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1st Place award-winner from the American Scholastic Press Association



# The Lion's Roar

The voice of Liberty High School students

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FREE



Photo by Alegra Nelson

## J-wing Jenga

By Alegra Nelson  
Copy Editor

*J wing now stands on the ground of Liberty's future Olympic size swimming pool. Construction is forcing teachers to begin packing up their portable classrooms before the big move: most J wing portables are moving to T wing, scheduled for early this summer. However, some teachers are concerned the portables won't be able to withstand the move, as portable walls are cracking, and ceilings are crumbling slowly.*

Many teachers spend the first month back to school setting up their classrooms with posters and pictures, but the teachers in J-wing, after second semester, now must start undecorating their walls. A task that must be done for the big move of each J-Wing portable. The situation in J-Wing has likely been obvious to every student and teacher since the year started with construction and renovations, but most people do not have much of a clue as to what is happening. The basic information is that classrooms J-1 through J-4 and J-16 through J-18 are being transported to where the now-demolished pool

used to sit; J-5 through J-15 will move to T-Wing. This will all occur during the summer of 2019. Mrs. Harper explained, "Our new Aquatic Center will be built where the current J-wing and district Maintenance and Operations building are located. This summer all of the J-wing portables will be moved to other areas on campus." By the start of the 2019-2020 school year there will also be an improved campus map at the front of the school because after the J-Wing classes move to their new locations, they will be staying there permanently. For some teachers, this move has turned into a daunting task because of all their posters, pictures, files, books,

and supplies. Teachers like Mr. Key in J-5 who has 20 years of memories on his wall will have to remove everything for the portables to be transported. Other teachers already started baring their walls before Winter Break. History teacher, Mr. Rust, in J-9 shared, "Since I have so many personal items, I wanted to get a jump start on this enormous task. If I wait until the end of the year, I will be so busy with my normal teacher duties, that I would be staying late into the evening to complete this move." Many of the J-Wing teachers have yet to start packing their classrooms, however, in the end, this inconvenience will hopefully be overshadowed by the improved campus.

## Who is Kamala Harris?

By Eddie Ransom  
Staff Writer

**Bay Area native taking a shot at becoming President of the United States**

Every four years the history of America is altered. November is the month for presidential elections, as voting is a big deal for many American citizens. Voting affects all of those living in the U.S, despite whether one votes or not, and in doing so one can potentially change America forever. Political powers are beginning to announce candidacy, and Kamala Harris has took to the race. Kamala Harris born on October 20, 1964 in Oakland, California has decided to step up in what she believes in and run for president in 2020. Kamala

Harris was born to an Indian mother and a Jamaican father who immigrated to the U.S from Madras, which is now Chennai in 1960. Kamala attended Howard University and the University of California Hastings College of law and graduated successfully to later embark on a rise throughout the California legal system. First emerging as a district attorney of San Francisco from 2004 to 2010 then as the 32nd attorney general of California from 2011 to 2017. Kamala Harris stands for a few things nearest and dearest to her. Kamala believes in free tuition at four year public colleges, Harris would enact

the "College For All" Act proposed by Senator Bernie Sanders that would create a government funding program that would pay for tuition and fees at public colleges and universities for students with incomes of \$125,000 a year or less. This would be funded by a fee on Wall Street firms of 0.5% per stock trade. Kamala has also proposed tax cuts to create new direct tax breaks for middle and lower classes. Harris has mentioned the "Lift the Middle Class" Act which would give a \$3,000 refundable tax credit to individuals making \$55,000 or less and \$6,000 for married couples earning under \$100,000. Harris

would pay for the multi-trillion dollar plan by eliminating some of the tax cuts put in place by the Republican sponsored "Tax Cuts and Jobs" Act and by creating a new tax or fee on some banks and financial institutions. However, despite some groups high expectations for her policies, critics still tend to denounce Kamala Harris for her ideas, and how she governs. For example, time after time when progressives urged Kamala to embrace criminal justice reforms as district attorney and then as the states attorney general, Ms. Harris opposed them or stayed silent. Furthermore, Harris was

criticized for withholding information about a police laboratory technician who had been accused of "intentionally sabotaging" her work and stealing drugs from the lab in 2010. Critics believe to think that Kamala Harris has a record in wrongful convictions and in withholding information from the legal system for years, hindering others to be skeptical about her run for presidency and if she's capable. Much may be on Kamala's plate, but despite that, her and many more presidential candidates will take to the polls as the run for presidency increases in competitiveness.

## The effects of America's longest shutdown

By Sophia Ortega  
Staff Writer

The average student at Liberty might have viewed the longest government shutdown as just another part of politics that would have no impact on their day to day life. Surprisingly, the effects of the shutdown are more widespread than one might assume. More than 800,000 federal workers were affected by the shutdown; they had to go to work without pay for over a month. These workers were part of government-funded agencies like The Food and Drug Administration, The Transportation Security Agency, and the Coast Guard. The Food and Drug Administration was heavily impacted, with workers not being paid, food inspections that are usually crucial were not taking place. These included inspections of "high-risk", like baby formula, and soft cheese. These inspections are important because they check the food to make sure there is nothing that could contaminate the food, as this could cause foodborne illness. This meant that some foods might have been unsafe to eat; these foods included mostly fresh foods like: vegetables,



Photo by Alex Wroblewski

2019 saw the end of America's longest government shutdown, lasting 35 days. President Donald Trump claimed the shutdown would last as long as it had to for Trump to get the funding for the now impending border wall.

prepackaged salads and ice cream, along with other dairy products. Caution taken with any kind of food that was perishable was very encouraged. Another institution that was hit hard was The Transportation Security Agency; with workers not receiving pay, a record amount of them began calling in sick. This caused huge TSA lines because of the lack of workers in the airports. Travelers would have to wait in these lines for hours on end. This along with a lack of Air Traffic Controllers led to several flights being delayed or cancelled. Two airports in New York were heavily affected. According to

The New York Times, "47 flights were canceled at La Guardia and there were 580 delays, which represented about half of the day's flights. At Newark Liberty, at least 40 flights were canceled and nearly 300 were delayed..." Mrs. Jewell, a Liberty teacher, was affected by the shutdown; her husband Brent, had to go to work for the Coast Guard every day, knowing that he would not be receiving any compensation for his work. Most members went to work every day motivated by an obligation to, as well as a faith that the government would eventually do the right thing. Mrs. Jewell said,

"You remember that your duty is to the nation and you must place some faith in the idea that politicians will do their job". She explained how her family is fortunate enough to have more than one income to rely on, and be able to save money to support themselves, but that unfortunately, this was not the case for many Coast Guard families. Her husband kindly did what he could to help them "He listened to their worries and encouraged them to go to the food banks and take care of their families. Many people felt embarrassed to be needing help. However, it was necessary".

