



El Rodeo



El Rancho High School - Volume 57 Issue 7
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ER Decathletes Finish 27th in State



Sacramento: The Decathlon Team made history by being the first El Rancho team to ever make it to state.

By CORRINE GARCIA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Following a delayed flight, the El Rancho Decathletes departed on Friday from LAX and headed toward Sacramento to compete in the Academic Decathlon State Competition.

Being that this year's team was the first in El Rancho history to advance to state, the young scholars greatly anticipated their arrival.

"For the past several weeks, we have been studying as much as possible, motivating each other to stay positive," said Hernan Reza, a gold medalist in music.

Drained from a week filled with "cramming" as well as end of the semester finals, most of the decathletes relaxed and slept during the flight. "I fell asleep," said Jonathan Luna, who later earned the highest cumulative team score. Chris Neely, winner of a

both a bronze medal in speech and a silver medal in interview, also joined Luna and took a nap.

Unable to rest, Amy Macheo, a silver medalist in speech, said, "though my ears were hurting, the plane ride was fun."

However, once the decathletes arrived in the windy city, they quickly became focused and eager to compete. Amazed by his fellow competitors, two-year decathlete Luis Aldana said, "the

amount of intelligence in California is really an eye opener."

Given that nearly every qualified California high school participates in the three-day event, "state is very competitive," said decathlon coach Mrs. Lam.

Concluding the intense competition, El Rancho's decathletes placed 27th out of sixty-six highly trained teams.

Though incredibly proud and pleased with the outcome, the decathletes were ready to return home. Due to Sacramento's location in California's agricultural central valley, decathlete Angeli Vicente said, "Northern California is very different. I'm used to the city."

Bidding farewell to a week-end in which rigorous studying and blue sweaters occupied prominent roles (not to mention karaoke night), the decathletes learned far more than Super Quiz facts. Amy Macheo said, "I realized that it's okay to study and have fun at the same time."

The decathletes also recognized the importance of time management and group cooperation. "The competition was not about medaling. We just wanted to have fun," said Luis Aldana.

Reflecting upon the countless hours of pure dedication, occasional sleep deprivation, and newly formed bonds, most of the decathletes would undoubtedly agree with Chris Neely and say, "I would not change anything."

California's Deficit Impacts Education

By REBECCA ROBLES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

During the next forty-two months California will face a \$42 million dollar deficit. California's economy will be impacted along with California's education. The El Rancho Unified School District will be affected during the 2008 to 2011 school years.

Other school districts in Southern California have already been affected and have begun making cutbacks to positions and educational programs.

In a memo sent to district employees Superintendent Norbert D. Genis said that the reductions made are caused directly by the state. This is so because the state has deducted \$6 million dollars from funding. The memo also mentioned that the district must make large budget reductions even though the reductions will interfere with the "sound" instructional program for the students throughout the district.

The February 3rd 2009 minutes from the Budget Advisory Committee meeting said that within three years \$14 million dollars must be reduced as of state funding in the present time.

Last June the El Rancho Unified School District submitted an approved budget on the "belief" that the district would receive the usual allocations from the state. Funds for the cost of living allowances (COLA) have not been allocated and reductions to the base are being discussed.

In the February 17th 2009 minutes from the Budget Advisory Committee meeting the idea that if the State proposed tax increase were approved there would not be an immediate impact.

Recommendations on the reductions were made between January and March to the District Budget Advisory Committee made up of members from the El Rancho Federation of Teachers, the El Rancho Administrators' and Supervisors', and the California School Employees Association.

Some of the topics of discussion concerning cutbacks include the elimination of the Energy Manager, temporary layoffs for employees, elimination of transportation, the transfer of the cost of transportation to parents, elimination of SIP days, elimination of after school activity programs, the modification of class size reductions, and a salary rollback at 1%.

Also the February 17th 2009 minutes from the Budget Advisory Committee meeting the committee was reminded by staff to consider "not only the cost savings but also the impact" the cutbacks would have on the district.

Some reduction topics discussed were found to be unavailable because the district does not fund those topics. The addition and elimination of crossing guards is not in the hands of the district but in the hands of the city of Pico Rivera.

Some topics for discussion were dismissed because the reductions would not be cost efficient. The Budget Advisory Committee found that the elimination of breakfast at El Rancho High School would not save money because food service is not funded from the general fund. Also, the expansion of kindergarten to a full time program would cost more money.

The state's allocations to the district were later than usual in the school year. This has caused a delay with the due processes at the local level.

The next Budget Advisory meeting is supposed to be on March 24th, 2009 at the City Council Chambers 6615 Passons Blvd. at 3:30 p.m.

Faculty Chooses Next Year's Schedule

CHANTEL MORENO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

For the past year and a half, El Rancho's faculty and administration has been investigating new scheduling options. With a May 1st deadline looming, the staff was required to vote several times this month in an attempt to come to a final decision. The original vote took place on Wednesday, February 11th; however, the winning model did not win by the required 75% of votes.

On February 18th, a run-off vote was held, however, the results of the runoff vote also did not receive the proper percentage of votes. This prompted a Leadership meeting, where the dilemma was discussed.

A memo sent out to the faculty members by Mr. Genis stated that a mutual decision, within the Leadership meeting, had been reached and that they felt that the best thing to do would be to just go ahead with the Three Peat schedule, even though technically it did not win by the proper amount of votes. Genis felt that any further voting would not change the outcome, and that enough time had been spent on deciding. Genis also discussed the fact that the most important thing right now was to worry about the teachers preparing for next years classes.

This schedule has caused a lot of debate among the staff, and another meeting was held last week

to discuss teachers' concerns. Taking the faculty's concerns into consideration, the proposed schedule was modified. On March 4th, yet another vote was held in the office, and again, the winning model did not earn 75% of the votes. A final decision needed to be made quickly because May 1st is the "absolute deadline" to turn in the new scheduling model, to the Board and District for approval.

A final vote took place on Friday, March 6th, and 106 faculty members voted yes, while 28 voted no, giving the schedule the 79.1% that it needed.

One of the new aspects of next year's schedule are the tutorials. These tutorials will be held after certain classes for twenty minutes in an attempt to help those students who are struggling in their classes, or would just like some extra help in a given subject. Any student earning a C or better will not be required to stay in class, but will be allowed to leave early to either nutrition, lunch, or to leave school earlier. The main goal of these tutorials is to make it easier for kids to get the help that they need.

Mr. White, an El Rancho math teacher, proposed the winning "three-peat" scheduling option. White pushed for this schedule because it, "preserves the current El Rancho schedule three days out of the week; 60% of the time," said White. White also points out that the schedule "allows for classes to meet four times a

Alaska/Three-peat Model

Monday/Friday

Period 0	7:00-7:50am
Teacher Collaboration	7:55-8:45am*
Period 1	8:50-9:40am
Period 2	9:46-10:36am
Period 3	10:42-11:32am
Period 4	11:38-12:28pm
Lunch	12:28-1:08pm
Period 5	1:14-2:04pm
Period 6	2:10-3:00pm

Tuesday Wednesday Thursday

Period 0	Period 0	Period 0	7:00-7:50
Period 1	Period 2	Period 1	7:55-9:05
Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	9:05-9:25
Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition	9:25-9:35
Period 2	Period 3	Period 3	9:41-10:51
Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	10:51-11:11
Period 5	Period 4	Period 4	11:17-12:27
Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	12:27-12:47
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	12:47-1:27
Period 6	Period 5	Period 6	1:33-2:43
Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	2:43-3:03

week which makes for greater continuity than meeting three times."

