Sierra is *Simply Irresistible!*

Johnny D. Sierra pondering the Riemann hypothesis. ***Photo by Alonzo Murrieta***

By Alonzo Murrieta
El Rodeo Staff Writer

On February 11th, 2001, in a far away galaxy, planets aligned. This alignment led to the birth of the one and only Herculean, superhuman, stupendous being, Johnny D. Sierra. He is a mathematician, scholar, musician, singer, but most importantly, he is *simply irresistible*!

If you know Sierra, you know he is a genius. Not only can his brain solve multivariable calculus at light-speed, but it can also absorb new information at an incredible rate. “On my spare time I am usually learning math or music,” says Sierra. An informed king, but what is his reason?

The reason is quite simple. “I learn math because it’s my backup,” says Sierra. “If I learn it now it won’t be so hard for later.” It seems that along with a brilliant mind, he can also plan decades into the future. Sierra’s mind may hold endless knowledge of mathematics, but what else does it hold?

Quite a bit actually. Sierra doesn’t wish to pursue mathematics, but instead, focus on music. His inspiration is that “I enjoy music just like everyone else.” Whether it be listening to classic jazz or the vocals in some of the greatest cinema soundtracks, Sierra loves every part of it.

Sierra hopes to attend Cal State Fullerton in the fall, study music, and end with a degree in vocal concentration. “A lot of soundtracks utilize a choir, which I would like to be part of,” says Sierra, “but it would be even cooler to be the one who wrote the music.” A man with a dream, a plan, and a backup, just how far does he go?

Although Johnny may be a math and music enthusiast, this is not his entire life. Sierra is also a member of El Rancho’s very own Choraleers. “I sing bass, so I sing those low notes.” With such a unique voice, it would be a waste for Sierra to not act on his natural talent.

Sierra is also involved in the math club. Although he is a direct member, his self-taken will is to teach all. “If you need help with math, come find me,” says Sierra. A man who gives up his lunch for the benefit of others? King.

Aside from school, Sierra lives a relatively calm life. His hobbies? Video games, *YouTube*, and the piano. Have you met anyone so passionate yet relaxed? Probably not. If you ever feel like getting bodied in Black Ops 4, just message Sierra, he’ll show no mercy.

But there is another burning question: what fuels Sierra’s brainpower? What food gives him the most nutrition? Well, the answer is hamburgers, specifically with cheese, lettuce, tomato, mayo, and mustard. Being his favorite food, there must be something behind the patty that gives Sierra his incredible knowledge.

Although Sierra is basically the perfect man, he is unfortunately not up for grabs. Being a ladies man, he must have a girlfriend, and he does! “We spend most of our time together, watching Netflix, cooking food, and taking naps.” This man has a dream, sings, cooks, what else could you ask for?

Well, you could ask for his Twitter, and that is @JohnnyDSierra. Feel free to hit him up for some advice, math tutoring, a game of COD, or just to have an intelligent conversation. He does not disappoint!

Ms. Nasouf bids farewell to the Ranch

By Dylan Joseph
El Rodeo Staff Writer

From helping with college applications to financial aid, high school-college counselor Nancy Nasouf has been an unsung hero and guide for many students on the El Rancho campus. Unfortunately, she has decided to part ways with El Rancho this semester as she has found a new job position at Paramount Park Middle School.

“An opportunity presented itself that would fit the demands of my family better and I took a leap of faith,” says Nasouf. “I hope to be able to implement some of the programs I started here at my new site and just provide students with the support they need.”

“Making the decision to leave ERHS was a difficult,” continues Nasouf. “I love my job and I am leaving everything I know.”

Despite her leaving, a part of Nasouf’s heart will always remain on campus. “It is truly an honor to be a part of students’ journeys,” says Nasouf.

> ***“This is one of the most rewarding careers, being a counselor has taught me to be more patient and present at the moment.”***

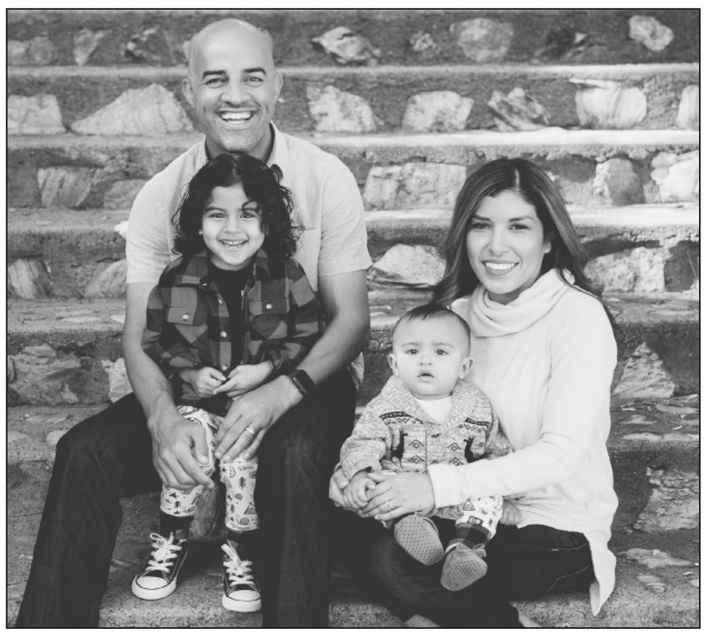
Being helpful and patient are some of Mrs. Nasouf’s most endearing qualities. She has had plenty of students of many different backgrounds go up to her and ask for help.

Part of this is due to her similar experiences growing up compared to kids on campus.“I wanted to work in a community similar to the one I grew up in and where the majority of the population is made up of first-generation and or low-income Latino students,” says Nasouf. “I love that this is such a tight-knit community and there is so much pride and traditions.”

Her community is what she notes as her inspiration to become a high school college counselor, “I have been doing college and career counseling for 13 years,” says Nasouf. “I started doing high school outreach as an undergraduate at CSULB and worked for various college preparation programs and high schools throughout my college career.”

“I was a first-generation and low-income student myself and if it wasn’t for counselors who guided me I would not have gone to college,” continues Nasouf. “I decided to become a counselor to do the same for other students.”

She felt sentimental when asked about leaving.



Ms.Nasouf and her family pose for a portrait. ***Courtesy of Ms. Nasouf***

> ***“I will miss my students, the counseling team, the school spirit, and the amazing teachers and support staff.”***

“I will especially miss Susanne, the CCC outreach staff and my peer advisors,” says Nasouf.

Nasouf continues, “Without them I would not have been able to put on events, workshops and support students through the college and career planning process.”

When asked if she has any final advice for her students or colleagues, Nasouf replied: “Students, a piece of advice to you is to ask for help and be resourceful, there is no way that I would have gone to college and be where I am today without asking for help and taking advantage of the opportunities and resources available to me.”

“Give back to your community,” says Nasouf. “Come back to ERHS and share your experiences! Teachers and staff, rely on each other.”

Although she will be dearly missed, the staff and students of El Rancho wishes her well on her new journey.

FEATURES

Restaurant review: Popeyes

By Grecia Haro-Flores
El Rodeo Staff Writer

It’s a new year with a new Popeyes location near you! In addition to their locations in cities like Whittier, Montebello, and Bellflower, the popular fried chicken restaurant is now open on 9211 Telegraph Road in Pico Rivera, attracting fried chicken lovers all over the city.

The menu at Popeyes consists of chicken and tender combos and their signature sides like mashed potatoes, Cajun fries, and jambalaya.

Whether it be chicken or tenders, mild or spicy is the big question on the table. Mild and spicy are both rather delightful, but the flavors are very different. The mild chicken tastes like a typical piece of chicken and lacks flavor compared to the spicy chicken. On the other hand, the spicy chicken has a nice, spicy tang that tingles the taste buds.

Mashed potatoes are the go-to side and why wouldn’t they be? They are very good, and although the gravy is mediocre, they are a great mix!

