



El Rodeo



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Academic Decathlon Finishes 13th in State

BY BRIANNA MORALES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

El Rancho High School's Academic Decathlon team placed 13th at the State Competition in Sacramento with a score of 41,976 out of a possible 60,000 points.

Last year, the Academic Decathlon team competed in division two at the state competition, but this year, due to their high score at the county competition, they competed in division one.

"In division one, it was tough because we weren't getting medals that a lot of us feel we could have gotten had we been in division two," said decathlete, Patrick Rubalcava.

Gerry Goyenaga received the bronze medal for essay, and Tate Harshbarger received a medal for being the highest scorer on the team, netting the team's only two medals.

"It was a privilege winning a medal amidst such tough competition. I was happy to win a medal that I could share with the rest of my teammates. At least we can say we got one medal together in division one," said Goyenaga.

Although they did not earn as many individual medals as they did at county, their scores were still high.

"Almost everyone scored higher than what they did at county," said decathlete, Albert Alvarez.

Going into the competition the decathletes knew it would be tough, yet they still had their sights set on success and on placing higher than last year's 27th place team.

"This year, it was a trip for all of us to succeed and do well; we knew what to expect because we had already been there last year. In comparison to last year's trip, this year's trip was more success-



Posing with their coaches, the Academic Decathlon team celebrates their 13th place finish at Sacramento.

COURTESY OF MR. WLASICK

ful and more improved. From 27th to 13th place is an amazing jump," said captain Angeli Vicente.

The countless hours that the team has spent together are not only shown through their high scores but also through their unity.

"We finished in the thirteenth spot, and that's something the team deserves after countless Sundays and Saturdays of practice, summer practice, and winter practice. Coming together as a team and pulling off such a great result doesn't just show off our talent but also the hard work and the

unity that we have as a team," said decathlete, Walter Quintanilla.

The team's unity is also seen by those around them.

"They performed beyond any expectations people had, and they bonded and built relationships that are going to last for a lifetime," said coach, Ms. Oase.

Surpassing expectations and attaining a high rank, the team is aware that they have nothing to be ashamed of.

"California is a huge state, so out of the entire state only 12 teams can beat us? That's nothing to be

ashamed of; we're really proud of what we've done," said Alvarez.

However, the decathletes know that their scores are a reflection of their coaches as well as their talent.

"We're only as good as the people that teach us," said Rubalcava.

Despite the arduous competition, the team feels as if the most difficult part of the year has yet to come.

"We were such a great team; we spent countless days and countless hours together,

so the hardest thing about this year has to be saying bye to the team," said Quintanilla.

The decathletes have taken more than just a high rank from their time spent studying together.

Captain Amy Micheo said, "We all went into this not knowing how close we would become."

The Academic Decathlon team is more than just a group that has studied together; they are a family.

Quintanilla said, "I don't know where I'd be without my decatha-family."

Happy Hour Serves Up Laughs in Little Theater



Performers line up to play the improv game, *Scenes from a Box*.

BY JOSE REYES,
AND NATALIE RANGEL
EL RODEO STAFF WRITERS

Carlos Figueroa's *Happy Hour* came to life on March twenty-fifth and twenty-six.

Happy Hour was a huge success, with both nights' shows selling out and sensational reviews from the audience. Many

left the Little Theatre with tears still in their eyes from laughing.

The *Happy Hour* performers consisted of students from Mr. Wlasick's Advanced Drama class, some of El Rancho's Alumni and faculty members: Ms. Oase, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Retana, who only participated in Thursday night's premiere.

Wlasick allowed Carlos Figueroa, an Advanced Drama student, to direct this production, having full confidence in his top actor to produce a comedic improvisation show that many would enjoy.

"[Carlos] does not quite know exactly what he wants to do when he graduates from college and has many, many talents but he is quite strong in his musical talents as well as his acting talents. [I wanted Carlos] to have the complete experience of putting on a complete production so that he understands what the artistic endeavors entail," said Wlasick.

The audience was allowed to participate in the night's performance, giving suggestions for the comedians to portray and base their improv off of. A hilarious improvisation that the audience enjoyed was the farm animal symphony, where Wlasick, the conductor, lead his team of farm animal singers into song.

Although he seemed to

keep his cool throughout the whole show, Carlos Figueroa says otherwise. "Well at first I was really nervous, but I feel really excited about it," Figueroa said before *Happy Hour*'s final showing.

Overall, *Happy Hour* was a huge success making Mr. Wlasick proud. "I thought he did an excellent job," said Wlasick. "I was not prepared for it to be quite as good as it ended up being because it was a little hazy for the past three days before that. But it really pulled together and he did an amazing," said Wlasick.