A lot of time and deliberation went into making a final decision

for next year's new schedule. According to Genis, "the impact and effectiveness of this schedule will be addressed...again next year."

NEWS

Teachers Rally Against Proposed Budget Cuts

BY MARICRUZ CASTRO-SPENCER
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

“Save Our Schools!” “Our children need teachers!” “Every teacher counts!” This is a taste of what passers by got when they walked along Passons Boulevard on March 12th at five in the afternoon. Teachers, students, and concerned citizens rallied in front of El Rancho to show how the felt about the budget cuts.

Approximately one hundred people rallied for the forty-eight teachers and fifty-two certified workers, including principals, assistant principals and deans who received Reduction in Force Notices.

The governor and state legislature signed the state budget that cuts school spending by more than \$11 billion.

Many schools will be left with a shortage of thousands of dollars along with fewer teachers to teach students. There is also a possibility of shorter school days, reduced or eliminating busing transportation, school employee layoffs, and much larger class sizes.

The state budget cuts are reaching every district, even here at El Rancho. Former Vice-Principal of Discipline Mr. Collings was given a position as Principal of Salazar and instead of filling his job here at El Rancho; Mr. Rodriguez has taken on Collings' old duties along with his own.

Next years budget for the El Rancho School District is \$14 million. This is considered high considering that the Whittier City District is a mere \$1.1 million. This is due the amount of people and schools that are located in that district.

“It’s a number that keeps changing,” said Superintendent Norbert Genis to the Whittier Daily News, “The intent of our [school] board is to use every available dollar to maintain staffing.”

Teachers that attended the rally on March 12th wanted their voices heard.

“Hopefully it will make a difference,” said El Rancho teacher Tim McMullen.



RYAN ROJAS



Rome: St. Peter's Square is one of the many sites MEChA students will visit during their trip overseas.

MEChA Prepares for Spring Break Trip

BY BIANCA GUTIERREZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

MEChA students count the minutes as they prepare to take the journey of a lifetime during spring break. While many wait for a rest from classes this Spring Break, the MEChA club along with Mr. Daniel Diaz, Ms. Jazmin Chavez, Mr. Gerardo Correa, Mrs. Ana Melgar, and Mr. Justin Diaz will travel abroad

to Spain, Italy, and the world's smallest country—Vatican City.

Club advisor and U.S. History teacher Daniel Diaz hopes that this trip will “open my student's desires to travel to new places. I want them to see their textbooks come alive”. New traveler and math teacher Ana Melgar said, “I hope students can apply all they have learned to what they will see”. Mrs. Melgar continues by saying that

“[I am] nervous, but comfortable because I know the experienced teachers will help me”.

After their arrival, the students and their supervisors will spend their first six days in Italian cities such as Rome and Florence. On the sixth night, the MEChA members will board a night ferry and travel to Barcelona, Spain where they will remain until their departure. During this time, the group will visit St. Peter's Ba-

silica, the Trevi Fountain, as well as other cathedrals and museums.

Senior Vanessa Torres traveled to Mexico last year with MEChA, but says that “It's always great to go out of your country and comfort zone to see how other cultures work”. “I hope to gain insight about culture and discover how I will react when exposed to a different situation that tests my independence”.

New MEChA member, senior Jennifer Alvarez feels that this trip is something you can “check off your list before you die” and “makes me feel adventurous”. Alvarez, Torres, and other MEChA members must endure a direct flight that is almost 12 hours long. Alvarez said “I'm nervous, but for the plane ride, not because of traveling to a new country”.

Mr. Diaz and Jennifer Alvarez alike, look forward to seeing “the Sistine Chapel and Leaning Tower of Pisa”. Besides the cultural attractions, other members of the group look forward to “shopping. All the Italian designers and boutiques,” says Mrs. Melgar. Vanessa Torres says that she is looking forward to “the art and just experiencing what I have learned as a sophomore”.

As an educator, Mr. Diaz hopes that students will “take advantage of these kinds of trips” and hopes that traveling “will change their lives”. Mrs. Melgar agrees, adding that “students need to travel and be exposed to new cultures because it's such an eye-opening experience.”

Taggers Beware: Crime Carries Serious Consequences

BY MADELINE RODRIGUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Graffiti is a silent enemy that appears as soon as the maintenance erases it. El Rancho's administration has partnered up with the Pico Rivera police department to identify the people responsible for the tagging on campus.

In the month of February, some students managed get inside and tag one of the faculty restrooms. “Two students were responsible. For privacy issues, those names cannot be released. That problem has been dealt with,” Mr. Rodriguez Asst. Principal of Business and Activities.

Strict measures are taken with the people who are caught tagging: “Suspension, fined by the school, if there is any tagging found in the city, the student will get fined by them too, they get arrested, cited, released by the LA's city department, have a court date and depending on what the court decides they can go to jail, placement, a group home; they can get a probation officer, or house arrest,” said Eleventh grade dean Mr. Lara.

“We can go up to Ed code, but the sheriff's department goes by the Penal code. We can go as far as suspension and restitu-

tion,” said Principal Mr. Genis.

“If they are already eighteen years old, they will be tried as adults, even if they still come to El Rancho. Tagging is destroying public property and it doesn't matter what age you are,” added Lara.

Cleaning the graffiti has gotten pricy for the school and district.

“On campus every spot tagged can cost about one-hundred and seventy-five dollars on average. It's a bargain considering the city charges about four-hundred dollars per spot,” said Rodriguez.

The school does not have a specific graffiti fund, so they have to rely on the school district for paint and other supplies,” We have used so many supplies this year that the district is running out; soon we will have to start buying our own. It seems that we have to paint the restrooms on a weekly basis,” added Rodriguez.

Removing the graffiti is a pricy and long process. “We have to think of the budget cuts, the cost of all the paint, the rollers which are about five bucks, everything just adds up, plus the man hours, it usually takes two guys,” said Lara. The janitors have to do various things to get rid of the graffiti



ANONYMOUS

completely. “Graffiti remover then that has to dry, primer, let that dry and then repaint it that way it can have a good big coat of paint,” added Lara.

Having to pay for the damages is one thing, but what the vandals have to face is having that on their records. “There are two types of crimes—misdemeanor and a felony. A misdemeanor is any damage that is under four hundred dollars and a felony is anything above that,” said Deputy Peralta.

“If the student is not able to pay the restitution then the probation department is brought in to make sure the student comes

up with that money. If they fail to come up with that money, and their parents own their own house, then the school or the city will put a lien on the house. If they ever try to refinance or sell the house, the city of Pico Rivera will take their money,” said Peralta. “There are 50-60 cases of liens, twelve this year,” added Peralta. “The school cannot put liens on homes only the city can,” added Genis.

“Our goal here at El Rancho is to keep our school as clean and safe as possible.

The graffiti is a major issue but it's just a small section,” said Lara.