The biscuit is so yummy. The inside is warm and buttery with a crunchy exterior, but don’t forget your drink because they are sometimes a bit dry!

The wait time isn’t long unless you order mild chicken. Although their specialty is fried chicken, Popeyes also sells seafood from Cajun fish to popcorn shrimp.

The prices range from two dollars to around 35 dollars, it really depends on the number of pieces of chicken/tenders purchased and other items added to your order. If you’re on a budget, try out their five dollar boneless wing combo, which includes boneless wings, a side of your choice, a biscuit, and a drink.

The interior of the restaurant is homey and comfortable, but small. Much like the inside, the parking lot is not big and it may be hard to find a good parking spot. Since Popeyes is neighbors with Little Caesars, it’s more convenient to arrive during the least hectic hours of the day.

Overall, the meals are filling and smell so enticing that one could taste the food before even taking a bite. If you’re looking for a good fried chicken place, Popeyes is the place for you!

Where are they now? Aleksey Soto: c/o 2018

By Kayla Perez
El Rodeo Staff Writer

From being the 2017-2018 Editor-in-chief to mastering four languages, Class of 2018 graduate Aleksey Soto continues to thrive in her new journey at the University of California Irvine.

“I’m currently at UC Irvine as an International Studies major,” says Soto. I ’ll be declaring my regional focus on Asia and functional focus on global conflict and negotiation later on.”

Soto has always had a passion for all the knowledge the world has to offer. “I’ve always found global cultures and societies really interesting, but in high school there wasn’t much focus on any places outside of Europe or the U.S., so I had to learn about them on my own,” says Soto. “I really wanted my major to allow me to learn more about lesser discussed regions and in the future I want my career to involve working in them.”

Even though Soto LOVES the college life at UC Irvine, it wasn’t where she thought she would end up during her college application season. “UCI wasn’t my first choice; out of the UCs I got into I actually really wanted to go to UC Santa Barbara,” says Soto. “However, Irvine offered me amazing financial aid that makes it possible for me to graduate virtually debt free so the choice was clear.”

“I also really liked the diversity in the student body and the proximity to cool hangout spots like Newport Beach and Disneyland,” continues Soto.

Even though UC Irvine wasn’t Soto’s initial choice, she couldn’t picture herself anywhere else. “I honestly fell in love with Irvine,” says Soto. “The vibe here is much more relaxed than a lot of other colleges, which is great because I thrive in chill environments.

“That’s not saying you won’t feel challenged academically if that’s your thing,” continues Soto. “You can find so many communities here with just a bit of effort and everyone is always willing to help you out.”

UC Irvine is a perfect fit for Soto as she has been an involved student since her El Rancho days. “I played clarinet in the marching band, I wrote for *El Rodeo*, I was VP of Key Club, and I competed in the Decathlon team,” says Soto. “Currently, I’m part of the publicity committee of UCI’s Liberty in North Korea club and I’m also part of a dance team called Level V Origins.”

Apart from her impressive list of extracurriculars, Soto is also a boba-tea enthusiast and often spends her time indulging the drink! “Boba is a HUGE thing here and my friends and I get boba at least once a week,” says Soto. “you can catch me at Sharetea getting an iced mango green milk tea with boba, 80% sweetened and less ice!”

“We’ve [My friends and I] have also been hitting the gym pretty consistently this quarter too to offset the absurd amount of boba and Starbucks we drink,” continues Soto. “We’ll be looking #thicc in a few months!”

Soto’s adjustment to college has been nothing but as breeze!

> ***“To be honest, my transition from high school to college was not as hard as I was expecting,”***
>
> ***-Aleksey Soto***

“It might’ve been easier because I’m dorming with Ahtziri and Narai (who are also part of the class of 2018) and we have each other.”

“I also live close enough to go home every so often and visit my mom, who I’m super close to and rely on a lot for emotional support, so that’s been very helpful,” continues Soto.

Compared to high school, Soto cherishes the college schedule and the benefits it has to offer. “High school in general is just so structured and stuffy,” says Soto. “The day drags on forever and then you have to go home and work all night.”

“Here, since I’m only taking 12 units and have about two to three classes a day and I was able to avoid 8 am classes fall and winter quarter, I sleep more and I have enough energy to do any work I have to do later,” continues Soto. “A lot of people say college classes are harder than high school classes, and that might be true depending on the school you go to or your major, but I’ve actually found it easier to keep my grades up here than in high school, even with the quicker pace of the UC quarter system.”

Yet, the college life has had it’s occasional ups-and-downs for Soto. “Time management has been the hardest thing for me. I had to drop some clubs I really wanted to do because the meetings conflicted with classes or didn’t leave me enough time to do my work,” says Soto. “I’ve had to learn to say no to certain plans because they get in the way of studying, my job, or my mental health.”

However, her college struggles only remind her of what motivates her the most. “I’m doing this all for my mom who raised me almost entirely on her own and sacrificed so much just for me to succeed,” says Soto. “We were never the most financially stable but I always had everything I needed and more because of her, so hopefully getting a degree and eventually having a good career will allow me to repay her for everything.”

A bright future seems like destiny for Soto as she strives to achieve her personal and academic goals.“Personally, I just want to be happy with who I am and what I’m doing by the time I graduate,” says Soto.“Academically, I’m currently on the Dean’s Honor List and I want to stay on it throughout my time here.

“I also want to study abroad in South Korea during my third year, so I have to make sure I get all of my general education classes out of the way and plan accordingly,” continues Soto.

Traveling around Asia is nothing unusual for Soto. Soto is a 2018 summer alumni of the government program known as the National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y). NSLI-Y is a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State that allows high school students to study critical languages abroad for free during the summer and academic year.

Aleksey Soto enjoyed going to multiple cafes during her time in Incheon, South Korea.

Soto highlights this program as one of her biggest life-changing experiences. “I definitely became a lot more independent during the program and I learned how to deal with difficult situations since I had to fend for myself in a foreign country while having the language fluency of a 3-year-old,” says Soto. “Aside from that I made so many connections with the group of students on the program, my Korean teachers, my host family, and my language partner.”

“I still message my little host sisters once in a while and I can’t wait to go back to visit them and see how much they’ve grown,” continues Soto. “Studying abroad in South Korea was the best thing that could ever happen to me.”

In terms of applying for colleges, Soto has a lot of tips based off her own experience. “A lot of times we water ourselves down to make us sound like what we think someone wants us to be, but applications are where you don’t want to do that,” says Soto. “Of course you want to talk about your good moments, but if you struggled or are currently struggling, don’t be afraid to describe how your struggles have changed you.”

“Most admissions officers won’t really care that you had a 4.0 or above since freshman year, they want to see that you’re human and that you’ve dealt with the trials of being human in a way that’s made you grow,” continues Soto. “Also, don’t let other people decide where you apply to or how many colleges you apply to, apply to schools that are the best match for you (and a couple of safeties).”

When asked if she had any advice for current El Rancho students she said: “Remember that YOU are in control of your own future even though sometimes it might not seem like it. Once you leave high school, you decide what path you walk on.”

CAMPUS

School board moves forward with reconstruction

By Rene Gallegos
El Rodeo Staff Writer

The City of Pico Rivera pitched a plan to reconstruct the El Rancho High School campus in September of 2017.

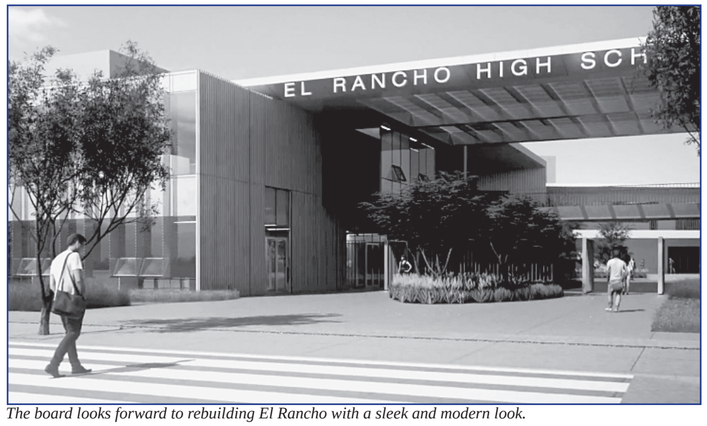
The project that was estimated to cost around $200 million included a complete redesign of the high school, including modernized buildings, new sports fields, and the latest technology. In December of 2017, this plan was approved by the school board however, the projected cost soon rose to around $230 million.