The Drama Department is very grateful for the support they receive. "I am very appreciative of the faculty's support of my students," Wlasick says, "because I know that the drama department sometimes takes them in and out of the classroom, but I try to guarantee the faculty members that a learning process is going on. So, I really appreciate how the faculty supports my

program," said Wlasick.

Selling out both nights, *Happy Hour* made over a thousand dollars, which will help to fund the upcoming musical: *Nine*.

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"Suffer" Plays at Chain Reaction

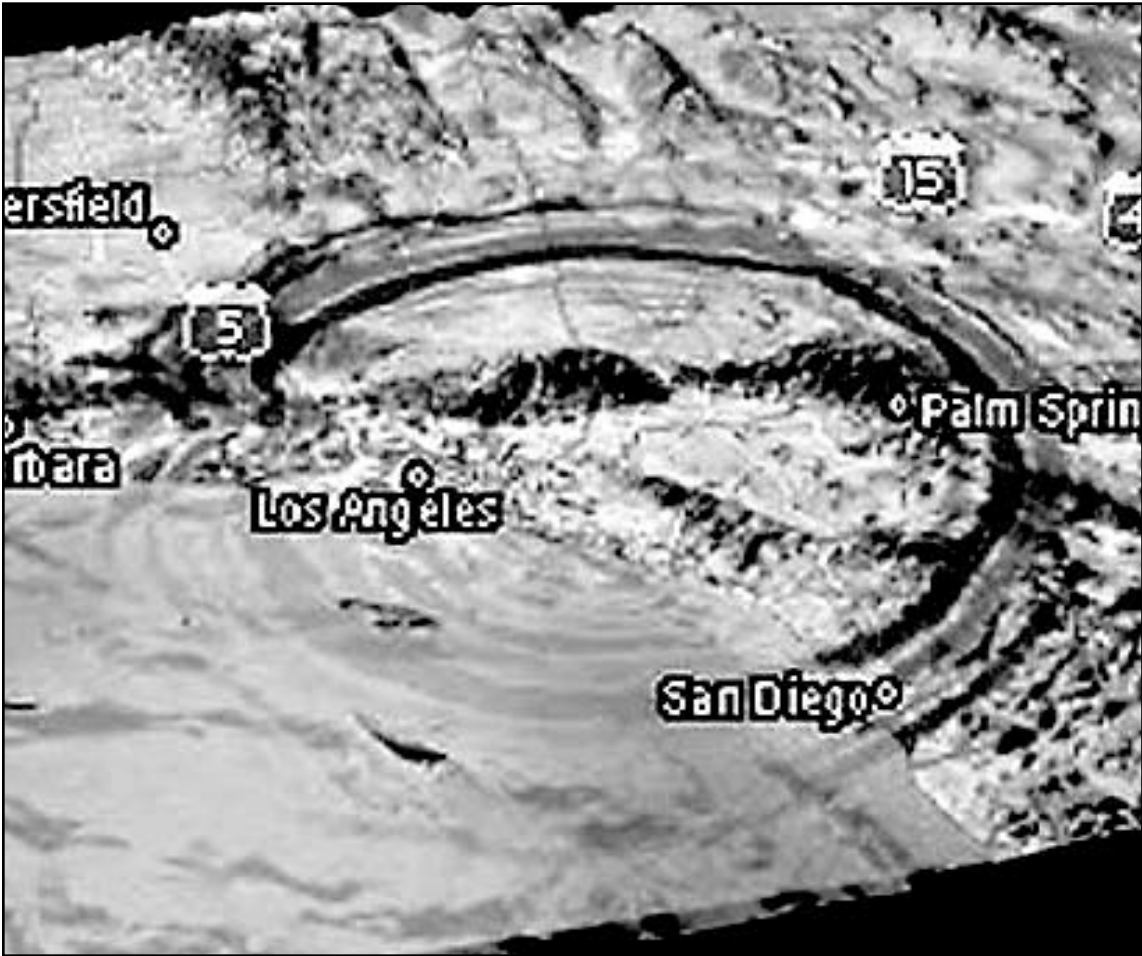
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NEWS



COURTESY OF GOOGLE

Shake, Rattle, and Roll!!!!