*"You remember that your duty is to the nation and you must place some faith in the idea that politicians will do their job."*

*-Mrs. Jewell,  
Liberty High  
English teacher*

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# A teen's rights in the workplace

By Allie Cone  
Editor-in-Chief

In high school, most teenagers decide to dip their toes into the working world, but the unfortunate reality is that there are sharks lurking to take advantage of inexperienced workers. Ultimately, inexperienced workers are less likely to speak up about an unfit workplace, so it is necessary to know the rights employed minors have. It should all begin with a work permit; work permits are the most essential piece of paperwork for student jobs, essentially, work permits hold the workplace accountable for protecting minor employees. Without a work permit, Liberty staff cannot defend the workplace rights for their students. The general rule of thumb is the more paperwork one signs upon employment, the more accountability the business will have for their employees' rights.



Photo courtesy of casefiremagazine  
The introduction of young adults into the workplace can be a slippery slope. Although American labor laws have increased dramatically since the industrialization era, there are many modern holes that need to be filled for young adults. A basic understanding of workplace rights is the first step.

With the seemingly endless adjustments of California's minimum wage, it may be difficult for first time workers to gage what exactly their pay should be. According to The State of California Department of Industrial Relations, as of January 1, 2019 minimum wage for businesses with 26 or more employees is \$12.0 an hour, and \$11.00 an hour or businesses with 25 employees or less. The minimum wage is an obligation of the employer and cannot be waived by any agreement, including collective bargaining agreements. Furthermore the DIR states, "Any remedial legislation written for the protection of employees may not be violated by agreement between the employer and employee. Civil Code Sections 1668 and 3513." Minimum wage is nonnegotiable, and an employee should not be offered any less.

## 'Tis the season for the sneezing: the ins and outs of flu season

By Jamison Capio  
Copy Editor

It's time to write an essay in English class, but just as the pencil strikes the paper, a student from behind lets out a horrendous cough. While it may be habitual to brush it off and assume it's simply the common cold, it would certainly do well to recognize the differences between the cold and the flu, as well as how to react in a similar situation. As explained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu virus is by getting a flu vaccine each year." However, the flu vaccine is often questioned for its effectiveness, and whether it is actually worth getting each year. In most cases, the flu shot is disregarded because it's either forgotten about, or simply not thought of as an essential form of protection against the virus. In addition, according to Joseph Nordqvist of MedicalNewsToday, "The main difference between cold and flu symptoms is that flu more commonly includes fever; the fever can be 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and last for 3-5 days." With the the main difference of having the flu being the dreadful fever, other indications of the influenza include: a long persistence of extreme fatigue, absence of nasal congestion (as it is more common in the cold), and vomiting. As an example, Liberty High School sophomore, Brianna Brown, says she caught the flu about four years ago during the Fall Break in 2015. Brianna Brown explains, "I was watching Marvel Avengers when I realized something was wrong. I most likely got the flu because of my mom, since she had it before I did," she explains, "I was frustrated because I could barely move and I had a game coming up." She demonstrates the difficulties she had with the flu, including the frustration caused by the inability to participate in playing softball. "Next time, I'll be more careful around people who have it. And

for the most part, I do believe the flu shot is effective." Brown adds. She also expresses her opinion on the flu vaccination and how she will continue to take the shot each year, as well as avoiding people with the illness. In a similar case, Mrs. Cailotto, a teacher here at Liberty High School, recalls the moment her son called her to tell her that he was not feeling well. Her son, Michael Cailotto, had been hit with the flu early March of last year in 2018. "My son called me to tell me he had been sick and visited the campus health center. Timing was inconvenient, like any illness," she recalls, "when I got to the hospital, my son was in an emergency room bed resting. The doctor came by to let us know he had tested positive." Mrs. Cailotto did as much as she possibly could in order to take care of her ill son by being there and keeping an eye out for any mishaps. In 2018, there were several waves of the influenza outbreak. Unfortunately, Michael Cailotto experienced one of the life-threatening waves. Michael Cailotto describes, "The onset of the illness was gradual, it persisted longer than I would have expected of a cold. I remember feeling completely miserable and honestly a bit irritable as well." He illustrates the feeling of having the influenza virus, describing the way in which it spreads slowly and extends over a rather lengthy period of time. "I mostly tried to rest and take cough medicine, but ended up getting a prescription of Tamiflu from the hospital. I really started to feel better the day I started the Tamiflu." Michael Cailotto adds, "I wasn't able to get it last year when I got sick since I was so busy, but I try to make sure to get the flu shot when the season rolls around. I'm sure the flu shot helps with flu prevention, there isn't really any reason to risk not getting it." Whether one believes in the benefits of the flu shot or not, doctors strongly encourage taking the vaccination prior to the flu seasons each year; and as for Brianna Brown and Michael Cailotto, they will swing on the safe side by continuing to keep the vaccination in their minds as each flu season approaches.