OPINION

SASSFA/WorkSource California Job

Recruitment and Orientation

March 21st Event Designed to Put People Back to Work, Stimulating Local Economy

Santa Fe Springs, CA

Unemployment in California has reached double digits. More and more companies are slashing their workforce or worse, closing their doors. Jobs are near impossible to find. Does any of this sound familiar? It seems that all the news that is coming at us over the air, in print and on the internet, is dark and getting darker. How long do we need to wait for the economic stimulus package to actually take effect? Is there any good news coming out of Sacramento and Washington D.C?

The Southeast Area Social Service Funding Authority (SASSFA/WorkSource California), located in Santa Fe Springs, has some great news!

You don't need to wait at all! SASSFA is looking to employ up to 250 youth, with 75 youth to start work as soon as possible, the balance during the summer months. If you are looking for work, you are between the ages of 16 and 21, live in the cities of Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Paramount, or the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, including Los Nietos, South Whittier, East Whittier and West Whittier, you are going to want to mark Saturday, March 21, 2009 down on your calendar as the day to take your first step toward getting back to work.

SASSFA/ Partners for Progress will be holding a Job Recruitment and Orientation, from 10am to 12pm, at their main facility, located at 10400

Pioneer Blvd, Suite #9, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670. They are looking to place up to 250 people with various employers in the area, in a wide variety of industries and fields. They will be processing applications to verify eligibility, conducting interviews and holding orientation seminars to determine qualifications and job compatibility for each applicant.

There are no fees to use SASSFA/Work Source California's services, which include paid work experience, free use of computers, copiers, fax, phone, internet access, workshops, including resume writing, interview skills, job search and job placement assistance. As part of the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program, SASSFA is

actively searching for qualified applicants to participate in this program, in partnership with local public and private employers that are willing to give applicants a try-out, at no cost to them.

The jobs they are filling are temporary, four to eight weeks, each coming with the possibility of the work experience leading to permanent positions, both full and part-time. The positions include working in retail, clerical, stockroom, data entry, insurance, customer service, medical and so much more. SASSFA/WorkSource California is also looking for more businesses that are willing to take advantage of this government funded resource to give applicants a chance to show what they can do, again, at no cost to the employer. For more information, please contact the SASSFA/Work Source California office at 562/946-2237, extension 254, 231, or ask for the Youth Employment Program.



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Free Time is Free Time

EL RANCHO STAFF WRITER
ANGELICA MOLINA

Cell phones and iPods have long been an interruption at school, but today's school board believes it's time to change that. All electronic devices are now banned. What's next? Calculators? The school Board's idea to confiscate iPods and cell phones during passing periods and lunch is not the right way to deal with class disruptions.

There are eight minutes for each passing period and forty minutes for lunch. During these times students enjoy talking to their friend and listening to music. How are students supposed to enjoy that "free" time when they constantly look over their shoulders for the deans and counselors who seem more interested in confiscating electronic devices than catching the students who are tagging our restrooms, stopping fights in the quad, and selling drugs?

In addition to the violation

of students' free time, there is a pressing issue of students who participate in extracurricular activities. These students are the best and brightest of El Rancho High School. And, when they need to stay late at school for Advanced Placement classes, tutoring, projects, sports, and performing arts, how are they supposed to notify their parents or get a ride home?

Another aspect of the ban on cell phones and iPods is that confiscated electronics may only be returned on Friday between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. with a parent or guardian present. Many students need their phones every day in order to communicate with their parents, check their work schedules, or even record homework in the calendar section of their phones. What are these students supposed to do to organize their lives if the major tool of that organization is sitting in the dean's office?

Admittedly, cell phones and iPods have been a major

Good Morning El Rancho!

MARICRUZ CASTRO-SPENCER
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

You are sitting in class. The teacher is explaining last night's homework. You are finally getting the concept of centripetal force when all of a sudden, "GOOD MORNING EL RANCHO!" The sound is so loud that you not only lose any concentration you had about learning, but you now have to hear the same announcements you heard the day before.

This year El Rancho decided that students and teachers

should listen to the daily bulletin over the intercom every day. Now, I'll admit that at first I thought it was a good idea. It would be an easy way to inform students, of activities and upcoming events. However, it seems that the time has come to end the announcements. It was nice, charming, even cute, but this is High School, not Middle School. We can read the daily bulletin on our own.

It takes away time that could be spent on learning. You're probably thinking, "Are you crazy? That's when I get to talk to my friend about what happened during lunch yesterday."

The point is, the daily bulletin was nice and maybe

distraction in classrooms during instructional time. But, students are learning self-control, and incidences of phone and iPod use have been reduced in classrooms.

The informal age is upon us, and electronic devices are tools of that age. Students do not use cell phones and iPods only for entertainment uses, but to balance their hectic lives. And, even when they are being used for entertainment on our time during passing periods and lunch, then we should be allowed to use them. It is, after all, "free" time. Therefore, a total ban on all electronic devices is a drastic and unnecessary measure.

even pleasant at one time, but now it's time to put it to rest. If the daily bulletin continues to be read over the intercom, which it probably will, it could be changed up a bit.

Also, the events need to be updated. We get that Sadie's is coming up and that we can buy airtime for two dollars in the activities office.

The daily bulletin will most likely continue to be read over the intercom due to the fact that some teachers don't read the daily bulletin to their class, but can the readers lower the volume of their voices? Indoor voices. That's all I ask, really. Think of it as a compromise.

FEATURES

Scripps College Summer Academy

BY JONATHAN RUIZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The Scripps College Summer Academy (SCA) is an academically intensive two-week residential program for motivated young women who demonstrate the promise to succeed in a liberal arts college environment.

This programs gives freshman, sophomore, and junior girls an opportunity to experience what it is like to study at a private, liberal arts institution.

There is no cost for participating in the SCA program; Scripps College pays for all cost sfor program materials and activities. Program participants work with Scripps College faculty, staff and students who support their efforts to graduate from high school and succeed in college by enhancing each student's academic skills and confidence.

The program is intended to further the participants' academic preparation by exploring race, class and gender through the four major areas of study (fine arts, humanities/letters, natural sciences, and social sciences).

Participants will have the opportunity to develop their writing, analysis, discussion, and presentation skills under the mentoring of Scripps faculty and undergraduate students.

Each fall, students are invited to participate in the Science Scholar program in which they work in small groups with science faculty members to conduct a research project and then present their findings.

In the past, students have read and discussed: Toni' Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek*, and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their eyes are Watching God*. The SCA extends their two-week residential summer program by providing academic resources throughout the school year and into a student's senior year of high school.

The SCA focuses its recruitment on first-generation, college bound students from low-income families. Participants have the opportunity to make new friends with other college-bound students from Southern California. People who participate in the program usually get invited back to the campus for a number of fun informative events.

The program will be taking applications until March 20 when the opportunity to attend the program will end.

You can apply online at www.SCRIPPSCOLLEGE.EDU/Academy or visit the career center for more information. Tomorrow is the last day to apply for a chance at the program.