By ARACELI CABRAL
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

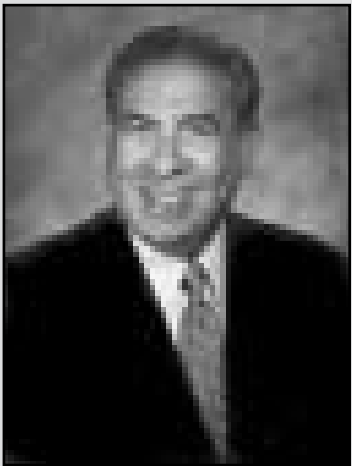
After being awoken early in the morning by the shake of an earthquake, various locals ran out of bed and under the doorway. Others were unable to get out of bed, shocked at all the furniture shaking in their bedroom. On March 16, a 4.4 earthquake hit Pico Rivera at 4:04 am, lasting about 4 to 5 seconds. It was located at the Whittier Fault, two miles south of Pico Rivera and three miles southwest of Whittier Narrows. “I was really scared, and my parents came to my room, but I didn’t want to get up because it was too cold,” said junior, Kimberly Bochere. The earthquake was felt in plenty of cities including Whittier, South Los An-

geles, Laguna Niguel, Long Beach, and Lake Forest. Many people were left in shock after the unexpected occurrence, and found it difficult to return to their sleep. People stayed up text messaging their friends and calling their relatives to reassure their safety. “My dad was at work at the time, and he called us after the earthquake to make sure everybody was safe,” said junior, Ruby Moreno. At the same time, a variety of people were thankful that it was a minor earthquake, compared to the recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile. “I feel grateful that this earthquake wasn’t as big as over there,” says junior, Stephanie Gutarra. Although the earthquake was known to be minor, it was strong enough to cause a crack on the Southbound Santa Ana 5 free-

way. Two lanes were closed down, causing a serious traffic jam, but were re-opened at 6:30 am. Despite the freeway incident, there were no serious damages reported. A few people claimed that some of their belongings, such as picture frames, fell, but nothing major. To many adults, the earthquake on the Whittier Fault was a reminder of the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake, which had a 5.9 magnitude. The 1987 earthquake caused a lot of damage, and left many witnesses afraid with the aftershock, three days later. After a few days passed, many people were still fearful of the earthquake, knowing an aftershock can happen at any moment. Teachers reminded students to go under the desk, if the aftershock happens in school.

Search Continues for New Superintendent

By ALYSSA MENDOZA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER



The search for a new superintendent has begun and everyone is talking about who they hope wins the opportunity to be apart of the district. “I’m hoping to get a new superintendent who really gets to know the community, someone who really gets to know everyone in the district as far as teachers, administrators, someone who is going to be fair and consistent and someone who really sees the need of our district.” said Mr. Sam Genis when talking about the search for El Rancho Unified School District’s new superintendent. His brother, Mr. Norbert Genis, has been with the El Rancho Unified School District since 1969 and for seven of those forty-one years, he has been our superintendent. “I kind of knew he was [going to retire].” said Mr. Genis, “He’s been wanting to retire for about three to four years now but because of the budget situation and the closure of schools he didn’t want to leave and feel like a coward. [People to think] he was leaving because he did not want to do it anymore. He’s wanted to retire but critical issues come up and he doesn’t want to leave on that note.” Searching for a new superintendent isn’t as easy as snapping ones fingers, it is a lengthy process. The process begins with hiring a firm, “.... first of all what they do is they get all teachers, administrators, everybody to parents to the community, and they ask a series of questions,” Mr. Genis said while explaining what is involved in finding a new superintendent, “like number one ‘What are

the strengths of the district?’, number two ‘What are some of the needs of the district?’ and, number three ‘What are the characteristics of the superintendent would you like to see?’” Once they get an input from everybody they develop a brochure. When the brochure is developed, it is sent out nationwide letting everyone know that there is an opening for superintendent in the El Rancho Unified School District. Even though the district has not yet found a candidate to replace superintendent Mr. Genis they are still searching. Many students were surprised to hear that Mr. Genis was retiring. “I’m sure many students will miss Mr. Genis as our superintendent but change is good and I hope he has a great retirement.” Said sophomore Brandon Mendoza. Some students were unaware of Mr. Genis’s retirement. “He’s retiring? I actually had no idea that he was retiring.” said senior Angelica Rodriguez when she heard the news of Mr. Genis’s retirement. NewSuperintendentequals change, and change in El Rancho can always be for the better. NewSuperintendentequals change and change in El Rancho can always be for the better. El Rancho students will have open arms and minds to whoever the new superintendent will be.

WORD ON THE STREET

How Well Prepared are you for an Earthquake?



“I’m kind of prepared; I got some stuff like water and all that, but I’m still scared”
–Crystal Gonzalez 9th



“Well, I think I could be a little bit more prepared if a big earthquake does happen. It’s kind of scary when you are not prepared because you never know what is going to happen.” –Tyler Shoemaker 12th



“I’m not that well prepared for an earthquake. I do have a kit in my garage.” –David Ramirez 9th



“No, because I haven’t really thought much about it” –Christina Garcia 11th



“I’m not prepared at all. I do have canned food, but it’s not enough to the last in an emergency. The only thing I have that I’m prepared with is water.” –Ivan Briseno 12th

OPINION

Prom Partner-A
Personal Choice

BY BRIANNA MORALES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

It is the day many seniors hope and dream for: Senior Prom. A beautiful dress, an amazing hair-do, and a beautiful date; but what happens when a school gets in the way of these plans?