## The history of Mardi Gras

By Reese Watkins-Nelson  
Co-Editor

'Tis the season to be filled with revelry. Mardi Gras, being the traditional celebration of indulging in excessive amounts of food, drinks, and other pleasures, is commonly celebrated after the Christian Epiphany, up until the day before Ash Wednesday. Now, Mardi Gras isn't the only name that this celebration is known by, in other cultures the name varies from Shrovetide, Carnival, Fettisdagen, and more. This celebration derived itself originally from Pagan traditions of spring and fertility common to Roman tradition. This is where many Roman citizens would take time off from work and school in order to praise their God of agriculture, Saturn. As time progressed, the holiday began to associate with Christmas, and it carried over into Christian teachings through the New Testament, when The Three Kings endowed Christ with gifts on the 12th day, hence to when it commonly starts. Many cultures around the world today still celebrate the tradition. For instance, in Catholic and Anglican dominant nations like Britain, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Americas all commonly celebrate



Photo courtesy of ibtimes.com  
Mardi Gras was first celebrated in the U.S. in 1856, and since that year has been known as a holiday full of extravagant costumes, masquerade balls, and beautiful parades.

it. Their celebrations mostly consist of large parades, heavy drinking and eating, and various displays of music, however, certain countries are renowned for their gigantic celebrations. Brazil for example, hosts the Rio Carnival, which celebrates with lively animated parades and diverse music performances. In Russia and the Ukraine, it combines both Pagan and Christian values through outdoor festivities dedicated to the winter season, and family gatherings. Even in the United States, prominently in New Orleans, the city celebrates through big parades, mas-

querade balls, and even cross-dressing. In addition to the celebration, there are also symbolic colors, particularly in the United States. These traditional colors that are associated with Mardi Gras are purple, gold, and green. Purple represents justice, green being faith, and finally gold being power. This stems from the 1872 Rex parade in Louisiana which established the tri-colored flag to welcome the Russian King and Queen. Collectively, these all these celebrations fall under the same purpose of luxuriating in the fruits of human need in preparation of relinquishing it during Lent.

## American troops pulling out of Syria?

By Hamid Chaudhry  
Staff Writer

Mass controversy, resigning officials, and lost lives are all result of one idea: to bring the American troops home from Syria. After President Trump's proposal to return the troops from Syria in December, the senate had unanimously voted to end assistance in Yemen and Saudi Arabia over the death of Jamal Kashoggi, a dissident journalist working in Saudi Arabia at the time. The Senate had voted this because they held Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman responsible for the killing. "We cannot sweep under the rug the callous disregard for human life and flagrant violations of international norms the Saudis are showing," claimed Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey. However, as of January 31, the senate rebuked the proposed withdrawal of the troops stating that the threat in Syria and Afghanistan was still present.



Photo courtesy of The Times of Isreal  
Trump has ordered a withdrawal of 2,000 American troops from Syria.

Senator Mitch McConnell states, "The precipitous withdrawal of United States forces from either country could put at risk hard-won gains and United States national security." The vote to oppose Trump's proposal passed 68 to 23 and was backed by almost every senate Republican. However, some Democrats showed opposition to this amendment, such as

Senators Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. "We've been in Afghanistan for a longer period than any war in American history; Syria, we've been there for too long and we've got to get out," he stated in an interview. As of now, the future of these troops in Syria is an uncertain one as the conflict is at a stalemate between the parties.

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## Liberty: we HAD the meats

*Examining Liberty's historic Meat Processing elective*

*By Roya Mohammad*  
Staff Writer

As you enter your next class, you put on your white apron with splashes of red on it, along with your latex gloves. You head over to your station surrounded by raw meat from various animals such as beef and pork, and start cutting. This was experienced by a student who has taken Liberty's Meat Processing class from the 1970's to the 1980's.

The class was run by Paul Young, a retired butcher who decided to teach his skills to others. Young discussed his agenda with the head of Liberty, who agreed to fund and create a Meat Processing class. At first, he taught it as a night class, but due to Brentwood being so driven by agriculture and already having a huge interest, the class was in high demand. So, he converted it into an elective class located "adjacent to auto shop" according to LHS teacher Rod Beaver. According to current LHS Agriculture teacher Yvette Herrera, Young taught many concepts during his time as a teacher. He would demonstrate to students various techniques to cut the meat. Also, the students would learn about the different qualities of meat, the cuts, percentages of fats, and the grade of the meat from A-F, as set forth by the USDA. Students also participated in competitions against multiple high schools, such as Amador Valley in Pleas-

anton, and many others. They were sanctioned through the National FFA program and are still occurring today in various schools. The competitions were between four students. Their attire was made up of a helmet and white coats. They would walk into a meat locker with a clipboard and were tested on the displayed meat's quality, cut, and the grade from A-F. In addition, they would have to know how to package meat the fastest and break it down into different sizes, such as a quarter, a half, or a whole steer, pig, or lamb.

After Paul Young retired, Mr. Gerte ran the program. However, he was diagnosed with arthritis and could no longer teach. Liberty could not find a replacement butcher, and therefore, ending up cutting the class altogether. The class that provided real life skills over 30 years ago is still realistic today, Mrs. Herrera confirms, "(The class) could be very realistic. Of course not any time in the near future as it would need a large financial investment to restart such a class. However, our agricultural based science classes are booming with student interest and the classes are growing quickly. If students show enough interest and outside funding was found there is no doubt in my mind that it could come back". The room previously used for the class is still around, but is now being used for district storage.



Traces of LHS's past likely go unnoticed by most students; this structure above the door of K-5 was once used to hang meat as it was unloaded for use in the Meat Processing class.

Photo by Rod Beaver



Former LHS student Johnny Cutino poses for a photo as he takes a break from work in the meat processing class.

Photo courtesy of Liberty's 1974 yearbook

**Want to watch an actual meat evaluation?**  
Check out the competition at Gilbert High School in Gilbert, AZ  
Visit: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbJqsh2pOs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbJqsh2pOs)

**"Offering more classes that provide training/experience for real-world training not only teaches them basic to complex life skills but also may help students find their passion and future career..."**

**- LHS Ag Teacher, Yvette Herrera**

## Lion's Cafe: A review of American Heroes Smokehouse

*By Dylan Davidson*  
Staff Writer



According to the writer, "Although the presentation may not be great, the flavor definitely makes up for it".