Running Back to Enter NCAA Next Fall

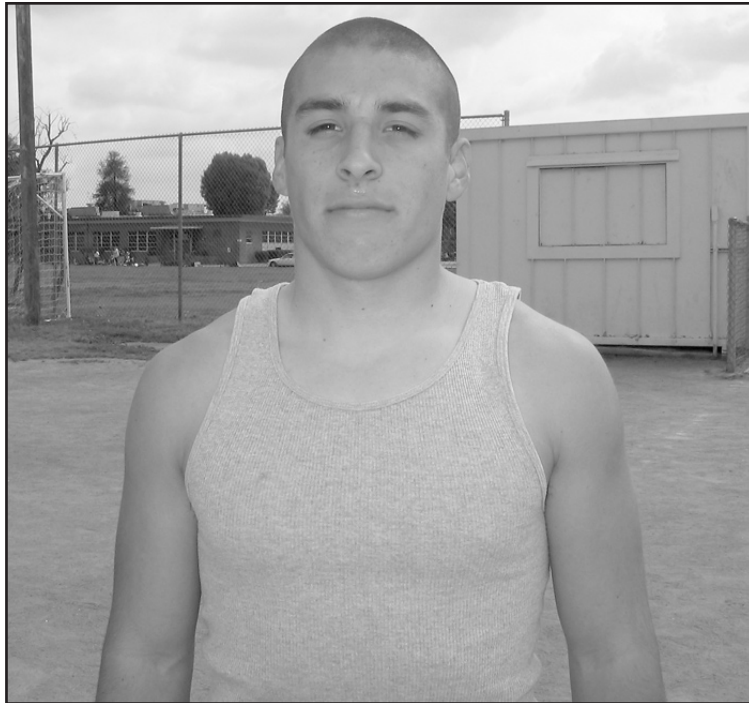
BY GENESSE CARRILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Marcus Galan, the 5'6, 170 pound, El Rancho athlete has broken the stereotype of what it takes to become a successful athlete. After playing for the Pico Rivera Dons, the St. Paul Swordsmen, and the El Rancho Dons running back/defensive back Marcus Galan will continue his football career at the University of Minnesota: Crookston (UMC) this fall.

"When I first played football I knew it was my passion," says Marcus. Football has been a part of Marcus' life for eight years. This season, Marcus finished with an impressive 1,038 yards rushing and 5 touchdowns.

Two weeks ago, the University of Minnesota in Crookston, a NCAA Division II school, recruited Marcus. The UMC Eagles compete in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, which operates in the Midwestern United States and is one of the largest Division II conferences nationwide.

The UMC was in search of two top running backs, and



GENESSE CARRILLO

Senior Marcus Galan prepares to continue his education at the University of Minnesota: Crookston (UMC).

they chose Marcus as one of them. "I had never heard of the school, but I wanted to play football and they offered me a pretty good scholarship to play at their school," said Galan.

After visiting the school the following week, Marcus decided that he would attend Crookston come fall. A ceremony in commemoration of Marcus' accomplishments was held on Friday

in the quad at exactly 10am.

Joined by his coaches, parents, friends, and fellow teammates, Marcus signed his formal statement of intent for next year.

Marcus is the first seven-year old athlete that will play for the NCAA straight out of high school. "I would like to thank my parents and Coach Zepeda for providing me with this opportunity," said Galan. Marcus will join Rich Camarillo (NFL punter), Randy Flores (pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals), and Bill Nelsen (former Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback) among El Rancho's notable athletic alumni.

Marcus fought the odds and statistics to earn his spot on the Eagles' team. "If you think that you can't make it because you're too small, or too slow, or not as strong, or 'only' from El Rancho, you're wrong to think you can't do it. All you have to do is have the heart and passion, and to make it, you need work hard." Although Marcus will become an Eagle this fall, he claims that he will never forget the experience and memories that El Rancho gave him.



REBECCA ROBLES

Senior Alejandra Perez looks for that special someone in her life.

Simply Irresistible: Alejandra Perez

BY REBECCA ROBLES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

A "smarty" who knows how to party, Alejandra Perez is a dedicated young woman. This spontaneous senior is always on the go and making her "simply irresistible."

Perez loves to make friends; she considers herself as easygoing and not shy, in the least. She is what one would call a "people's person."

After school and on weekends she works at a fast food restaurant here in Pico Rivera. In her spare time she enjoys shopping with friends, going to the movies, and going to the beach when the weather is warm.

Perez said, "My perfect date would include walking down the coast on the beach with that special someone. Then as the sun begins to set we would find a cozy place and watch the luminous sun take a dive under the sea line."

Perez's favorite hobby is drawing—she loves to doodle in art class or at home. Alternative rock is a favorite when Perez turns the dial on the radio.

So gentlemen if your looking to catch this busy young women then you must know what she likes—her favorite color is yellow; her favorite movie is "The Notebook"; and her favorite candy is gummy bears.

Perez hopes to attend a well-rounded university and will graduate with honors come June 2009. She has a very competitive grade point average and hopes for a prominent future.

Perez said, "I look for a guy who is caring, friendly, and intelligent. I also like a guy who knows how to make a girl laugh and can laugh at himself."

So if you're looking for a spontaneous single, take an interest in Alejandra Perez because she is "simply irresistible".

1980's: Big Clothing and Even Bigger Hair!

BY JESSICA FLORES
EL RANCHO STAFF WRITER

With 80's Sadies coming up in just a few weeks, March 20th to be exact, a brief review of 1980's fashion might be of some help.

Now we all know about the infamous leg warmers and oversized brightly colored dancewear, but that's not all there was in the 80's. The "preppy" fashion was especially popular in the United States, which was associated with classic and conservative style of dressing and clothing brands such as Izod Lacoste, Brooks Brothers, Polo Ralph Lauren, and clothing from The Gap.

Opposite to the preppy look was the new wave punk look, mostly popular with the British night clubbers. The make up was big and the hair was even bigger; black leather and fishnets were a must, which led to the "pirate look".

Then, there was the fashion icon of the 80's: Madonna. With her laced outfits, fingerless gloves, and rebellious attitude everyone adored. Her accessories were big and in large quantities.

So if you are in doubt as to what to wear on the day of Sadies just remember there are a lot of different ways to portray the fascinating fashion of the 1980s.

Also Irresistible: David Flores

BY VICTORIA SERRANO
EL RANCHO STAFF WRITER

Irresistible: One who cannot be resisted; tempting. David Flores possesses this quality is likely to make you swoon.

When he's not out making music, he's hanging out with friends and eating some maple bars. Full of ambition, David plans to make a movie by the time he is 21. He is currently making a mix tape with his friend "Randezy" that should be coming out on April 21st.

David likes to have a good time, go on adventures and cause some ruckus, while texting that special someone. He also likes to bring out the best in others.

Not only is he nice, but he can also enjoys baking on a regular basis.

With a motto like "Rawdawg it," and with a middle name like "Danger" as a middle name

you know you will never have a dull moment with this boy. He will have you laughing and smiling right at the beginning.

He's looking for someone who he can have a conversation with and that could listen for him talk for hours. A girl that is polite and feisty.

So, if you're a nice presentable girl that isn't shy, then you might have a chance with Mr. Irresistible.



FEATURES

Advanced Drama Students Perform Poems by Shel Silverstein



CHANTEL MORENO

From Left to Right: Emily Wold-Salcido, Consuelo Rivera, Bianca Leon, Chantel Santos, Diana Jimenez.