Constance McMillen is your average high school student; except for the fact that she is being robbed of this memory. McMillen challenged the Itawamba County School District when she and her partner were both denied the right to purchase tickets for their school's prom.

She has done nothing wrong, yet her school is against her taking her girlfriend to their last senior dance, so she will be missing the last major social occasion of her high school years.

When she challenged the school district, instead of allowing McMillen and her girlfriend to attend prom together, they canceled prom.

This controversy has grabbed the attention of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), who has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Oxford, on behalf of McMillen. They, ACLU, are trying to force the Itawamba School District to have their Senior Prom and allow McMillen and her girlfriend to attend together.



Attorneys have said that McMillen has the right to take her girlfriend to prom and dress in a tuxedo, for if she is denied these rights her freedom of expression is taken away from her.

The school district has said that one of the requirements for bringing a date to prom is that they are of the opposite sex. The school district has also said that they have the right to tell McMillen and her girlfriend to leave prom if other students are bothered by them being there.

Whether they be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, a student should have the right to take whomever they wish to prom. McMillen is being treated unfairly by the Itawamba School District asking McMillen to be "straight" in order to fulfill her dream and actually go to her Senior Prom.

Seagulls Steal
Students' Snacks!

BY NATALIE RANGEL
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Lunch. A peaceful time during school when grades and paying attention are unimportant. All your attention is either on the new gossip floating around or on the delicious snack you have in hand. But with winged thieves on the prowl, your lunch, or your health, might not be very safe.

Anyone who has gone to the beach or the park has experienced this at least once in their life: a lunch-stealing seagull.

It is never fun to have something stolen, more so when a bird with a brain the size of a walnut does it. They can become very aggressive when they want some food and might stop at nothing to get to it.

Some might think: 'what's one lunch stolen? They're just birds.' That brings us to the second point. On top of being thieves, seagulls and pigeons also harbor infectious bacteria and viruses in their feces.

When bird feces dries or is disturbed, such as walked on, microscopic pieces break off and become airborne. These particles, when inhaled, reach the lungs and allow bacteria and viruses to multiply, making anyone who came into contact with them sick. Common symptoms for these



types of infections can be flu-like.

These birds, though bothersome, are now protected by law. It is illegal to harm a seagull in any way because of their noise, excessive droppings or savaging natures, due to the The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. So harming these birds is punishable.

Are the birds a problem at El Rancho? It is for every student to decide. Some students seek shelter, under walkways and trees, to keep out of the birds' way and thus have no complaints of the winged creatures.

But many others group out in the open, near trash cans or even close to the cafeteria where the smell of food attracts birds. Those students might be putting up with more than others,

whether it is the bird's excessive noise or their dung bombs.

Seagulls are beautiful creatures, powerful and majestic; but should be watched from afar. This also decreases the chances of getting infected with the diseases they carry.

Throwing away our trash in its appropriate place is the simplest solution possible, especially with trash cans so conveniently placed throughout the quad.

By doing this, El Rancho High School can become a seagull-free zone, and a cleaner campus for all to enjoy.

We are happy that the birds will eventually be happy (once they find a new feeding ground away from noisy kids). So in the end, everyone wins.



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FEATURES

Scholarship Opens New Door For Perea

By ABEL MARTINEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

For the senior football players, the season has come and gone. But for Josh Perea, a new season, and a new journey has just begun.

Recently sealing the deal by signing a letter of intent on March 3, 18-year-old Perea is now headed to the University of Minnesota, Crookston.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston competes in the NCAA Division II athletics, which is part of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSCI). Their school colors are maroon and gold, and their mascot is an eagle named “Regal.”

In regards to his thoughts on this opportunity, Perea almost seemed at a loss for words.

“I don’t know,” said Perea. “I just feel like it’s a gift. I’ve really been working hard.”

Football Head Coach Zepeda, however, was not at a loss for words about expressing his thoughts on this most wonderful opportunity.

“It’s a blessing,” said Zepeda. “Only about 2% receive an NCAA scholarship to play at the college level. That’s why Josh is blessed.”

Last season, Perea completed 83 of 146 passes for 1,059 yards. He also had a to-



tal of 9 touchdowns with only 4 interceptions. He was named a team MVP, All-League, All-Area Honorable Mention and was a two-year team captain.

“He’s probably one of the most disciplined and com-

mitted guys that I’ve ever coached, and I’ve coached a lot of guys,” said Zepeda.