In September of 2018, the scheduled demolition of the campus was suspended. Newly-elected School Board President Jose Lara says, "The decision to postpone [was] due to disagreements on the board over the scope and scale of the project. Some board members changed course and instead of rebuilding El Rancho, they wanted to merely modernize the school."

A new school board was elected into office in November of 2018, so today, the El Rancho Unified School District has different members on the board.

On January 15, 2019, the previously-approved plans were pitched again to the recently-elected school board. With a majority vote of 3-1 (one school board member was not present), the board elected to move forward with the original reconstruction plans. "With the newly elected members of the school board now in place," says Lara,

> *"The board has decided to continue forward with rebuilding of El Rancho [High School] as promised when the school bond was originally passed."*
> *Jose Lara*



The board looks forward to rebuilding El Rancho with a sleek and modern look.

Due to the original design being scheduled for 2018, the board must adapt the schedule to fit in 2019. Lara says, "The schedule is being finalized and will [be] made public shortly." School Board Vice President Gabriel Orosco says, "What we're hoping is if everything goes according to plan, that we can have a ground-breaking in late April."

Despite the project already being approved, people are still hesitant on proceeding forward with its non-finalized schedule. School Board Member Dr. Teresa Merino says, "Students deserve a safe, state of the art learning environment that will allow them to reach their full potential but I have concerns on how this is happening." She continues, "[The management of the budget] is unknown since we don't have a full scope of work or a budget. The time line available is sketchy. What is available now does not cover the full cost of the reconstruction without raising property taxes."

Dr. Merino is not alone in her concerns. Raul Elias, City Council member, says that the School Enrollment levels have been declining over the past few years. "We have a declining enrollment, so we actually haven't made the projections as to how many students are really going to be here and the size of the school were going to need," says Elias, "We really have to take a look at the student population that's going to be occurring."

Elias continued by discussing the hiring of a project manager to oversee the entire project since "everything has been conceptual." "This whole idea of 224 million dollars spent on a school," says Elias, "It really doesn't make sense unless there's planning and there has to be professional input."

Elias added, "How much can the city afford? It's based on tax dollars and Pico Rivera is already over taxed." He proposed, "to start working on paying our teachers and getting more programs and technology in here… the building is secondary."

As the school board finalizes the details of the project, they plan to inform the public with each decision. Lara says, "The ERUSD board and public will also receive

Experience an adventure at Winter Formal!

By Selina Torres
El Rodeo Staff Writer

On February 2, 2019, El Rancho High School will be holding the annual Winter Formal Dance at Miles Square Golf Course from 7 to 11 p.m.

Dons will be traveling to see the Wonders of the World. "[I wanted] to try something different with the theme and pick something that is fun, creative, and adventurous." said ASB Dance Commissioner, Josh Cabral. The venue will be decorated based off of a "classy vintage look from old maps and globes" Cabral continued.

Cabral promises attendees will "live for every moment [at formal]. The DJ is really good and will play everyone's favorite [music]." "The DJ will gladly take any suggestions! Just go up and ask!" he added.

"Food at formal will be a traditional Italian dinner" said Mr. Magdaleno, ASB advisor. "There will be different types of pasta, like lasagna, chicken parmesan, fettuccine alfredo, and chicken," added Cabral.

Formal will also have a photo booth! Students will be able to "take propped pictures with their friends for free!" said Mr. Magdaleno.

All in all, Cabral believes that "people who are attending will be amazed on the venues details and activities and hopes to make every moment count [because, for some] it is [their] last one."

Mr. Magdaleno hopes that students will "continue to spread school culture and school pride at Winter Formal." Like Cabral, he "can't wait to see his students dressed up, looking fancy, and having as much fun outside of the classroom as they do inside of the classroom."

Tickets for Winter Formal will be sold until January 23rd or until they are sold out. Do not miss out on your chance to experience the Seven Wonders of the World!

Word on the street:
What are you most excited for at formal?

" I'm looking forward to dancing with my friends and messing around"
~Apollo Hernandez, 10th

"I'm looking forward to having fun and dancing with my friends"
~Alhia Iniguez, 10th

"I'm looking forward to having a good time"
~Matthew Solis, 9th

OPINION

Trump is to blame for the government shutdown

By Araceli Correa
El Rodeo Staff Writer

On December 21, 2018, the government shut down due to a debate over the new spending funds that had recently expired. The government shutdown was a result of two main issues: immigration and budget.

In my opinion I believe that the shutdown has Trump to blame. I also believe that it has done more harm than good and has affected the lives of countless people, many of whom are federal workers. All of these factors can and will affect the general population.

Every year, Congress meets to create a federal budget, however, this past December Congress waited until the last-minute and was unable to pass a federal budget for several agencies, this left the government to be partially shut down.

President Trump working in the Oval Office.

Unlike most of the usual government shutdowns, this one was quite different. This had to do more with President Trump rather than with policy disagreement. Trump recently proposed a spending bill on the wall of about $5.6 million. Since the House of Representatives is now Democrat majority many of them disagreed with Trump's proposition.

At any attempt to make negotiations, Trump would veto it until he gets his proposal passed by the Senate and House. However many of the members of Congress are still in the crossovers on whether to pass the bill of the wall, leaving the government stuck and unable to negotiate over the matter.

> *" I am proud to shutdown the government for border security,"*
> *- President Trump*

Trump is willing to risk the lives of many people to meet his childish demands. This shutdown has affected the lives of many federal workers.

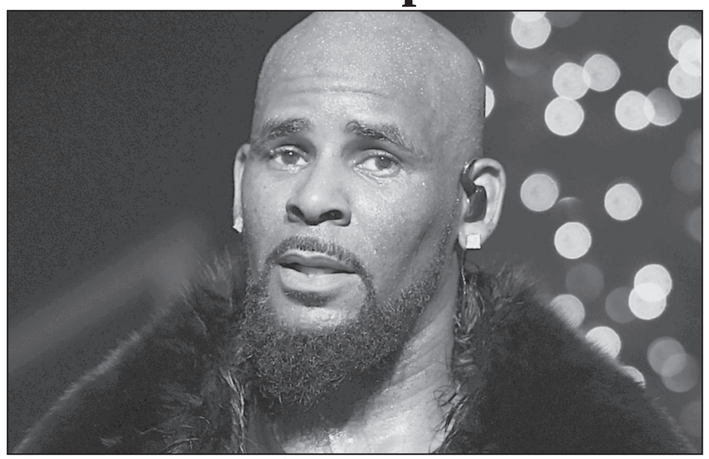
A total of 800,000 employees have been affected. About 380,000 workers have been furloughed, meaning they are not being paid and stay home, and another 420,000 employees are working without pay. Many of these workers work for several agencies of the government such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

The government shutdown has surpassed the record for being the longest, which was the 21 day shut down during the Clinton Administration. The shutdown lasted a total of 35 days. Even with that, the president threatened the shutdown could take up to months, even years.

This government shutdown is affecting not only the federal workers but the general public as well. Due to many of the government agencies being underfunded, agencies like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have stopped reviewing food products for pathogens. Which means that any raw food we eat could potentially have dangerous results.

This government shutdown seems utterly pointless because of Trump's stubbornness and unwillingness to negotiate a budget. Besides, there is still about 27-40% of immigrants who fly using their visas and overstay illegally. If we construct the wall it will only increase the number of immigrants coming by one method to another.