By CHANTEL MORENO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Two weeks ago the El Rancho's Drama Department began its annual Kid's Show. Their first shows were at North Ranchito and Durfee Elementary school. For the next few weeks, the drama class will be going to various elementary schools in Pico Rivera performing the show for the students.

The Drama Department will perform various poems from the Shel Silverstein books *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in the Attic*. The class acts out choreographed poems com-

plete with props and songs. The class visits different elementary schools around the city, during third period, and typically makes it back by the end of lunch.

The Kid's Show has been traditionally performed during second trimester since 1985. For many members of Advanced Drama this is what the students look forward to all year.

The class usually has about six weeks to memorize lines and put a show together. For many of the drama students the Kid's Show is a nice break because they had just wrapped up the fall play. "I enjoy the humor and fel-

lowship the actors get out of the rehearsal process," said Wlasick.

As much fun as the Kid's Show can be, a lot of hard work goes into the production. Many things can go wrong with a traveling kids show. Props may break, lines are skipped, and the younger children do not always want to cooperate. However, given any set backs, the class is always quick to adapt. The kids, ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade, generally seem to really enjoy the show and getting involved.

As well as being entertaining, clever, and imaginative, many of the poems often have a lesson behind them put in ways that the young kids can understand and identify with. Other poems, such as Paul Bunyan, are classic stories that are redone in a way that makes it funnier and easier for kids to grasp. The drama class likes to put new spins and twists on the poems that the kids will enjoy, for example, the poem "The Unicorn" was turned into a modern rap.

Wlasick hopes that from the Kid's Show the children gain "joy while using their imaginations," as well as exposure to live theatre. "For many of the children this is their first experience with theatre. This is empowering to the actors," said Wlasick.

Choraleers Hit the Right Note



ANGELICA MOLINA

Choraleers perform in Whittier High School's Tournament of Champions.

By ANGELICA MOLINA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The Choraleer department has shown throughout the years that they can accomplish any task that comes their way.

With Mrs. Espinoza gone and Ms. Dodd taking over as the new director of the Choraleers the group has adapted well to the new changes that have been enforced. These changes include the elimination of the Legacy of Men and not allowing the Choraleers compete in show choir competitions.

"I have learned a lot from the first year. I fixed a lot, but I still have a lot to learn about show choir," said Dodd. "It takes a lot of concentration to sing while dancing on stage."

During last year's season the Choraleers had a rough time and did not place on any of their competitions. On February, 21 the Choraleers had a competition at the Tournament of Champions at Whittier High School. They placed 4th out of 6 of the best show choir groups in the county. The Choraleers displayed an exciting performance of their theme this year, which was, "Legends of the 80's." They opened up the show with an exciting number of "I Just Died in Your Arms," by Cutting Crew and closed their number with, "Wake Me Up" by Wham.

Senior, Core leader member, Edgar Torres said, "I like to sing and dance because I love the excitement of competing, it is a really cool feeling. I think were doing good, there is no chaos or drama and if there is we try to resolve the problem."

This April they will face a new challenge when the performers will attend the Heritage Festival Competition in San Francisco as a Jazz Choir. Dodd plans to give the students an opportunity to have to travel and compete with different show choirs around the state.

"We might not be the highest placed group but I would not give up my group for the whole world," said Senior core leader Lauren Miller. "I have gotten so close to the old members in the group and the underclassmen, I love them all."



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CAMPUS

Faculty Crushes Advanced Drama in First-Ever Face-off

BY MADELINE RODRIGUEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The Faculty crushed the Advance Drama class after a two-day competition. Teachers showed that they too have a funny bone to share with the student body. They come up with random noises and characters suited for the different improvisation games.

The idea to challenge the advance drama class to an improvisation smack down against the faculty was originally Mr. Rodriguez's idea. "It allowed us to connect with the students [and for them] to see us outside of the classroom," said Rodriguez.

"I think it's really important for the students to see faculty members outside of the classroom. [For them to] see that they have talents and that they can be something other than a demanding teacher in a classroom and that they can be funny, let their hair down and hang loose as the students do, it allows them to see them in a different view point," said drama teacher Mr. Wlasick.

One of the improvisation games that got the most laughs was "rewind". "They did this activity where they had to react



MADELINE RODRIGUEZ

From Left to Right : Ms. Hughey, Mr. Diaz, and Mr. Retana play the improvisation game, Taxi.

to a concert. How a concert-goer would react. Mr. Wlasick would say, "rewind" and ask for them to say it as if they were an opera singer, or a character from Sesame Street. That got the kids crazy because they would push it right up to the very line of appropriateness, but it was just so well done

that it was hilarious, that was my favorite," said assistant principal and Lunch bag judge Mrs. Linares.

Another game is taxi where every time someone steps up to the cab everyone on the cab must take on the same character as that person who walks up to get on. They have to stay in character

until someone else, with a different personality walks up to get on the cab. "The worst one was the taxi. I was last one in line and was thinking "who is someone that both the adults and the students will know?" and I said oh Simon Cowell," said English teacher Ms. Hughey. "But the other things like

the feather was easy I had tons of uses for that, we could have gone for eight minutes," added Hughey.

The teachers were at a disadvantage since they didn't have the formal training Mr. Wlasick gives his students. "[Advance drama] had the experience of entertainment improve so they know what it is to be in front of a crowd and the expectations of the crowd they have had my training so they know how the veer it towards getting laughs on specifics, they know things about rhythm, reaction response. The faculty had no experience other than Ms. Hughey because she majored in drama," said Wlasick.

Since it was obvious that the teachers had little to no knowledge of what they were truly getting into, Mr. Wlasick and the advance drama helped them get acquainted with the different improvisation games. "We spent one day after school introducing the teachers to the improve games, but not all the teachers that participated made themselves available that day," said Wlasick.

The two-day show was an utter success. "We have been asked to have it once every month or once every two months," said Wlasick.

Melissa Avila-the Next Dr. House?

BY GENESSE CARRILLO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

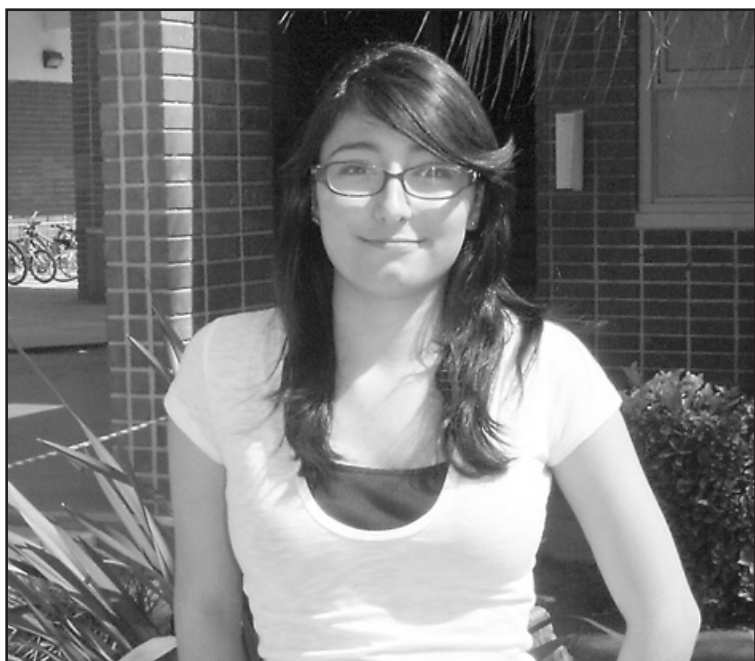
Working hard for the money, Senior Melissa Avila puts her scrubs on five days a week for her job at the Paramount Physicians Medical center.