Photo by Dylan Davidson

While the American Heroes establishment may not look like much from the outside, the flavorful endeavors of brilliantly barbequed meats that lie inside more than make up for the outward appearance of the restaurant. Upon entering the restaurant one cold Tuesday night, we were greeted by a server almost immediately, despite the empty appearance of the restaurant. The server paid attention to detail and was incredibly kind and helpful as my family took their turn ordering food.

Not too long after ordering, the server we had just spoken to, and an additional two workers appeared from the back, and began constructing each of the orders, in full view of the restaurant patrons due to the glass coverings that barely obstructed them as they worked. It was actually rather satisfying to watch a fresh piece of warm brisket be filleted into the shreds that would eventually become the sandwich I ordered.

After watching the employees prepare the food, a few moments later the food had already arrived to the table in a surprisingly short amount of time, considering multiple slabs of meat had to be carved in order to fulfill the orders we had requested. The presentation of the food isn't necessarily the fanciest ever, but it is a barbeque place, so it is not really expected in the first place. I had ordered the brisket sandwich and a side of their homemade mac and cheese, which were both rather delicious, the brisket being well seasoned and tender, while the mac and cheese was both creamy and soft, but still enough to maintain its texture. Once I had bitten into the sandwich, I realized there was something integral missing in a sandwich like this, that being the barbeque sauce of course.

One of American Heroes special quirks is its five specially homemade sauces that are placed at each table, named things like Jersey Devil, and Lexington

Dip. Each of them have unique tastes and flavors, each being good enough to make you put a little bit from each of them on your next bite. Among other items ordered, the tacos and sliders stood out to me, as both of them retained the quality of the brisket, but blended well with their respective mediums they were delivered in.

In conclusion, the American Heroes establishment is an inviting restaurant, that prides itself on supporting veterans and those who serve our country in any shape or form. The owner of the restaurant's family lineage, including himself, have served in every armed American conflict since the Civil War, and would like to give back to the community members who do the same by offering a hefty discount, counteracting the rather expensive food. While the price may be high, and the portion sizes could be a little bigger, the food is still amazingly delicious, and I would recommend anyone to try it.

## Is being an only truly lonely?

*By Ysenia Inguanzo*  
Staff Writer

*A glimpse into being an only-child*

A bond built from childhood into adulthood, a friendship made the day of birth; siblings have a friend from the very start. But what about only children? Without a sibling, everything must be different, right?

About 23% of American families only have one child, a small chunk including some students here at LHS.

Often, an only child is portrayed to have "Only Child Syndrome," or "Little Emperor Syndrome," "Symptoms" would include greediness, loneliness, and bossiness.

However, it is not accurate to assume these characteristics are completely right. In fact, Adam Duarte, a Sophomore, who is an only child, disagrees with a number of only child assumptions, yet he can't help but to agree with a few as well.

Contrary to common beliefs, Duarte states he doesn't feel lonely at home or have social troubles. When Adam

is bored, he will simply find activities such as playing on his Xbox, or browsing through his phone, which many other teenagers do.

Although he isn't completely independent (Adam referred to himself as a "Mama's Boy"), Adam had no problem making friends; he expressed, "Making friends was easy; I have ADHD, so I was always out there." He believes being an only child shaped his personality to an extent, as he spends most of his time alone, but his friends played a big role as well.

When asked if he is spoiled by his parents, Adam responded with, "Yes, I am the only one, so my parents spend a lot of money on me". Adam also added that because he is the only one, his parents have no one else to spoil, which is why he prefers to have no siblings, either.

Furthermore, Adam revealed because

he has no siblings, he doesn't have to fight for attention from his parents, and has a close relationship with them.

Though, it is not to say everything is always sunshine and rainbows in his household, as Adam confesses, "Whenever I have problems with my parents, I either talk to my cousins or keep it to myself, it's my problem after all". Having no siblings allowed Adam to develop a close relationship with his cousins.

Despite being an only child, Adam boasts a large family overall. He joked, "My numerous cousins, aunts, and uncles comes from my Hispanic side, while being an only child came from my Caucasian side".

It seems being an only child isn't completely what others make it out to be. More positive "symptoms" of being an only-child include good organization skills, maturity, and high independence.



Although Adam Duarte may be alone at home, he's definitely not lonely.

Photo by Ysenia Inguanzo

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## Liberty's secret celebs

By Lily Castro  
Staff Writer

Everybody from a young age dreams of becoming famous, whether that would be through acting, singing, or athletics. With the new age of technology people can gain popularity in unexpected ways. Liberty students, Darcy Gilfoy and Rachel Schieber found fame through the internet and went viral.

Darcy Gilfoy, a junior here at Liberty, became known for a video of her niece squeaking a prolonged "Hi" up close to the camera captioned "Me responding back in .2 seconds after being left on delivered for 6 hours". This video, posted in November, gained a lot of popularity and now has over 7 million views and 424 thousand likes on Twitter. Gilfoy usually sticks to LHS posts and the occasional selfie when it comes to Twitter, but she admits that her friends convinced her to post the video that would soon go viral. Initially, it was only her close friends who were liking and sharing the video, but just overnight it had a thousand likes

and that number continues to grow to this day.

"I was in shock because I wasn't expecting it to get that big" Gilfoy recalls "And [I wasn't expecting] the amount of attention it got".

As thrilling as going viral was, she did encounter a fair share of people trying to take credit for her post. Another account on Twitter stole the video and posted it with a similar caption.