Zepeda said, “He committed himself to being the best. He really worked hard on perfecting his craft.”

Perea is the 2nd El Rancho student to receive a scholarship. Perea will be playing alongside his former teammate Marcus Galan, the other student who got a scholarship, at Crookston.

The road that lies before

Perea will not be an easy one. “There are many things that I need to do,” said Perea. “I have to get bigger, stronger, faster...I’ll need all those. I have a lot of work ahead of me.”

March’s Trendy Trendsetters of the Month



Senior, Marina Garcia
Shirt: \$5 at Forever 21
Skirt: \$10 at H&M
Necklace: \$5 at Forever 21
Boots: \$20 at Forever 21
Total=\$40
This “Sophisticated “ look can be dressed up with a pair of heels for a fun party or a date. It can also be dressed down with some boots for a perfect school day or even a just a nice girls day out trip to the mall.



Senior, Carlos Figueroa
Leather Jacket: \$120 at Leather Gauntlet
Pants: \$30 at PacSun
Shoes: \$81 at Shiekh
Slayer Buckle: a gift from dad
Sunglasses: \$5 at Melrose
Black beanie: \$5 at Target
Total=\$241
Want to look like a “Bad Boy” just add some leather and a pair of shades to the mix & don’t forget your Favorite band buckle!



Junior, Ruth Ibarra
Romper: \$22 at Forever 21
Jacket: a gift from mom
Tights: \$3 at Target
Black Flats: \$12 at Daisy’s
Total=\$37
The “Chic” look can be accomplished with the simplest things. A navy blue blazer, a romper, a pair of flats and some dark colored tights are just the right combo to create this look. The City look works for all girls.



Junior, Yadira Ramos
Dress: \$54 at Urban Outfitters
Moccasins: \$30 at Nordstrom
Tights: \$12 at Target
School bag: \$69 at Urban Outfitters
Total=\$165
This “Spring Chic” look has a refreshing taste with a simple flowery dress. Chilly morning? Just add dark colored tights and you are ready to go!



Senior, Gaby Ortiz
Shirt: \$17 at Express
Denim Jacket: \$26 at Charlotte Russe
Scarf: \$7 at Forever 21
Pants:\$40 at AME
Sandals \$15 at Charlotte Russe
Total=\$105
Want that laid back look? Just throw on a denim jacket, a pair of loose pants along with a bold colored scarf and sandals and Voila! Your look is complete.

FEATURES

Suffer the Irony Opens at Chain Reaction

BY NAOMI ORTEGA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

From the Plain White T's to Tegan and Sara, Anaheim's Chain Reaction venue has seen it all. Thursday, March 18th, El Rancho's own band Suffer the Irony took the stage for an eager crowd. Seniors, Jair Haro, Chris Zarate, Bobby Torres, and Antonio Martinez, played an approximate twenty minute set of post hardcore music.

Popular bands such as Anti-Flag, Coheed and Cambria, and The Offspring, all have something in common, they all started their careers at Chain Reaction and now their music can be heard all around the world.

To be in such a place was an exciting experience for the beginning band. "I felt pretty good about it," said lead singer, Bobby Torres. "It gives me some confidence, like anything is possible and it makes me feel as if there is a chance for us to get somewhere with the band."

The members of Suffer the Irony all enjoyed performing there and would not mind going again. "It sure beats playing in a garage while cranky old ladies tell you turn it down," says guitarist, Jair Haro.

Suffer the Irony has also played at Jimmie's Restaurant and is perhaps ready to take on a more fitting stage where fans can freely shake their heads back and forth and maybe even enter a mosh pit.

El Rancho student Jade Carrasco, senior, said, "I think they



From left to right Jair Haro, Chris Zarate, Bobby Torres, and Antonio Martinez

did great and the people were enjoying them as well as we were, and they didn't get booed off the stage so that's always a plus."

"Well it felt great. It made me feel like if we weren't just

some little band playing music in the background," says Torres. Zarate said, "I was nervous until

after the first song. It was cool because I liked the response we were getting from the crowd."

Kirsten Garcia Showcases Her Art



The title of this piece is "Bound by Blood." The meaning behind it is the symbolization between the ribbon that bonds them together as siblings, although personality wise they are complete opposites.

BY JONATHON RAYA
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Twelve years ago Kirsten Garcia picked up a crayon and did not put it down. Now she

has progressed to using pencils, markers, and other media and tools to complete the art she continues to work on today.

Kirsten started to draw in kindergarten and kept drawing

through out her middle and high school years. "My style of drawing is a Japanese style like manga [Japanese comics] drawing," said Kirsten. Comics Kirsten enjoys reading are *Dragon Ball Z*,

Johnny the Homicidal Maniac, and *Higurashi No Naku Koro Ni*. Cartoons that have inspired her art include *Invader Zim* and *Spongebob Squarepants*.