Avila has been working at the physicians center since her junior year. Before that Avila had been a volunteer there for two years. Working as a secretary at the center was Avila's first official job, but she says, "getting used to the work load was not hard thanks to her volunteer experience." On a typical work day, Melissa does "tons of paperwork", organizes patient's files, types up medical reports, makes prints and copies proofs of service, and mails medical bills. Avila usually works Satur-

days and Sunday mornings and afternoons. She usually works on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday nights if her homework load is low. Melissa manages to balance her busy schedule as a "working-girl" and Team student with some sacrifice. "I do all of my work quickly in school or I just stay up late," said Melissa.


The best part of having a job-the paycheck. "I usually help my mom out with bills, like electric or gas bills, and I pay for my own expenses such as my phone bill, school expenses, and spending money to go out with friends."

Melissa Avila- perhaps the next Dr. House from FOX (minus the psychotic side) or the next Dr. Nick from *The Simpsons* (minus the fraudulent procedures)- is a Don on the job.



Genesse Carrillo

Senior Melissa Avila multi-tasks school and a part time job.




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Animal Advocates Speak up for Their Furry Friends

BY JONATHAN RUIZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Few people could call themselves an animal advocate. That is someone who speaks on behalf of animals because they don't have a voice.

The purpose of the animal advocates is "to promote the appreciation of animals, particularly pets (like cats and dogs)," said club advisor Mrs. Lamar.

Freshman Citlali Molina said, "We talk about the news dealing with animals, and recent dog shows."

Club president Blanca Castellanos said, "We discuss upcoming events and debate what animals are better and what animal belongs to each person. It is like the movie *The Golden Compass* where everybody has an animal to go with them."

These advocates usually have one or two trips a year. In the past the club has gone to the Long Beach Aquarium, the San Diego Zoo, and the movies.

"When we go to the movies we usually watch movies that have to deal with animals like *Marley and Me*. Why do we watch animal movies? Because they are really passionate about animals," said Lamar.

On their last trip they attended the Eukanuba Dog Show where members discussed different breeds of dogs that come out in the show. They also learned about breeds that they didn't know about.

With the field trips they usually brainstorm ideas about what to do, then they pick one that they know is possible because they know that they can't do everything. The club offers a lot of op-

portunities for students on campus to learn about their pets. "We are all about helping animals out, for example if someone lost their dog they can come in and we will help them put up flyers. Also, we give them advise on how to take care of their pets," said Castellanos.

The club usually tries to find fundraiser ideas. "We care for pets because if we are walking down the street and see a stray dog on the streets we would take it to an animal shelter or an animal hospital so it can get the attention that it deserves," said Castellanos.

"We are animal advocates because we care for animals, and we are the ones that speak on there behalf because nobody else does," said Molina.

The club meets every Tuesday during lunch in A-204 with Mrs. Lamar.

SPORTS

Boys Tennis Team Hits the Courts

BY GUADALUPE MARTINEZ &
JONATHAN JIMENEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The boy's varsity tennis team is preparing for a great season this spring. Based on their pre-season games, the boys expect to do very well.

"Our team has many talented players, and, so far, we've been playing pretty well. I hope we keep our game up and play even better during season," says Leo Altamirano.

The team has high expectations this year. "We think we're going to have a pretty good season because the team has a lot of experience and is growing strong," said Brandon Lay.

Because the team has many experienced seniors, they

team feel stronger. They also feel that they have a greater chance of winning their matches.

Although they will face many teams, they feel that playing against La Serna High will be their toughest competition.

"The most difficult team to face is going to be La Serna," said Altamirano, "they're good, but we've beat them before."

The Dons are currently playing pre-season games to prepare for their league season which will allow them to become the Del Rio League champions. "I feel as though the value of winning in pre-season games gives us a chance to experiment and improve ourselves as tennis players so we can perform and do our best when it counts," said Altamirano.



Junior Leo Altamirano at practice for their season games coming up.

Volleyball Team Smashes the Swordsmen

BY BRANDON DIAZ &
JOSUE SALAZAR
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Coming off a weekend tournament in Arcadia, the Dons pulled off an explosive victory over St. Paul winning four of the five games. Adrian Huerta's 14 kills, Gabriel Franco's 11 kills and 5 aces, along with Carlos Estrada's solid defense; helped the Dons to their win.

The next opponent for the Dons is South Pasadena, which head coach, Mrs. Picon says, "will be a good challenge because of their excellent scores." Although The Dons are doing well, "many players need to step up" said Picon. With the loss of their middle hitter, the Dons need to fill in that spot.

"I expect to win league and get into the playoffs this year. Our goal is to reach the third round but last year we didn't even make playoffs," said Picon. She also explained that last year was the worst record that they had in the past seven years.

Last season in league play the Dons went 4-6 and missed the playoffs. This year Picon is confident that there is a good chance that their goals will be met. "Our team is very competitive and motivated to learn," said Picon.

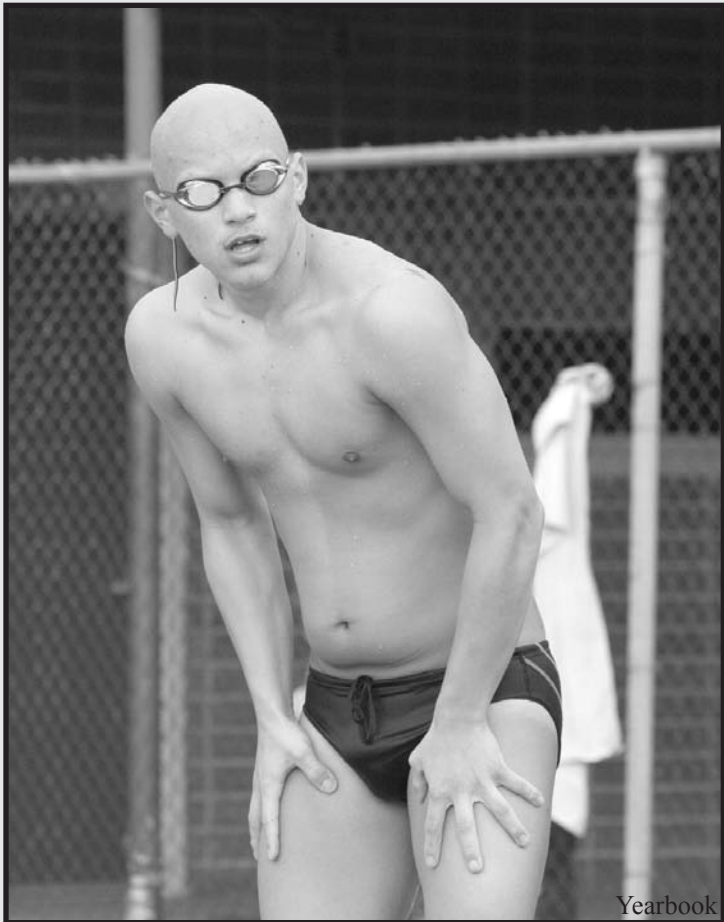
She also talks about the obstacles that this year's team will have to overcome. "Most of our players are coming from junior varsity and they need to get used to the varsity level, but by league play we should be where we need to be," says Picon.