On the experience, she shares, "At first it was 'Oh that's annoying' but then you realize that you can't do anything about it... so yeah I wasn't really mad" Even though the video's fame didn't last that long, Gilfoy still had a lot of fun with the experience. At one point she even tried to get Ellen DeGeneres to notice the video. She continues to stay humble even with her viral status. Additionally, Rachel Schieber, a sophomore at Liberty, similarly found her spot in the limelight when she was featured on "The Voice" on Snapchat back in March. Snapchat featured an audition tape of Schieber singing "Sunday

Morning" by Maroon 5 while playing the ukulele. She took the opportunity when stumbling across an advertisement on Snapchat asking for auditions for hit T.V show "The Voice". She didn't really give it any thought at first but decided to send in an audition tape anyways. In just a week NBC contacted her, asking for more videos of her singing. Schieber was then flown out to LA and competed to become a finalist on team Adam, who is the lead singer of Maroon 5.

"I was very nervous to perform for the producers and camera people because it was unlike anything I had ever done before, and much different than performing in a play", she recounted.

Schieber has been singing as long as she could remember and has been playing the guitar since she was ten. Although she has a lot of experience with performing, she found herself struggling with stage fright. Her experience on "The Voice", where she became one in five finalists, helped boost her confidence and showed her that she could

Me responding back in .2 seconds after being left on delivered for 6 hours



Gilfoy's niece in the video has been seen more than 7 million times.

Photo courtesy of @D\_Gilfoy

go far with singing.

"My experience has led me to take chances when it comes to auditioning for other singing opportunities at school, like Liberty Idol" she admitted. Both Gilfoy and Schieber posted their videos not knowing the amount of attention they would receive. Even though their experiences were similar at face value, what they took away from it were extremely different. Gil-

foy explains that although the video didn't change her life drastically, she did get an interesting story out of it. Schieber, on the other hand, found a new sense of accomplishment and confidence through her opportunity to compete on "The Voice". Despite the fact that their fame lasted for a short time, their videos gave them the opportunity to be in the spotlight and an experience that very few people get the chance to have.

## Why do people believe in conspiracy theories?

By Trevor Aitchison  
Staff Writer

9/11/2001 was most definitely an inside job, the moon landing was faked by the U.S. to dismantle the Soviet Union, and the Kennedy assassination had more behind it than meets the eye. These are some things, if not all, people labeled "conspiracy theorists" would say.

All these theories and accusations are usually backed by a decent amount of proof, but not enough to be so sure that the most popular conspiracy theories are undeniably true.

What makes people truly believe horrific things like the attacks on the World Trade Center were all planned by our own U.S. government? To some people that would sound ludicrous, and have no logical reasoning behind it, but theorists are constantly pointing out co-

incidences that may seem a little too out of the ordinary. This has been examined by British psychologist Karen Douglas and her colleagues recently in the Journal Current Directions in Psychological Science. The researchers have narrowed this question down to a couple different answers; the need to understand and to be certain, and the longing for control and security.

Humans are the only species on the planet to have ever actually asked questions, so it is only natural to be skeptical about major world events that seem unworlly to us. When it really comes down to it, people fulfill their need to understand by making quick explanations to grasp concepts that may seem immensely complex to actually happen in reality. For ex-

ample, the more common conspiracy theory that the moon landing was faked and filmed here on earth to bankrupt the Soviet Union, partly springs off the subconscious idea that successfully embarking on a lunar landing would be too difficult for a species such as us to accomplish.

Although theories like this are not made without their evidence, one popular piece states that President Kennedy made a promise in 1961, that the U.S. "should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth." When NASA started working on the lunar launch, for multiple years they made very little progress, and at the tail end of the decade, they miraculously were able to create a spacecraft that would suc-

cessfully land astronauts on the moon, fulfilling the president's promise just in the nick of time.

However, the desire for security and control also plays a rather large factor in conspiracy theory making. For example, if scientists predict that global temperatures are rising at a concerning rate, some politicians will want to put measures in place to counter it. In doing that, citizens would then have to drastically change their way of life, and would have to cut down on things that pollute the environment. Now, if people then started to regard global warming as a hoax, therefore making it a conspiracy, those citizens will be able to continue their current way of day to day life, therefore having more control and security.

Overall, conspiracy theories that be-

come popular and gain lots of traction usually have to do with something that affects society, and there's another whole aspect that has to deal with sociology, how people are tricked into believing things simply because others do. This also coincides with fear, and how people make excuses for events that scare them. There are some silly theories out there that do not seem to make much sense, such as Barack Obama, the former president of the United States, is a reptile. Ones like these do not gain as much attention because they do not pose any threat to society or individuals. No matter how much evidence is backed by these kinds of conspiracies. But when you really boil it down, it can always be traced back to human nature.

## New network brings consumers to future

By Kristine Sanchez  
Staff Writer

Every day the world takes a small step towards the technology of the future. Now, it takes a leap. Network technology will soon be improved. Qualcomm, a telecommunications equipment and semiconductor company, will introduce a faster and newer version of the original network this year. This network will be known as "5G". The 5G Network brings consumers into a technological future, where downloading a high definition movie will take a few seconds unlike the 4G LTE network, that takes numerous minutes to download the exact same movie. John Stamm, former Qualcomm employee, states "5G is the 5th generation telecommunication global standard, which is dramatically more bandwidth across the Network, which will allow us to stream more content and automate cars and trucks". This

technology also brings consumers to communicate with more people without any delays or glitches, bringing more people together and having a better experience with communicating with one another. However, the 5G network can be concerning to most people because of compatibility, affordability, and availability.

Consumers asked companies introducing the network, whether or not current phones will be compatible with 5G. The answer: the phones released before the 5G Network launch, such as current iPhones and Samsung Galaxies, will not be compatible. However, 5G phones are being released at the same time or even sooner than the release of the network. When the first 5G compatible phones will be released from companies like Google, Samsung, Apple, and others, the cost will likely be high-priced. These phones will be more expensive than the phones

# 5G

consumers have now.

Before consumers buy 5G-based phones, they must question themselves if the 5G will be available in the country they live in. The network will be available this year in some regions. The first couple countries that will debut the 5G Network will be the United States, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil. The network will be available worldwide in the future, but not at first.