"My inspiration for my drawings comes from the music I listen to, and as well as books and comic books I read on my spare time" Kirsten said, "Sailor moon was the first manga that got me to draw in the Japanese style."

Drawing in a Japanese style is much more difficult than most people think. In the classic American Style the people are all basic shapes like; circles, ovals, and triangles. Japanese Cartoon "is more of a challenge than tradition American cartoons" Garcia said.

Even her teachers have noticed her talent. "Kirsten is highly imaginative and has developed her own languages though her art, which invites the viewer to partake in its interpretation," said Advanced Art teacher, Mr... De La Loza. "In addition from a technical point of view it is more advanced. Most of her work exhibits sensibility and even a troubled innocence."

As most people know, art is an expression of one's personal feelings and subconscious mind.

"She is using her art for self exploration as well to resolves some subconscious experience to which many of us can relate," said Mr. De La Loza. "Her work is emotionally liberating."

Fellow classmate Brandy Ortiz said, "Her art has a live feeling to it. She has a good shading technique in her drawings and she has a way of putting a little bit of herself into every piece she creates. Every picture tells you a story." Brandy continued to say, "I cherish the artwork she has gifted to me over the years."

"I still have a lot to learn," said Garcia. "I would like to get more into the digital media of the art world and learn techniques from that aspect of art."

Kirsten will learn more at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, where her passion of art will keep growing and improving. Kirsten will be studying illustration for her major and possibly animation as her minor.

Kirsten has her art on the website Deviantart.com. Deviantart is an art website where artists around the world can share their art and get feedback from other artists.

To view her art go to puppetmasterhyde.deviantart.com.

CAMPUS

AVID Hops to Aid Children

GUILLIANA BRAVO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

What are you doing to help out your community? A.V.I.D, (advancement via individual determination) a college preparatory program, is collecting stuffed animals for less fortunate children to give away during Easter.

"What inspired us was knowing that there are always toy drives in our community and we recognize the effort. In order to help children that are under privileged, we started this event on campus," says supervisor, Mr. Correa.

A.V.I.D is going around

classrooms and asking teachers, as well as students, for donations. The collected stuffed animals can be either used or new. These toys will later be used in Easter baskets to give out.

The stuffed animals can be donated to the four A.V.I.D classrooms here on campus or the Library.

"After we finish collecting the donations we will donate it to local church's and orphanages" said, Mr. Correa.

In Mrs. Lugo's Spanish classroom, there is a plastic bag filled with stuffed animals to be handed in.

"I am going to get a few toys to hand in", said, junior,

Stephanie Cazales. "I really like this idea of giving stuffed animals to less fortunate children."

Many students that are apart of A.V.I.D walk around with stuffed animals in order to donate to this noble cause.

"I gave two stuffed animals that I had since I was little" said junior, Tim Benson, "I had to wash them before turning them in."

"Many students are helping out and donating to the cause. There are about fifty or sixty toys that have been donated," said Mr. Correa.

Any student can bring joy on Easter to a less fortunate child with a simple toy or stuffed animal.



Soccer Stars Take Honors

BY ALEJANDRA VALLIN
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

In the month of February, senior varsity soccer players Lily Gama and Dorian Puentes both received athlete of the month after leading a strong season for their teams.

"I did the typical thing during season. I worked really hard for it and I have Blue Pride," says Puentes.

He not only put all his effort in his last season of soccer in his high school years, but he lead his team into CIF.

"I did not think I would get the athlete of the month, but I know that all the hard work and long practices paid off," says Gama.

After running into some obstacles midway through

season, Captain Gama encouraged her team to stay focused and play their best.

"I was really proud of the girls since we made it to CIF and recieved 3rd place. The last time El Rancho's Girls soccer team reached CIF was back in 2007," she said.

Both Puentes and Gama end the season on a good note and hope for the best for next year's soccer team.

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WORD ON THE STREET

Which college would you like to attend?



"I have been accepted into the University of California Irvine, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, and UC Davis. As well as the University of Southern California and I will be attending USC in the fall."

-Fabiola Avina



"I have been admitted into the University of California, Irvine, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, and Dominican University. I am waiting for Harvard, New York University, Brown University, Johns Hopkins University, and Norte Dame University."

-Jacob Barrera



"I have been accepted into the University of California, Irvine, UC San Diego, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Norte Dame University, Whittier College, and Sacred Heart University. I am still waiting on Brown University and hoping to get into Brown."