The players to look out for this year are Adrian Huerta, Gabriel Franco, Mathew Esparza, Caesar Roldan, Eric Gonzalez, and Allen Gonzales. Picon explains that this team has a good attitude that just needs to "get things together."

Junior, Anthony Ayala, says, "We need to win a league championship. We have a good team with really good hitters and I have a good feelings that this year will be special."

In addition senior Eric Gonzalez says, "I want to have a good season and win league. We just need to work together and be focused with no distractions."

Swimmers of to Promising Start



Yearbook

Senior Michael Neevenhoven, who made it to CIF Championship twice, prepares to face La Serna.

BY DONALD RAMOS &
OSCAR BECERRA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITERS

Coach Pringle and the swimming team started the season this past Wednesday, March 11th.

Their first meet against Bell Gardens was an easy one due to the opposition's lack of competitors. Although an easy win, the match prepared the ER swimmers for future meets.

On Tuesday the team had their second swim meet and unfortunately they lost.

"Overall we did not win, but to do better, we should have our minds focused and have no one put us down," said varsity swimmer Michael Neevenhoven.

Michael is positive about his fellow swimmers this season and for himself. "I'm confident because everyone is trying their best. They perform well and are improv-

ing their technique. Our coach is also pushing us to get better."

Coach Pringle also had some words to say on their last swim meet.

"I expect higher standards from my swimmers and for them to be much more competitive." The expectations of the coach refer to the swim team's toughest competition, La Serna.

"The swim meets we are competing in now are to better prepare ourselves for La Serna," said Neevenhoven.

The El Rancho swim team practice early mornings and after school hours to prepare for such competition.

"As of right now we are not entirely prepared to compete, but we are going in that direction so that we may be ready for the finals," said Coach Pringle. Their next swim meet will be against Paramount High at Paramount Park.

Boys Varsity Basketball Finishes

Season With 9-19 Record

BY MATTHEW CROTTICO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The boy's varsity basketball team started this season with great optimism and a hope at a league title. Unfortunately, things did not work out as planned for the Dons who finished the season with an overall 9-19 record.

The Dons began the season well with a victory over Rosemead High School but then went on a slump winning only two of the next fourteen games. On the other hand, the team won three of the next four games. This spark of momentum made the transition into league play look promising.

The Boys Varsity won their first league game but then dropped the next three to California, Pioneer, and La Serna. They fought back into the playoff picture, with the chances of league looking slim, as they won two straight against Whittier and Santa Fe.

All that was needed was a win over Cal High to secure second place, but the team came out flat and were beaten dropping them into third place and struggling for a playoff spot. The team then lost the next two games and went into the final game of the season knowing that their season was over.

Because Pioneer held the tiebreaker, which is determined in the second time the two teams play, over El Rancho and Santa Fe, the Titans were the team that moved on into the third place spot and into the playoffs.

"It was a tough season that had its ups and downs but it was a pleasure to have all of those experiences with my teammates," said senior Captain Carlos Estrada.

Senior Ishmael Santa Cruz, two year Varsity member added, "It was a really fun season and although we worked hard, we were unable to get that extra inch that we needed for playoffs. The positive things are that we

improved from past years and have left a good foundation for the underclassmen to build on."

The Dons still kept their mindset on winning the last game at Whittier. With a packed house, the Cardinals came out roaring and hit a three pointer to start off the game. The team was on their heels for the first quarter only scoring two points to Whittier's thirteen. This embarrassing start motivated the Dons who then went on a seventeen to one run to end the half up 21-14. The Cardinals fought back in the second half but the Dons ultimately prevailed, 43-40.

Although most of the varsity team consists of seniors that will be leaving next after this year, they have set a firm platform for the younger players to take over.

Senior Brandon Rodriguez, three-year varsity member said, "It was a great experience being in the basketball program for four years and I hope to see the team improve and fix some of the mistakes that we made this year. The underclassmen need to learn from us and use it to their advantage next year."



STEPHANIE PENA

ENTERTAINMENT

Movie Review: *He's Just Not That into You*

BY IRENE CORTEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Have you ever sat by the phone wondering why he said he would call, but didn't, or if you can't figure out why she doesn't want to sleep with you anymore, or why your relationship just isn't going to the next level, well... He (or she) is just not that into you.

Based on the wildly popular best-seller from *Sex and the City* scribes Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo, *He's Just Not That into You* tells the stories of a group of people as they navigate their various relationships trying to read the signs of the opposite sex and hoping to be the exceptions to the "no-exceptions" rule.

It began with a line said during a "Sex and the City" episode: "He's just not that into you." That line became the title of a best-selling relationship book, and now it's a movie. *He's Just Not That*

Into You struggles for more than two hours with many characters and tangled story lines to bring home the point that not all chance meetings or blind dates are meant to go the distance- and not all marriages are rock solid. Wow, didn't we know that already?

In the film, directed by Ken Kwapis from Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein's screenplay, most of the relationships revolve around advice giving. Gigi (Ginifer Goodwin) wears her heart without doubt in the open for just about any eligible male to see, but rejection is the only thing she receives. Her latest rejection came from Conor (Kevin Connolly). But Conor's friend, restaurant manager Alex (Justin Long), gives her sound advice: Don't be sitting next to the phone and move on.

Beth (Jennifer Aniston) wonders if she should break away her relationship with her boyfriend, Neil (Ben Af-

fleck) after years of committed to a singlehood relationship.

Beth can't get live-in boyfriend Neil to propose to her, so she kicks him out before getting advice from her dad, Kris Kristofferson (Ken Murphy). And so the story goes on.

Conor has this on-and-off thing going with yoga instructor Anna (Scarlett Johansson) but longs for more. Meanwhile Anna turns to her friend Mary (Drew Barrymore) for advice, especially when she gets involved with a married man, Ben (Bradley Cooper), whose wife, Janine (Jennifer Connelly), works and gives advice with Beth (Jennifer Aniston) and Gigi.

Janine isn't sure if she can trust her husband, Ben, who can't quite resist being around Anna. Anna can't decide between the sexy married guy, or her straight-forward boyfriend, Conor, who can't get over the fact that he can't



have her. And on the other hand Mary, found an entire network of loving, supportive men, just needs to find one who's straight.

Gigi, who is close to being the film's heroine, has a sweet disposition and is far too attractive to be forever getting bad dates. Yet crowded into an all in once situation, there is just too much similarity in the story lines and not enough depth to any of the characters to gain interest.

All of this results in a way that too much relationship talking and not nearly enough comedy, romance or even dysfunctional relationships. We want to laugh--but at what.

Classic Album Review: Rush 2112

BY JOSEPH MARTINEZ
EL RODE STAFF WRITER

Rush has been together for more than thirty years, and still manages to sell out arenas worldwide. They are one of the founding fathers of progressive rock in the 70's along with the bands Yes and Genesis. Bassist/singer Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson give Rush a level of musicianship few can compare to. Prior to Neil Peart's (drummer 1975-present) entrance into the band, the songs from the first album were more about everyday topics like working everyday at a blue-collar job and "Zeppelin-esque" songs about love. That dramatically changed when Peart added science fiction/fantasy style lyrics. Along with more in depth lyrics, the music also became more complex and progressive. A perfect example is Rush's fourth studio album, *2112*.