Choosing to convert to a 5G network and phone or staying with the current 4G LTE will be difficult a choice but consumers will have to choose sooner or later.

## DNA testing: cool or drool?

By Maya Morales-Cartwright  
Staff Writer

Spit-in tube genetic testing kits have piqued interest of millions, making their way from wish lists to the homes of curious testees. But their existence has spiked suspicion in many, making some question if there is an ulterior motive to their seemingly promising services.

The tubes full of saliva are sent to labs for analysis, and are then extracted and processed into a distinctive genetic report. Every testee's data contributes to the advancement of accuracy regarding ancestry. When notified of completion of results, all data is accessible on the website of the company.

Amid the lengthy privacy policies and statements, genetic testing companies have continually reassured skeptics what is done with DNA when results are completed.

DNA tubes are monitored, sent, and discarded at biomedical facilities

daily. Digital data is protected as well, by encryption. If any third party were to try to access information nothing would be exposed, other than a bunch of jumbled up words.

However, data can be accessed by law enforcement, but only if a warrant is issued.

"I trust that my information is protected", Tate Watkins-Nelson states, "I'm pretty sure if companies weren't protective over that kind of sensitive information, then they would be facing a lot of legal issues."

Genetic testing companies have issued a law for protection against some employers and health insurance companies. As their popularity increases, other laws may be issued in regards to how data will be dealt. Whether they are trusted or not, their services are to be taken great advantage of. Their platforms have rekindled families, solved crimes, introduced potential health risks, and continue to change the lives of people around the globe.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

applications are now available in your Den

If you need to remediate an F grade for graduation or a D grade for college eligibility, summer school is the time to do it.

Go to your Den at lunch to pick up an application.

## Seniors Don't forget

Your FAFSA must be completed and submitted by March 2nd! This is vital for your financial aid packages for all colleges; 4-year, 2 year and most trade or vocational schools ALL accept FAFSA. The FAFSA is also required in order to be eligible for Cal Grant. Questions? See the College and Career Center.

February 27, 2019

# Wrestling team from Japan sweeps competition, shares culture with LHS

By Leah Carrasco  
Staff Writer

It was the experience of a lifetime for Liberty High School's varsity boys wrestling team as they faced off against some special contenders from Japan.

An international wrestling team all the way from Japan stepped foot onto the Liberty campus, however, this wasn't the first time they made an appearance at Liberty. Varsity head coach for boys wrestling and national teams director, Greg Chappell, partnered up with cultural exchange director of California, Tod Blank, to bring an international team to California, which they do every other year. The Japanese team made an appearance two years ago, and the cultural exchange program gave Liberty's wrestling team another opportunity to host them again in early January of this year.

As the Japanese team came to visit, Liberty's boys wrestling welcomed them with open arms. They got to stay with some of the Liberty wrestlers and even some of the coaches at their houses for competition. The teams were able to spend time together, get to know each other, and share parts of their cultures with one another. Varsity boys wrestler, Cade Martinez, goes on



East meets west when former LHS wrestler and City Councilman Johnny Rodriguez (center) gathers with the coaches of the Japanese team following the match.

Photo courtesy of Greg Chappell

to explain that he spent time with the Japanese team during his first period class when they came to visit on campus, and got the chance to hang out with some of the wrestlers that were staying at his friend's house. He ex-

plains his experience by saying, "I had a lot of fun even though they spoke very little English", and adds that they got to share music and food from their cultures with each other. The Liberty boys wrestling team knew

it would be a challenging duel going up against the skilled junior national team from Japan. As a result, despite a tough loss for the majority of the team, varsity boys wrestler Wyatt Word prevailed and was the only Liberty wrestler to win his

match. A great, rewarding victory for Word as he was, additionally, the only wrestler to win his match against this Japanese team 2 years ago when they came to duel Liberty the first time. Wyatt reveals it was overall a good experience and that it, "put us back on our heels". He was satisfied to win his match, and bring a major victory for his team.

Overall, despite losing, the learning experience and the social interaction between the teams is what really mattered in the end. The Japanese team bonded with the Liberty boys wrestlers from the start of their visit to the last moments of the competition. Liberty girls wrestler, Hermelinda Mendoza, explains, "I thought it was really cool, seeing them come all the way from Japan to Liberty", and further adds that it was an interesting and fun experience watching these teams come together to wrestle. The competition gave both teams the opportunity to gain insight to each other's cultures, as well as learn some new wrestling techniques. Chappell expresses this experience by saying, "They are getting to see our culture and we are getting to see theirs", he adds furthermore, "It's a good thing all in all, everybody interacts and we learn from each other, that's what it's all about".