-Michelle Luna



"I have been admitted to Penn State University, Drexel University, Pacific University, and Loyola University New Orleans. I also got accepted at Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Monterey Bay, Cal State Pomona, Cal State San Luis Obispo. I am waiting for NYU and Wake Forest University."

-Jesus Hinojosa

CAMPUS

Leaders of Tomorrow Debate Topics of Today



The "Affirmative Team" for Social Service Debate. From left to right, Naomi Zaldate, Robert Brown, Danielle, Amanda Lara, Khadidja

BY REBECCA GALLEGOS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

This past week Freshman Team debated controversial topics such as Animal Testing, Capital Punishment, and Euthanasia.

This experience was very beneficial to the students. "They learned how to research and analyze information and pull it together into a real cohesive argument," said Mrs. Mata, Freshman Team English teacher. "But then they also learned how to

work together as a team and improve their speaking ability; so it works on many different levels."

The freshman had been preparing for the debates since second semester began. "I think it is one of the best things we do all year as preparation for the

future," said Mrs. Mata. "This is one of the times of the year, where they really grow and do something that is very difficult."

Freshman Betsy Cerda thought the debates were a wonderful learning experience. "I learned stuff that I never knew

before, so it was pretty beneficial," said Cerda. "It was fun and stressful at times; but we did it."

Watching her students succeed is one of the best parts of the debates for Mrs. Mata. "I just get a really big sense in pride of what they have accomplished and what I helped them to accomplish and noticing how much they have grown," said Mata.

The debates not only teach students about controversial issues, but also help them learn to work together and speak in front of a crowd.

"At first I was nervous because I had never spoken in front of a crowd like that before, but with practice I did well," said Cerda.

The debates went very well. "They did an excellent job and were making really good arguments," said Mrs. Mata. "They were working together and I was really proud of them."

Even though the debates are a competition, everyone won in the eyes of Mrs. Mata.

"I am very proud of my team and I think that all the students are winners," said Mata. "Even though this is a competition and one side wins and the other side doesn't, I think that they are all literally winners."

Teen Read Week

Teachers Connecting with Students

BY ALYSSA MENDOZA, EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Teen Read Week started off with a two-day book sale in the library where students had the pleasure of buying new and used books such as *The Fountainhead*, *Woodstock*, and *Middle Sex*. Borders is usually the school's Book Fair provider but this year there was a change to that so The Little Old Book Store, which is located in Uptown Whittier, had the pleasure of providing such books.

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday were the last three days of Teen Read Week and what better way to end it than to have three school administrators read to students. "Books open a whole new world to the reader," said Mrs. Smith after she read to Mrs. Chavez's freshman team on Thursday morning.

Mrs. Smith said that she read to the students because she will "always welcome the opportunity to connect to the students because I will always wear the badge of the teacher." The book chosen by Mrs. Smith, *The Painted Circus*, intrigued Mrs. Chavez's class with its bold colors and tricky illusions.

Students would stand up to view these illusions and test their artistic eye. Out of about seven volunteers only two or three were focused enough to see the illusions.

The students looked as if they were in kindergarten all over again. They were fascinated by how these cartoon images were tricking their 15-year-old eyes. Teen Read Week was a hit once again this year thanks to all the students who participated.



Get Lit Drops a Line for Students

BY REBECCA GALLEGOS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

On March 2 the Get Lit Performers came to El Rancho High School to perform classic, contemporary, and original poetry to third and fourth period English classes.

The performers consisted of five students who are a part of the Get Lit organization: Jasmine Williams, Ian Sandblue, Ryan Jafar, Renee Aguiluz, and Briana Taylor. They all have been a part of the Get Lit organization ranging from 2 weeks to 3 years.

Their performances varied, each trying to catch the attention of a different type of student. Students who are fans of Hip Hop music enjoyed Ryan Jafar's performance; while students who have felt ostracized enjoyed Jasmine Williams' performance.

Along with the performers from Get Lit, Mr. Sorenson, Mr. McMullen, Ms. Brown, and a select group of students also performed poetry.

"As a creative writing teacher, I think writing is extremely important, poetry in particular,

Said McMullen. "It is sort of a lost art that nobody pays attention to. If you want the best thinking man has done, look at poetry."

Students also had the opportunity to share their original and classic poetry.

"It was cool because I got to express what I think and it was an awesome experience." Said Emma Leal who performed a poem entitled "A Good Closed Mind"

Overall the Get Lit performance allowed students to see different styles of poetry and hopefully gain a new respect for literature.



SPORTS

Rodriguez Makes a Splash



By Emma Leal
El Rodeo Staff Writer

A bright and easy-going girl—who could it be? There is no doubt in saying it is water polo lover, Melissa Rodriguez, a junior at El Rancho. Rodriguez said, “I love H2O Polo. Last semester, my team mates and I made it to CIF; that was cool.”