Art can not be separated from the artist


R.Kelly catching his breath during his performance.

By Kayla Perez
El Rodeo Staff Writer

There is a long list of pop stars that despite their amazing talents are later revealed to be cruel. This sad reality has continued over the past years as some believe we must "separate the art from the artist."

However, it is time for that belief to end. The practice of knowing "right from wrong" is something we are taught since our childhood. These celebrities that make these "mistakes" because they are not "aware" of the consequences that arise from their actions are only taking advantage of their platform to cover their faults.

When you stream or buy an artist's music or merchandise you not only contribute to the vile acts they have committed, but you are also providing an unforgiveable person with benefits they do not deserve. Take R.Kelly for example. It's been 25 years since R. Kelly was first charged for and forced to answer to sexual abuse.

Since then, new reports, witnesses, survivors, and testimonies, have gathered against R.Kelly, but these trials have constantly been swept under the rug due to popularity of his music. Now, after two and a half decades of silence we are finally able to hear the victims that have been a subject to R.Kelly's abuse in the new documentary series "Surviving R. Kelly."

What makes this docuseries so pivotal is its hounded emphasis on indicting Kelly as well as everybody in the music business who have empowered and supported him.

As "Surviving R. Kelly" convincingly argues, he can still do it to this day. It's a reminder that speaking up for abuse fighting sexual violence means fighting a system.

> *"The reason why he could do it is because he had people helping him"*
> *- R.Kelly Survivor*

This is the reason it is vital for us consolidate an Artist's activities with their fine art. Isolating the craftsmanship from the craftsman would only work in a perfect world where popularity and wealth were not crucial devices utilized by sex predators such as R.Kelly.

That isn't the world we live in. However, by making a toxic culture that pardons the wrongdoings of the groundbreaking, capable or rich, we make it harder for the victims to hold their pride in society.

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***.

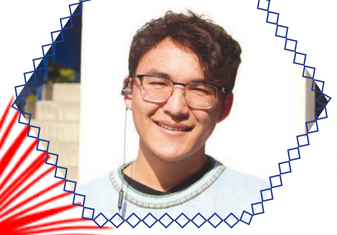
Student journalists on the ***El Rodeo*** staff will make every effort to publish following the legal definitions of libel, obscenity and invasion of privacy. Consistent with California Education Code section 48907, the staff will refrain from printing material that may incite students, be a violation 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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Word on the street: What do you wish to leave behind in 2018?

"What I'm leaving in 2018 is all the drama and bad vibes from myself and others."
- Jocelyn Recendez, 10



"Loneliness."
- Diego Cabral, 11

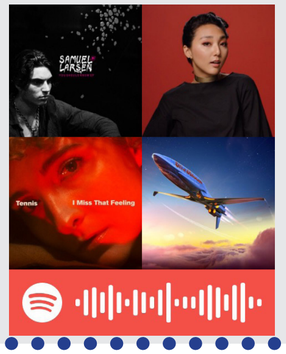
I'm leaving me caring about what other people think of me in 2018."
- April Rivera, 11

"Non-band tees."
- Yasmin Olea- Flores, 12

"Things I'm leaving in 2018 are empty pockets for sure. Oh and people with white tongues and hot breath."
- Luis Perez, 12

2019 playlist!

Start the year off with some great tunes below!



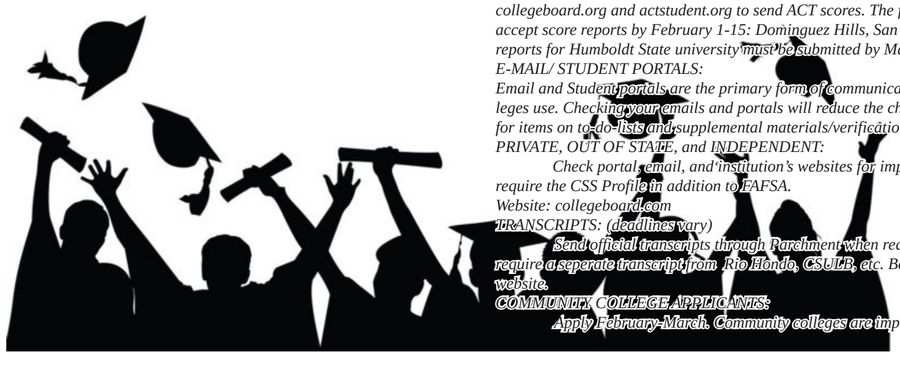
Movies to watch out for in 2019!

By Selina Torres
El Rodeo Staff Writer

Glass (January 29)
It Isn't Romantic (February 19)
Happy Death Day 2 (February 13)
Lego Movie 2 (February 8)
Captain Marvel (March 8th)
Dumbo (March 29)
End Game (April 26th)
La Llorona (April 19)
Shazam (April 5)
Aladdin (May 24)
Pikachu (May 10)
Godzilla (May 31)
Men in Black (June 14)
Toy Story 4 (June 21)
Star Wars IX (December 20)
Lion King (July19)
Spiderman: Far From Home (July 5)
Hobbs and Shaw (August 1)
The Goldfinch (October 11)
Frozen 2 (November 22)
Sonic (November 8)

College Reminders!

Seniors! As we start the new year it is important to not miss out on any deadlines! Here are some important reminders!



FASFA or CALIFORNIA DREAM ACT:
Due on March 2nd. All seniors must apply to be considered for financial aid. After submissions, students are able to make corrections. AB540, DACA, and undocumented students submit the California Dream act not FAFSA.
Websites: FAFSA (fafsa.gov) or CA DREAM ACT (dream.csac.gov).
CAL GRANT:
Due March 2nd. Students must create a Web Grants 4 Students account and check their award status. Lastly, confirm the school you will attend and submit high school graduation confirmation.
Website: mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov
SCHOLARSHIPS: Generation First Degree/ Frank Terrazas Scholarship
Due on February 28th. Scholarship applies to ERHS students only.
Website: frank-terrazas.hsfts.net
SAT/ACT SCORE REPORTS: CSU (deadlines vary, depending on university).
Send official score reports to ALL colleges you applied to. To send SAT scores go to collegeboard.org and actstudent.org to send ACT scores. The following CSU's will accept score reports by February 1-15: Dominguez Hills, San Marcos, Fullerton, and Fresno. Scores reports for Humboldt State university must be submitted by March 1st.
E-MAIL/ STUDENT PORTALS:
Email and Student portals are the primary form of communication that CSUs, UCs, and Privates colleges use. Checking your emails and portals will reduce the chance of jeopardizing an admission. Look for items on to-do lists and supplemental materials/verifications.
PRIVATE, OUT OF STATE, and INDEPENDENT:
Check portal, email, and institution's websites for important deadlines and reminders. Some require the CSS Profile in addition to FAFSA.
Website: collegeboard.com
TRANSCRIPTS: (deadlines vary)
Send official transcripts through Parchment when requested by a college. Some colleges require a seperate transcript from Rio Hondo, CSULB, etc. Be sure to order transcript from colleges' website.
COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPLICANTS:
Apply February-March. Community colleges are impacted; registering late will make it dif-

Advice from Alonzo

Is Indian food good?
A: After I read this question I went to Curry Hut (by Target). Yes, food of that cuisine is good. Go support a local business and try it out for yourself!

What do I do in life now that college apps are over?
A: First, you should follow up with financial aid applications and all that other jazz. Then, you can focus on classes and enjoy yourself, you got this!

How do I get a girl to like me? (I'm a girl)
A: As I am not a girl, I cannot give an amazing answer. But! If you want to catch the attention of someone then don't make any rash decisions, just be yourself. If someone doesn't like that, then you don't deserve to waste your time!

Is it safe to support the Coachella Festival?

By Marissa De La Cruz
El Rodeo Staff Writer

In April, hordes of music lovers will travel down to Indio, California, for the annual Coachella Music Festival. People from around the world travel to attend Coachella and pay up to two-thousand dollars or more for event tickets.