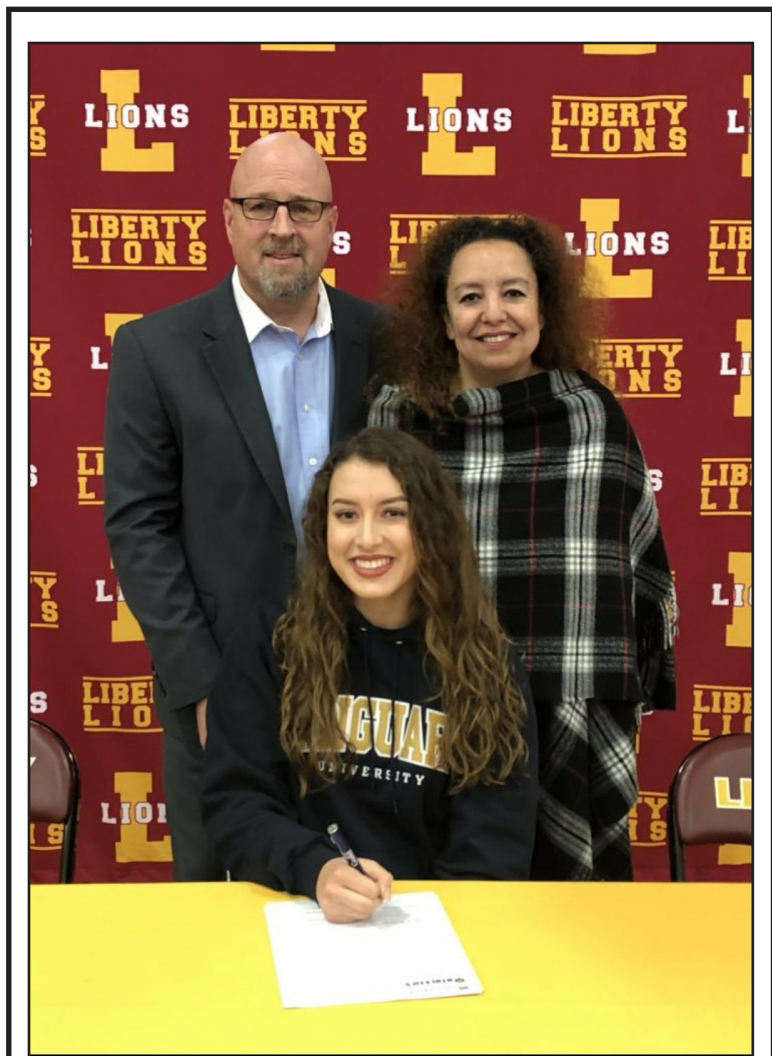


Photo courtesy of @LHSLionsCheer

## Stunt team's historic signing

Congratulations to Liberty High School senior Jessi Renner, who recently signed her letter of intent to play on the stunt team at Vanguard University, located in Orange County, CA. Renner is the first stunt team member from Liberty to move on to the collegiate level.

## Does an injury end a career? A look at how medical setbacks impact athletes

By Charlis Vega  
Staff Writer

Athletes all over the world train for the sport of their choosing in hopes of one day making an impact on the sport; whether it be to accomplish great things in high school or to one day be in the Olympics. However, athletes face injury all the time, whether it be in or out of practice.

An athlete can be putting in hours of hard work at practice, and in the last 30 minutes they can twist an ankle or tear their ACL, which can put an athlete out for a while. However, does that mean it'll be end of their career? According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, or NCAA there were more than 41,000 injuries and 25 million athlete exposures from 2004 to 2009. Football players are nearly seven times more likely to be injured during a game or practice. In addition, 54% of athletes reported to have played while being injured, and 12% have reported having concussions or injuries while competing.

Wrestler and returning national champion, Jason Nolf, suffered a knee injury during a match at Rutgers University, facing off against Penn State, forcing him to medically forfeit out of Penn State's 25-15 win. Nolf's coach, optimistic about his injury stated, "Really it's not as bad as we feared, but it's going to be some time before we get him back in as close to 100% as we can before postseason". Nolf's injury gives him a new perspective and out look on his wrestling. He states, "I definitely felt a little slower after I got injured, but I feel better now than I did before. Just overall, physically I was a little bit slower, I think hesitant because I wanted to protect my knee".

According to mensjournal.com, San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey suffered a brutal injury in May of 2011

when he collided with then-Miami Marlins player Scott Cousins. Posey suffered a fractured fibula, or calf bone, and torn ligaments in his ankle, ending his season early.

Defying expectations, Posey returned the next season completely healthy, winning the National League batting title with a .346 average in 148 games. In the four seasons following the injury, Posey played in at least 147 games each year, including a career-best 150 games in 2015.

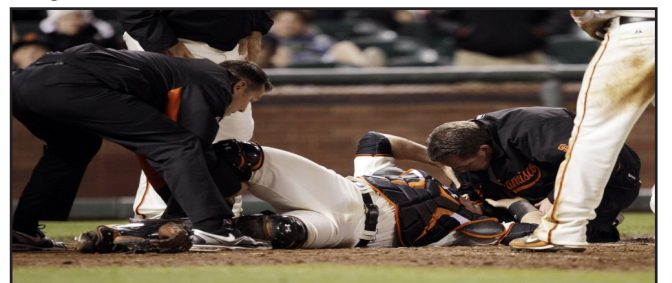
However, some athletes don't ever come back in the same condition, which is a major fear for most athletes, especially

when they've experienced the same injury multiple times. Liberty's very own varsity wrestler, Alyssa Sequeira suffered a torn ACL and meniscus her junior year while wrestling. Alyssa was out for a total of nine months, and during this time, she states, "I had physical therapy for almost a year and went to the gym after". The reason for this, she mentions was so that when she finally returned her senior year, she could perform at the best of her ability. Though she states, "It messed up my mindset a little bit. I'm having issues trying to trust it like how I used to before I got hurt".



The injury caused by this home-plate collision required Buster Posey to have two screws surgically inserted into his left leg in order to repair torn ankle ligaments.