Though water polo season is over, Rodriguez continues swimming on the swim team at El Rancho. “Being on the swim

team,” Melissa continued, “is difficult because it is a major transition. Now, I need to focus on perfect timing, whereas, when I was in water polo I used to focus more on getting a hold of the ball.”

In addition, it is surprising that out of the water this *Ninja Turtle* lover is not your typical teenage girl but a hard working student, caring daughter, and loyal friend. Rodriguez is currently taking three A.P. classes and is able to handle her family life.

“At times, yes, things can

get hard. My parents volunteer for the American Care Capital Foundation, so my house is a bit hectic sometimes because of the foster children that we need to attend to, whom I really get emotionally attached to.”

As it seems that she easily juggles her family situations she makes time to enjoy hanging out with friends. Rodriguez said, “I care about my friends. I think they are the most awesome ‘things’ ever.”

Golf Team off to Great Start

By Naomi Ortega
El Rodeo Staff Writer

Acres and acres of green is all the players of El Rancho’s golf team see and it’s time for them to kick off their season in the Del Rio League. Coach May and his team of eight returners and one new comer take the green at Whittier Narrows and Pico Rivera Golf Course once or twice a week.

“I think we’re going to have a great season this year because we have a new player and the team puts a lot of heart into it,” says Captain Alfrado, junior. The team is entering the season with high hopes and Coach May can definitely see his team placing in the top three.

“As long as we can take on the three headed monster, Cal High, La Serna, and Sante Fe, I think we’ll do well,” said May. El Rancho has already lost to La Serna, but won against Whittier. Today the team will be competing against Pioneer. “Golf is a nice outlet to relax after lunch at King Taco,” says Brian Reyes, junior. Golfing is not a sport commonly praised for endurance and strength, but “for all those people who think golf is not really a sport, it is. Its more about tactic, it s more about technique, and knowing how to play,” Albert Romero, sophomore, continued to say, “Try it once and be patient, don’t put down golf before you give it a chance.”



Anthony Ayala, Leads on the Court

By Erika Morales
El Rodeo Staff Writer

The net is the only barrier between him and the opposing setter; he smacks the ball into the air and his focus is completely on scoring the next point. Senior, Anthony Ayala is one of the captains for the boy’s varsity volleyball team. He has been playing since his sophomore year, and along with that, has also been playing varsity football for the same amount of time. Coach Zepeda describes the receiver and center as a “very self-driven and self determined athlete,” with great work ethic, while Adrian Huerta, his co-captain, says he is a “good leader on the court.”

Ayala began playing football in fifth grade, and decided to join volleyball when he started high school. Coach Picon chose Ayala as one of the captains of the team, along with Adrian Huerta. He credits becoming a captain to “working hard.” “She believed Adrian and I were the right people to be leaders,” Anthony said. Huerta agrees, adding that he learned to play setter very quickly without any previous experience.



Ayala works on his passing during a recent practice.

Ayala described football and volleyball as being sports that are “really hard to play, it’s not something you can just go and be good at. They both require really great athletes.” Ayala proves himself to be an outstanding athlete by being a varsity player in both sports, being a letterman in one, and a captain in another. it seems that Anthony can accomplish whatever he sets his mind to, no matter how challenging it may be.

A Family Affair at the Plate

By Mari Dueñas
El Rodeo Staff Writer

Can you think of any better way to bond with your sister than to be out on the field? The Pereira sisters have been playing softball together for nearly half their lives.

Karla, a senior at El Rancho has been on the school’s varsity softball team throughout her four years of high school. The only difference with her sister Karol is that she is one year younger.

Karol joined this sport at the age of seven because her father used to always talk about baseball, and it inspired her to play. Karla joined her younger sister at the age of ten.

“Seeing Karol play looked like fun and made me want to try it out,” Karla said.

Since this year’s season started, the girls admit they have not been playing to their full potential, but Karla said, “at times we can show how good we can really be.”

They mostly enjoy being on each other’s team because they work hard together to improve their skills. “I really like it because if I don’t do well, Karol will help me get better, and same goes for her,” said Karla.

Karla says she has improved a lot since she started playing this sport. “I am where I am expected to be and where I always dreamed of,” she said. She plans to con-



Left to right: Karol Pereira and Karla Pereira

tinue playing at a junior college after high school graduation.

As for her sister Karol, she has one more year of high school, and also has plans of playing softball as an extra curricular activity at a university after high school.

It is heartbreaking for Karla to leave the high school

softball team because she quickly became attached to her teammates and the coaches.

“I am definitely going to miss them,” she said. Her sister Karol is going to miss having her as a teammate during her final year of high school.