But what most attendees actually don't know is that their money is going to a right-wing billionaire who funded Anti-LGBTQ+ and Anti-Marijuana causes.

Co-founder of Coachella, Paul Tollett, has made multiple attempts to defend attendees of Coachella that have been accused of sexual harassment and homophobia.

On January 14, 2019, the reporter group The Pitchfork, interviewed Paul Tollett on the subject of the recent accusations towards Coachella and its attendees. These accusations are also said to be the reasons for Kanye West's and Justin Timberlake's dropping out of the event.

When Kanye West dropped out of Coachella, people speculated it was due to previous sexual harassment accusations toward the rap artist. When asked about this, Tollett claimed it was due to Kanye's distaste for the stage set up. He stated, "He has some great production ideas, but we just weren't able to pull them off right now." Which isn't surprising due to Kanye's recent behavior and actions. Yet, it sounds like a blatant lie. I feel like Kanye is much more reasonable than to quit such a large event just because he didn't like the stage design.

When Justin Timberlake dropped out, people assumed it was also for sexual harassment allegations. Tollett explained that Timberlake had quit due to bruised vocals and that he required a break. Although it sounds very sketchy, it's a likely reason for someone in his profession. I still feel as though this is a lie due to the fact that the interview was held in January, yet Coachella is in April, which is four months apart; four months is enough time to rest your voice.

Although I am displeased with a lack of justice, both Kanye and Timberlake have dropped Coachella. Ariana Grande and Tame Impala will be replacing them as headlining acts.

Many attend the event every year unaware of what they are actually supporting.

Another accusation to note is that Coachella is sponsored by Anschutz Entertainment Group. This outraged the LGBTQ+ community as the Anschutz leader, Philip Anschutz, is known for donating large amounts of money to anti-LGBTQ+ groups.

This is troubling due to the fact that many people who go to Coachella are some form of LBGTQ+. Tollett attempted defended himself and Anschutz by stating that they are not Trump supporters nor are they homophobic. He proceeded to explain that Anschutz has donated a million dollars to Elton John's AIDs fund. I don't find this to be a good enough reason to excuse someone who has donated so much to anti-LGBTQ+ organizations, especially due to the fact that AIDs is not inherently a "gay" disease.

Although Paul Tollett has attempted to clear up the controversy, most of what he says sounds like excuses, which is extremely disheartening. Coachella is supposed to be a festival that brings many different people and artists together, but instead, we face the fear of sexual harassment and homophobia. As a person who is a part of the LGBTQ+ community and a female, I feel uncomfortable and afraid knowing that if I bought tickets for Coachella, that money would go to an organization that supports homophobic behavior and doesn't stand against sexual harassment.

WHAT WILL 2019 BRING?

New year! New YOU! We asked students on campus what they are looking forward to the most in the new year! Here are some of their responses.

"My acceptance letter to UC Irvine."
-Senior Wendy Rodriguez

"Let's get this bread."
-Senior Janice Chavez

"I hope to be successful in school and sports."
-Senior Melanie Corona

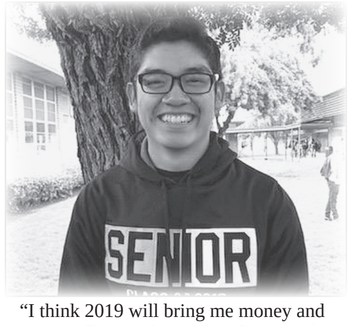
" I think 2019 will bring me happiness."
-Freshman Jimmy Valenzuela

"I think 2019 will bring me growth in different parts of my life. I think I will learn how to improve academically and athletically as well as personally."
-Junior David Hernandez

"Happiness and hopefully a lot of acceptance letters."
-Senior Maria Garcia

"2019 will be the year my aim gets better in Fortnite."
-Sophomore Alyssa Quevedo

" I think 2019 will bring me happiness and hopefully better grades."
-Freshman Delany Lomas



"I think 2019 will bring me money and fortune. Fame if I'm lucky. I wish to be the next Disney star."
-Senior Jose Martinez

"I hope that it brings lots of concerts and just fun in general."
-Senior Jade Castellanos

"It will bring some challenges at first because of the stress of college, but in the end I think that everything will turn out great :) and 2019 will be a great year."
-Senior Ariana Campos

"Lots of road trips because I am going to get my drivers license."
-Senior Jennifer Campos

DISCOVERING DONS

Carlos Mares: *"The Singer"*

BY EMILY VASQUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The thoughtful and talented senior Carlos Mares began his passion for music by playing the guitar for his 4th grade mariachi class. Mares then received his very own guitar for his 8th birthday after having *Guitar Hero* on his PlayStation 4. In 8th grade, Mares began writing his own songs, but did not yet have the interest to perform them until he became a don at El Rancho.

During his freshman year, Mares would post songs on *Youtube* just for fun. This is where Mr. Schneidman first heard one of his songs and referred him to, former choir director, Mrs. Cisneros. In choir, Mares met Karina Jimenez and in his junior year they created their band, Beach Clinic.

Mares is the lead guitarist and vocals of Beach Clinic, an indie-pop band. In January of 2018, Sarah Piñon was added to the band and they have now played over 30 shows in this past year, playing in backyard parties and venues such as Chain Reaction. They are scheduled to release their first EP on Saturday, February 8th. You can listen to their singles "Do I Know You?", "Never Meant" and a crowd favorite "Baby Celeste" on Spotify, Apple Music, Youtube and Deezer. You can also get the latest updates on the band and their journey by following them on Instagram at @beach.clinic or on Twitter at @beach_clinic.

Carlos Mares sings his heart out! ***Photo by Pedro Salcido***

Sophia Lugo: *"The Jock"*

Scholar Sophia Lugo poses in the hallway. ***Photo by Emily Vasquez***

BY EMILY VASQUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Junior Sophia Lugo is the all-around, college bound, student athlete! She has been a part of varsity volleyball and softball while also taking AP courses such as AP Calculus AB and BC and AP Physics. In addition to taking AP classes, Lugo spent her Saturdays taking Chicano/Latino Studies through CSULB this past semester. This semester, she's added more to her schedule by adding two Rio Hondo classes. Lugo keeps herself busy, also participating in several clubs on campus such as Link Crew, CSF, Math Club, Be a Leader, LEOS Club, and National Honor Society. Furthermore, Lugo was selected to be a part of this year's Academic Decathlon team.

With all these clubs and rigorous classes, Lugo has the volleyball court and the softball field as her space to be free of the stress of academics. Lugo started playing volleyball her freshman year of high school and has loved the sport ever since, playing hitter and opposite. For softball, it is a different story! Lugo has played softball for nine years now, playing various positions from shortstop to second base and anywhere in the outfield. We stan a versatile player!

With sports, clubs, and demanding courses, Lugo loves to spend any free time she has with her friends and family. Lugo's family keeps busy as well so it's nice to have a break once in a while and just be around the people she loves. You can try to keep up with Lugo's day to day life by following her Twitter at @sophlugo.

Angel Martinez: *"The Artist"*

BY EMILY VASQUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Senior Angel Martinez has been drawing since he can remember. Martinez accredits his art career to his mom because she would draw for him and his cousin, alumna Jasmyn Perez. His father would make paintings for his family as a hobby and his mom would sketch pin-up models and superheros. Martinez, taking inspiration from his parents' art, draws a variety of characters from undead Disney characters to realistic drawings of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe.

During his sophomore year, Martinez was invited to be featured in the Temachtiani: Art Exhibition by former El Rancho art teacher Mrs. Carrasco. Martinez submitted three pieces to the art show, two of which were sold and 40 percent of each piece sold was donated to a hospital in El Salvador. Martinez's first two pieces were realistic, all-pencil drawings of Alain Delon and Marilyn Monroe and his final piece was a personal piece entitled "Jasmyn's Place." The realistic pencil drawing of Marilyn Monroe, "Sex Symbol" and "Jasmyn's Place," sold for 400 and 300 dollars respectively.