When released in 1976, the entire A-side of the album was filled with the title track "2112," clocking in at a lengthy 20:33. This song is about mankind in the far future that has no recollection of what music is. Today's society was basically erased from the history books. Dictator-like priests that dwell in the temples of Syrinx run the future human race. The points of view change throughout the song, going from first person to omniscient, where you read it like a story. The song is broken up into seven different parts that all correspond with each other. First being the musical masterpiece "Overture" and "Temples of Syrinx," where the priests are the rulers of all, and tell everyone how to live their lives. Followed by "Presentation," where a man shows the Priests a strange object (a guitar) that makes music. They realized what it was and immediately destroyed it. The man then ends his own life because of the realization that no changes will be made in the Priests' mindset.

As for the rest of the album, the tracks are much shorter than the previous one. The second track titled, "A Passage to Bangkok" starts off with a guitar riff that sounds "worldly" and is about the marijuana trade in foreign countries as well as the band's own passage through many different countries in search of earth's finest. The third track, "The Twilight Zone" is a slower tune that is based on the old TV show. Clever lyrics include, "You have entered the twilight zone, beyond this world strange things unknown." The fourth track, "Lessons" gives the impression of a seemingly lazy song until the great bass lines and the lead guitar work take control. The fifth song, "Tears" is the slow, less favorite song on this album, but is forgiven by the last song on the album, "Something For Nothing." With a slower sounding beginning that leads into a great chorus, this is one of the album's true gems.

That's a Wrap!

BY MARICRUZ CASTRO-SPENCER
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

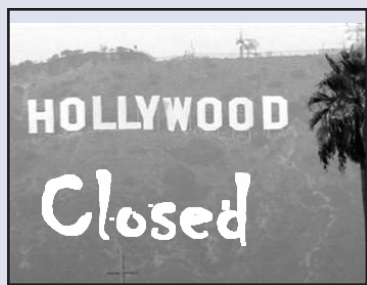
With all the glitz and glamour of the award shows coming to an end, the last thing one could imagine is a strike, but with every sold DVD, Blu-Ray disk and iTunes download the Screen Actors Guild gets closer to making the decision of whether or not to strike.

Last year the entertainment world shocked viewers across the nation when the Writers Guild of America went on strike, causing several TV shows to stop production for what felt like an eternity to viewers. After one hundred days of reruns and no new episodes the writers reached an agreement and resumed writing.

This year, the Screen Actors Guild is in the process of striking if the studios do not meet their demands of residual sales on new media distribution. This is not currently in their contract, which increases the chance of a strike.

The Screen Actors Guild of America is a labor union, which represents film, television, and background performers. SAG, which consists of over 120,000 members including actor Robert Redford and actor Russell Crowe are hoping that their demands are met and there will not be a strike.

Production lines are working long hours to finish as much as they can before the expected strike in June of this year, when SAG's contract with Alliance Motion Picture & Television Producers is set to expire. If last year's strike showed us anything it's that Hollywood is a place full of surprises.



Two Voices: *Two Tongues*

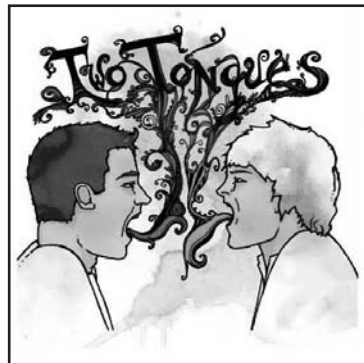
BY ARACELI AGUILA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Two Tongues much anticipated debut album was released in February. The band came together as a side project by Saves the Day's Chris Conley and Dave Soloway and Say Anything's Cody Linder and Max Bermis.

The album, *Two Tongues* contains 13 tracks, most of which are about the friendship shared by Conley and Bermis. The first two singles off the album are, "Crawl," and "Wowee Zowee."

Each song on the album delicately intertwines the two voices of the singers.

Likewise, each song is able to show the style of the two collaborating bands. My favorite tracks off the album include, "Even If You Don't," and "Tremors." Both songs have a catchy rhythm and fast-paced beats. The song lyrics play off the two singers fight with one another. This allows both Conley and Bermis to show their own unique style of voice ranges.



The "Interlude" sang by Easley's Sherri DuPree is quite catchy. However, its slow and low vocals make it seem out of place compared to the rest of the album.

The only other real problem with the album is that Conley's voice can drag on and sound a bit whiny in some songs. Other than that, each song is different ranging from a pop beat to an Indie style rhythm.

Saves The Day is currently working on their next album, *DayBreak* which is going to be released sometime in 2009.

Say Anything also plans to release a self-titled album in 2009.

Top Eleven: *American Idol* Blog

BY BRIANNA MORALES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Another week of *Idol* means another week of song choice, style, and the infamous disputes between Simon and Paula. The week's *American Idol* was no different.

After a tearful goodbye to the young Jasmine Murray and Puerto Rico's fabulous Jorge Nunez after some not so pleasant renditions of Michael Jackson hits, the stage was set for a night dedicated to the music of the Grand Ole Opry.

The Grand Ole Opry, which is located in Nashville Tennessee, is the home of the world's longest running live radio show. The contestants had the pleasure of being mentored at the Grand Ole Opry by Randy Travis who has had over twenty number

one hits and has sold around twenty five million records.

The show was not off to a good start with Michael Sarver delivering a "clumsy" performance. As the night progressed, there were some highs, but mostly lows.

Megan Joy was one of the standouts of the night with her jazzy yet spin on Patsy Cline's "I Go Walking After Midnight." Although she was fresh out of the hospital with a serious case of the flu, she managed to stand and deliver her song while managing to pull off a very cute pageant-like hairstyle accompanied with her unique tattoos that run from her right shoulder down to her forearm.

Lil Rounds, a favorite of many and an early stand out with her Mary J. Blige like vocals,

seemed to be out of her element while singing her rendition of Martina McBride's "Independence Day." Lil's voice was noticeable strained at the higher notes, and when she is unable to belt out the lyrics she is slightly unsure and shaky. After being critiqued on her shocking performance, Lil stated that she wanted to show that R&B is not the only thing that she is able to sing. Lil or Little as Simon prefers to call her is now on dangerous ground.

One thing is certain about Adam Lambert: he can never go to Nashville, where country music might as well be a common language, after his Middle Eastern like rendition of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire." Lambert, a Los Angeles native, is definitely

appealing to a teenage crowd with his seductive glares at the camera and the "accidental" lifting of his shirt during his performance. Last week, Adam Lambert's performance was "in a different league to everybody else," according to Simon. This week Lambert let the positive feedback get to him and delivered a performance was "absolute indulgent rubbish," according to the very honest Simon.

Grand Ole Opry night was disappointing due to the fact that great country artists, such as Carrie Underwood, have come out of the *American Idol* competition. The weak performances also solidified the fact that most contestants resort to safe and boring if they are the least bit unfamiliar with a particular genre of music.