Martinez continues to draw in his free time by sketching eyes and faces. He is currently in his second year of AP Studio Art and has recently reopened commissions for his artwork. He can do anything from realistic portraits to cartoon drawings. His most favorite work being pencil drawings and oil pastels, stating that he is too impatient to paint although he is amazingly talented with a brush, too! You can find his most recent artwork and contact him about commissions through his Instagram at @angelmarti10.

Angel Martinez poses in front of Mr. Diaz's class.
Photo by Emily Vasquez

SPORTS

Boys basketball looks to finish season strong

By Karizma Reyes
El Rodeo Staff Writer

After 19 games so far, El Rancho boys basketball have finished with their preseason and currently have a record of 1-6 with an overall record of 5-14.

With almost all new players joining from last year's JV team, head coach Jason Chacon says, "we are coming together as a team."

"Our preseason was like a feeling out period," says coach Chacon, "it didn't start off the way we wanted as far as our record goes, but I thought there was some growth [since league started]."

Although their season did not start off the way they wanted, the boys basketball team still keeps their sights on CIF. "[The team's] goal is to compete for a league championship every year," says coach Chacon.

Senior Abraham Ramirez says, "My expectations for the team is to win it all and go to CIF."

Coach Chacon says with league now in full swing, "we're seeing some of our leaders emerge and those who can handle the pressure and limelight."

Returning varsity player and co-captain, Alejandro Sainz says his standards for his teammates are, "bringing energy and just coming out and playing hard each game." But this team isn't just close on the court, Sainz says, "I met some of my brothers here and [the team] is like a second family to me."

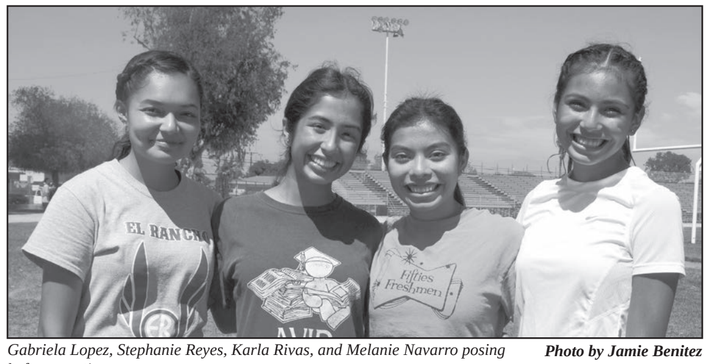
The boys basketball team puts in work not for themselves but for the team as a whole. "We come to practice everyday together and we do team bondings to have better chemistry," says junior Bryan Ornelas, "we sacrifice a lot for this team."

Santa Maria and Lizarraga trying to defend their ground against Cal High. ***Photo by Ezra Blanco***

With some remaining games in season, there is room for improvement for these boys. The basketball team can make their set goal of CIF with their determination. "I think it is possible for us to win a CIF title," says senior Isaac Noguera, "we just have to play hard every game and play together as a team." Teamwork is important on the court for these Dons.

Coach Chacon says, "sports are not easy, it's definitely not easy to sacrifice hanging out with your friends." He believes his team has come a long way and have grown closer as a family. "I'm impressed who they are as men," says coach Chacon, "there's a lot to be proud of, I'm proud to be their coach."

Track and field welcomes new coach



Gabriela Lopez, Stephanie Reyes, Karla Rivas, and Melanie Navarro posing before practice. ***Photo by Jamie Benitez***

By Araceli Correa & Grecia Haro-Flores
El Rodeo Staff Writers

Track season is right around the corner! To prep for their upcoming season, members of El Rancho's track and field team have been putting in hard work to reach high milestones.

Track is not only a sport to have fun and relieve day to day school stress, track has also been a way for many kids to be more involved in school."I decided to join track because I wanted to be involved in school, and this sport made me feel more welcome than any other sport I've tried before," said junior Karina Rivera.

Senior long-distance runner, Destiny Rivera says, "I decided to join track to help me train and condition for cross country." Like many other track students, track is a way for the members to train and condition for future sports they will partake in.

Most of the track students look forward to this upcoming season, "My goals for this season are to set new personal records in each event and to help all my teammates improve by pushing and supporting them every day," says junior David Hernandez.

Change comes with every new season, and this track season is no different. The former head coach, Gabe, departed ways with El Rancho High School and although many students were sad about the news they are still enjoying this season.

Senior distance runner, Haya Villareal says, "This is the first year without having coach Gabe as our head coach, however, Coach Luis is doing an amazing job at it." Hernandez adds, "He has brought new workouts and a new approach to the sport."

Students are ready to take on what this season will bring. Junior Karla Rivas says, "My goal is to be my best self and improve as much as possible." With similar aspirations, junior Melanie Navarro says, "This season I plan to PR in mainly my hurdle events and hopefully qualify for league finals."

The seniors are also trying to make their last year count and leave their mark on the team.

> ***"My goals for this season is just to finish [the] senior season on a good note. I want to leave with the underclassmen feeling ready and motivated to improve,"***
> ***- Destiny Rivera.***

The first meet will be held at Downey High School on February 1st, which is their annual Blue and Gray meet.

Boys soccer shoots for CIF playoffs

By Emiliano Lafarga
El Rodeo Staff Writer

The soccer season has begun and the El Rancho boys' varsity soccer team has started their journey towards a CIF Championship.

Despite a rocky pre-season plagued with several losses, the boys started the season strong with a convincing win over Whittier High School (3-0). However, their pre-season struggles seemed to have carried through to the regular season as they suffered back to back losses against California High School (2-0) and Santa Fe High School (2-0).

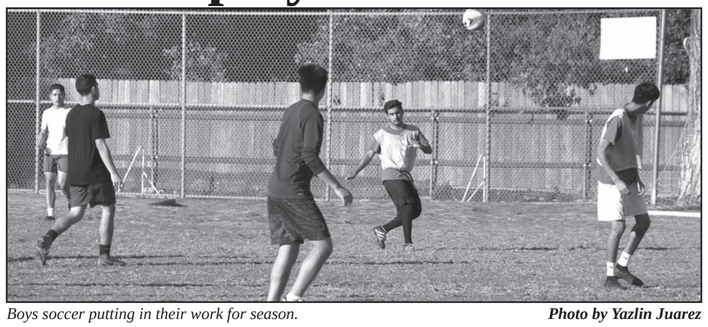
However, a recent win against rivals, La Serna High School (3-0) has put the boys back into playoff contention.

One thing that hasn't faltered is the team's dedication and high expectations for themselves. "We know we are more than capable of winning the rest of our games," says junior Diego Gonzalez.

"It's been a tough season for sure and we haven't been as dominant as the previous generations of El Rancho soccer" says Gonzalez, "I believe that if we have our heads in the right place and keep moving forward we can win games and make it to playoffs."

This season has definitely proved to be a challenge for the team, who are used to being dominant in their league games. Players and coaches have appeared to have accepted the fact that in order to succeed and make it to playoffs they have to adapt to this level of competition.

The team's leadership has also been continuously pushing the boys to keep going strong. "I think that the best thing we can do to help ourselves is to keep working and to keep believing in ourselves," says Head Coach Gerry Goyenaga. "When things don't go your way it's easy to knock yourself out mentally so it's important to have your head in the right place."



Boys soccer putting in their work for season. ***Photo by Yazlin Juarez***

However, there are positives to the struggling start the team has had so far. They have grown closer together as team both on and off the field and have learned to push through these tough times together. "I think over any season, especially this one, teams always get closer and that's part of the fun of coaching and being part of a team," says Goyenaga.

Despite the losses, the team and the coaches are still looking forward to a deep playoff run. It's especially hard for teams who have dominated in past years to come back from tough losses but with such a motivated team and coaches anything is possible.

"I'm always confident in my team's abilities whether we win or lose," says Goyenaga. "I don't try and try and focus on results that much, it's about getting better and for that reason I'm always confident." continues Goyenaga.

With a recent win over Whittier (3-2), the team is beginning to find their stride once again. Be sure to look out for their last two games of the season, which are all home, scheduled for today at home and January 30 at Smith Park!

SPORTS

Girls water polo struggling to stay afloat

By Flor Calderon
El Rodeo Staff Writer

The girls water polo season is quickly coming to a conclusion. Currently the team has an overall record of 3-10 and stands 0-2 in league play.

Despite their struggles, the team is continuing to make efforts to improve. "Every game has been different," says head water polo coach Ms. Xenia Castillo. "League is tough because it's not just one same division, it is different divisions all playing against each other.

"Each and every game isn't the same and you will notice the teams progress in each game," continues Castillo.

Castillo wants the team to learn from this season so that they are be able to improve this coming summer.

The team is rather small and consists of only eight players from a mix of all class levels. "The seniors hope to leave their mark onto the lower classmen," says Castillo. "Not only to get use to playing against their grade levels but to learn to make them stronger on their improvements for the upcoming year."

"The team wants to be the team that others remember," says first year captain Yulissa Chavez. "The girls water polo season hasn't been the best by far but besides the numbers of wins or losses the team wants to leave an impression of pure determination and to have the other teams know that they're not an easy win."

Ariana Campos preparing take her shot. ***Photo by Yazlin Juarez***

Their season is coming to a close, but the girls still have room for improvements. "Although the season is coming to an end, the team wants to keep learning from their mistakes and continue building their communication," says Chavez. "Most importantly they want to enjoy water polo," says Chavez.

As the season progresses, Chavez reflects thoroughly on her time as captain. "As captain I have definitely gotten closer to the team," says Chavez. "My team is the best family I could ever asked for and I know I am going to miss them."

Strong leadership is another important tribute that helped the team throughout the season. "I try to remind the girls to always work hard and that I'm always here if they need me," says second year captain Alexis Viramontes. "My standards of myself are really high and I always give it 150%."

"One thing I love about our team is that we are really close," continues Viramontes. "They've stood by me when times have gotten rough and I'm beyond grateful for them, I love them so much."

Support girls water polo at their next home game on Tuesday, January 29th at 3:15 pm against Cal High at El Rancho!

Girls basketball dribbles past competition

Lady Dons rushing Cal High's defense. ***Photo by Ezra Blanco***

By Alejandro Melchor
El Rodeo Staff Writer

When it comes to basketball, these Lady Dons don't play around! After finishing off their preseason strong with a record of sixteen wins and four losses, the girl's varsity team still has their eyes set on higher goals such as winning the Del Rio League title , a title which this team has held for the past 6 years, and perhaps a CIF title, a higher goal which they are determined to achieve this season.

"Although we lost a few games that we shouldn't or could have won we still have our every year goal of winning the league title," says girls varsity Coach, Randy Shigezane.

After finishing off strong in the preseason these girls are undefeated in league and plan to keep it that way. "My expectations for this season to win the league and to make CIF," says junior Ajhonette Guerra.

"I think a CIF title is possible this year because we are in a position where we can manage our game plan and put our trust in our Coach Shigezane," says junior Sarahid Hernandez. "He gives us the guidance we need to work together at our best on the court"

Because of the consistent training these girls go through weekly, the team has united greatly and has only brought them a whole lot closer.

"This is my fourth year and I can say we have gotten very close and are very much like a family," says senior captain Donteylor Maxwell, "They're like my sisters."

"I've seen this team come together since our trip to Las Vegas and because of this bond, it has transferred over to the court," added Shigezane.

Despite the team's relationship on and off the court, being undefeated does come with its dues. "We watch films, we run practice every day Monday through Saturday when nobody is here, and go through game plans as much as possible, and most of all, we hustle on the court. Says Hernandez. "It was a struggle at first but we got to know each other it has helped very much."

To ensure this team is on the right track they are working their hardest to perfect their game plan. "We've been having very serious practices and from what I can see is we are growing and getting better each day," says Guerra.

With their season going well and showing consistent hard work on and off the court it is fair to say these girls are going far.

So will the girls hopes be fulfilled? We'll just have to wait and see to find out. Be sure to watch as the girls attempt to make the impossible possible for El Rancho and perhaps gain another title at their senior night game,

Girls soccer trying to make a comeback

Lucia Yañez receiving a pass. ***Photo by Yazlin Juarez***

By Stevie Dominguez
El Rodeo Staff Writer

With a league record of 1-5-1 and a preseason record of 6-5-2, the Dons hope to improve their record as they progress through the season.

The girls began the season with a disappointing 1-0 loss to Whittier High. "The team played well until the end of the game, but it just wasn't enough," says head coach Michelle Flores.

After the loss, the girls managed a tie against California High with a 0-0 score. Next, the team got their first win of the season against Santa Fe by a score of 1-0. The Dons then lost 2-0 against La Serna. To end the first half of season, the team was able to get their second season win by edging Whittier with a 1-0 score.

Despite not having the best record, the team believes they will be able to finish the season strong. "Even though we lost, we never gave up, and we fought until the last whistle blew," says senior Lucia Yanez. "We set the pace of the game, but we just couldn't pull off the win and put balls away," says Coach Flores, "It was a very intense game."

The team believes they have not yet played to their full potential. "[Although] the team has not played bad, they have been inconsistent," adds Coach Flores, "we haven't been playing our best game."

In order to play to their full potential and win, the team thinks they need to make improvements. Junior Desiree Munoz says, "We can improve on the number of shots we take and just getting them in the goal." Coach Flores adds, "The girls need to work on having confidence going from goal to goal and learn how to control the pace of the game."

Go out and support girls soccer as they head into the final game of their Del Rio League season and play their hearts out. Their final game is away against La Serna at 3:15 pm on Jan. 30.

ENTERTAINMENT

The possibilities are endless in Netflix's *Bandersnatch*

Fionn Whitehead, Will Poulter, and Asim Chaudhry in the interactive episode of Black Mirror: Bandersnatch

By Yazlin Juarez
El Rodeo Staff Writer

Bandersnatch, the stand-alone movie from the popular Netflix-original series Black Mirror, was released on the movie streaming service on December 28th of last year. Bandersnatch follows video game programmer Stefan Butler (Fionn Whitehead) and his struggle with the idea of free will as he adapts a mad-man's fiction novel of the same name into a game in this 1980's UK alternate-reality.

Black Mirror, one of the most popular series of the Netflix original collections, is easily the modern-day Twilight Zone. Each episode, set in the future or in an alternate-present, explores different realities in which advanced technology is implemented into human society and how we interact with it, and each other, because of it. Throughout the series, writer Charlie Brooker and director David Slade seek to prompt the viewers to reflect on their own interactions and challenge what they believe in, whether it is religion, war, politics, or love.

In this chilling film, viewers are given ten seconds to select the actions of Stefan that appear at the bottom of the screens of their phones, tablets, and some TVs. These choices can be fun, like what cereal he has for breakfast, or grim, like whether to chop up or bury his dad's body (Craig Parkinson). Most choices lead to different paths that branch off until you reach an ending, usually one in which Stefan is dead and the "Bandersnatch" game is released, or until you come across a dead end and are forced to "redo" a previous action to lead you to an ending. In total, there are five different endings and almost a trillion different combination patterns of actions; the shortest route, without any redo's, takes 90 minutes to complete, but in order to get through every possible ending, it may take viewers two to three hours to complete. By the end of this adventure, viewers will be left questioning every move they make: inside the movie and outside of it too.

Bandersnatch, despite being a part of the Black Mirror universe, definitely stands on its own as a well-crafted cinematic piece of the 21st century. When watching the movie, one can see the creators have dedicated enormous time to detail and artistic direction. Everything from the soundtrack to the color palettes screams 80s, and each scene is carefully crafted, from frames so cold you'll need a sweater, and LSD trips that will make you feel like listening to the Beatles.

The background behind the cultural references of the movie are also highly complex. The lore behind the movie is well mapped out and researched, so that in any of the endings, a different "beast" of power is faced by Stefan. The title itself, Bandersnatch, is a monster from C.S. Lewis's books, said to have also been influenced by hallucinogens and the concept of will, and may represent the beast Pax. It truly takes a great deal of focus to keep track of what is real and what is not.

What might be the most exciting about this addition is the numerous callbacks to the other Black Mirror episodes; after all, who doesn't love a good Easter egg? Presenting themselves as video games, newspaper headlines, symbols and more, critically-acclaimed episodes such as "Metalhead," "San Junipero," "Nosedive," "White Bear," "Hated in the Nation," (and especially "U.S.S. Callister") sneaked themselves into the film.

Although the movie-game phenomenon was well-received by many Netflix viewers, some have accused Bandersnatch of being underwhelming or not fitting of the standard Black Mirror style. Critics have deemed the film kitschy and tedious to follow through with all the different endings. The movie is also currently under scrutiny for the "choose-your-own-adventure" style, deemed overused and overly complicated. Netflix currently faces a lawsuit from Chooseco, the original publisher and owner of the Choose Your Own Adventure trademark, who wants Netflix to cease usage of their brand name and is suing for $25 million or the profits from Bandersnatch. Nevertheless, Bandersnatch is still praised, and rightfully so, for its ground-breaking integration of technology in entertainment.

While some viewers may simply enjoy the film for its complex plot and seamless storytelling, some have delved deeper into the dark message of Bandersnatch in the way that was intended to be. Throughout the film and its multiple paths, characters and plot points in Stefan's struggle with sanity and game developing revolve around the notion of free will. This comes in the form of a government conspiracy route (Program and Control Study), a beast-like god in Jerome F. Davies' experience called Pax, the constant power of suggestion from Stefan's therapist and her pills, and even a reality where it is revealed Netflix viewers from the future are controlling his fate for entertainment.

People, especially teenagers, are convinced that they are being manipulated through various forces to behave a certain way. Mass media, politics, and social phenomenon is said to dictate our lives, so perhaps we really aren't in control. And if we were in control, on what authority do we have to act upon ourselves or others?

Morally-ambiguous questions like this are what make Black Mirror so addictive, and also hard to watch. You can see more of this tech-horror action in the upcoming season.

January Horoscopes

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): Happy New Year Aquarius! 2018 was an extremely difficult year, but 2019 has different plans for you. This year, the stars encourage you to reflect on all that has happened in the past year and allow yourself to feel the emotions that come with these events. It may be difficult to go back and think of these memories, but you need to heal, Aquarius. As for your love life, you may be confused about what you truly want right now. You know what you want, but others don't so be vocal. Keep strengthening your friendships and keeping striving for self-love!

Pisces (Feb. 19 - Mar. 20): New year, new you Pisces! Last year, you focused on being the version of yourself that everybody wanted you to be, but this year, try to change that. The stars encourage you to be your true self in 2019! Don't let others put you down, Pisces. People will always have something to say about you, so brush it off and keep moving forward! 2018 was generous to you in regards to love and relationships and 2019 can be the same way if you maintain the good energy you're known to have. There is nothing but positivity in store for you this year!

Aries (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19): Happy New Year Aries! 2018 had plenty of ups and downs, but you managed to survive them. The real question is though: did you just survive them or did you make your way through these situations in a healthy manner? Whatever the case may be, 2019 encourages you to start new and make sure you get through difficult situations with the closure you deserve! Last year was a bit rough in the relationship aspect of your life, but with an optimistic attitude, anything is possible! Who knows? Maybe you'll find your special someone!

Taurus (Apr. 20 - May 20): New year, new you Taurus! The stars have spoken and they encourage you to reinvent yourself. Whether it's through a new hairstyle, a new wardrobe, or even a new mindset, change is exactly what you need in order for this year to be a successful one. Since Taurus is one of the most stubborn and fixed signs of the zodiac, change may seem a bit frightening and even unpleasant, but trust the stars, they know what's best for us! Last year, you might have had a fling or two, but you're getting tired of the inconsistency. 2019 has the stable relationship you're looking for, you just have to find it. Go out more, be open-minded, and keep a positive attitude and you're sure to find a boo!

Gemini (May 21 - June 20): Happy New Year Gemini! Last year you isolated yourself…A LOT...and that wasn't very good for you. While it's okay to have some alone time, too much of it can cause some serious damage! This year, the stars encourage you to engage in more conversations, to go out more, and to make new friends. Make valuable connections with others! 2018 was not the best year in regards to your relationships, but 2019 can be better if you keep one thing in mind: don't spread yourself too thin. Put your time and effort into a couple of relationships instead of into everyone you know. This will create more meaningful relationships and it won't put any added stress onto you. Remember to love yourself first before getting into anything serious with someone else!

Cancer (June 21 - July 22): New year, new you Cancer! There is no doubt that 2018 was a very difficult year for you. Whether you experienced heartbreak, loss, or stress (or a mixture of all three), you felt things very strongly and that might have made your year rather unpleasant. Worry not my dear Cancer, 2019 will not be like that at all! This year, the stars encourage you to work on yourself, to love yourself, and to be yourself. Don't let others dictate how you live your life! 2019 has plenty of little surprises in store for you, Cancer. All you have to do is be positive!

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22): Happy New Year Leo! Last year, you were very critical of yourself. While it can be a good idea to keep yourself in check once in a while, constantly bringing yourself down and beating yourself up is not! This year, the stars encourage you to be proud of yourself, no matter what it is that you are doing. 2019 is a time for self-confidence and good energy! 2018 was filled with ups and downs in regards to your relationships, but towards the end of the year, things seemed to fix themselves. That state of peace and stability can remain present this year if you continue to surround yourself with people who you care about and who care about you! Good luck Leo!

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): New year, new you Virgo! This year, the stars encourage you to find where you belong. 2018 made everyone feel a bit isolated and left out, but nobody felt it quite as hard as you did Virgo! In order to make sure that you don't feel that way again, it may be a good idea to go out and meet new people. Find a social circle that makes you feel included! If that means cutting ties with old friends, then so be it. You deserve nothing but the best this year!

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): Happy New Year Libra! Last year was pretty much the same for you as every other year before. While routine and predictability may seem like a good thing, wouldn't it be better to spice things up? A new atmosphere and new energy may be exactly what you need to feel good about this year. In 2019, go out and find that! Make new friends, go to new places, and make new memories! 2018 was very lackluster when it came to romance, but this year can be different. Put yourself out there and be the most confident you-you can be!

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): New year, new you Scorpio! For most of your life, you've had goals and dreams that you would like to see come true, but your realistic outlook on life has made it difficult to see these as anything more than a fantasy. This year, the stars encourage you to change this mentality! If you can dream it, you can do it. It's good to stay grounded and know that there are limits, but it's also good to allow yourself to go for things you never thought you could get! Romance is looking good for you Scorpio! 2019 has lots of fun in store for you, just remember to be positive and enjoy the journey!

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Happy New Year Sagittarius! Much like Scorpio, you have big dreams, so why not make them a reality? Stop with the "What ifs" and start with the "How wills." This year, the more confident you are in yourself, the more you will accomplish! If anything is bringing you down or making you a bit insecure, talk to a close friend. 2019 is also a great time to strengthen your relationships! Good luck and have fun!

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): New year, new you Capricorn! In 2018, you worked hard, maybe even harder than you should have. It's common for the hardest working sign to want to overwork themselves because they don't want to feel like a burden to others, but that's not healthy! In 2019, learn to ask for help, Capricorn. There is nothing wrong with asking for help when you most need it. Allow yourself to be more vulnerable! This year, also try and strengthen your existing relationships. A healthy Capricorn is a happy one! Good luck with your journey and don't forget to have fun!