Photo courtesy of USAToday.com



February 27, 2019

# Athletes now vs. 50 years ago

By Adelle Senneca  
Staff Editor

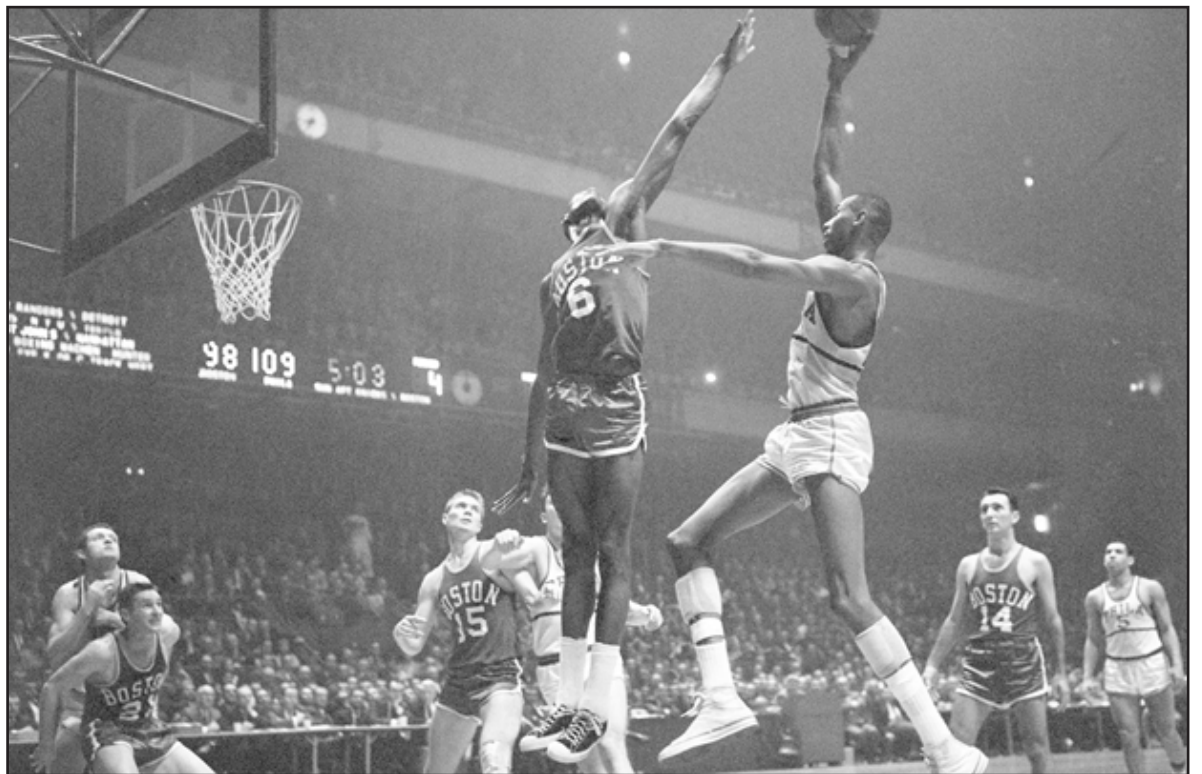
The cheering in the stands, and the competition among different teams has brought many people together sporting events for decades. Sports became increasingly popular in America during the 1920s due to the boom of media and technology, as well as the rise of professional leagues for Basketball, Baseball, and Football. Through the years, sports have evolved to fit the standards set for each generation, and the regulations and expectations required of an athlete in this day and age compared to the requirements and expectations of a professional athlete fifty years ago are very different.

The requirements of an athlete, such as height and weight, have drastically changed throughout the years. For instance, fifty years ago, the NFL required football players to be at least between the heights of 5'8 and 6'0 and between the weights of 160 and 220 lbs.; now, they expect their players to be between the heights of 5'10 and 6'2 and between the weights of 200-300lbs, at the very least. In addition, fifty years ago the average height of an NBA player was 6'5 and weighed at 199 lbs.; whereas now, the average height is 6'6 and weighing at 215lbs. Finally, for baseball, the average height for a MLB player fifty years ago was 5'8 and weighing at 170lbs; whereas, now baseball players average height is 6'1 and weighing at 190lbs. As the years go on, the height and weight ex-

pectancy requirements of athletes are increasingly taller, heavier, and stronger, which is leading to new benefits and obstacles to professional sports.

However, the height and weight requirements are not the only elements that have changed over the years. The level and experience of play has evolved greatly over the years. For example, fifty years ago, scholarships, and playing on travel teams was not as important as it is now, in order to even have a shot of playing at the college level or even professionally. Today if an athlete wants to play at the college level it is almost required of them to be a part of a club team in order to be discovered by scouts. In fact, with certain sports, club teams are pushing for athletes to not be a part of high school sports because they won't help an athlete get to where they want to go; whereas, fifty years ago, being a part of a high school team was how athletes would be discovered. Furthermore, scholarships to play in college are a major requirement in order to have a chance to play in the pros; whereas, fifty years ago playing in college wasn't as common, in fact some players even got recruited to the pros right out of high school. The expectations of athletes now have become higher as well as more expensive compared to the expectations fifty years ago.

Currently, if you are a professional athlete, then that is a career and it is how one will support themselves and their families; however, when sports were just becoming popular, athletes



Bill Russell (left) for the Boston Celtics attempts to block shot from Wilt Chamberlain (right) for the Philadelphia 76ers during the 1968 NBA Division Finals.

Photo courtesy of Bettman/CORBIS

had to have outside jobs in order to provide for themselves and their families. For instance, in the 1920s, professional athletes would make an average of between \$100 and \$300 yearly, and it wasn't until the 1960s that athletes were getting paid between \$6,000 and

\$10,000 yearly. Then in 1972, the first million dollar contract was made with NHL player Bobby Hull, signing a 10 year deal worth one million dollars. As time went on, professional athletes paychecks have enlarged greatly through the years. The differences between athletes

now and fifty years ago have evolved greatly throughout the years, and it can only be expected that as time goes on, the expectations will continue to rise due to the higher levels of competition.

## What's the deal with diet trends?

Shakes? Supplements? Debunking the hype behind the products

By Leila Haddadin  
Staff Writer

A good majority of people have heard of weight loss products. There are many different types of the products such as pills, shakes, and extracts, and they all are supposed to help people achieve their weight-loss goals, but how exactly do they work, and more importantly, do they actually work? Depending on the product and how it is meant to work, the ingredients aren't always the same. A few of these ingredients often include caffeine, helpful for boosting the metabolism and increasing more fat burn, Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA), which reduces the appetite and speeds up the metabolism, Glucomannan, which essentially acts as another appetite suppressant, and Garcinia Cambogia Extract, an inhibited fat-producing enzyme that

also increases Serotonin, all of which are natural.

According to a website called Worldometers, people in the U.S. spend an average of \$30 billion a year on various weight loss products. The American people are willing to spend good money on products to help them lose weight, and in a few studies mentioned on the website Healthline, they seem to actually help. For example, with the use of Glucomannan, it says that it helped people "lose 8-10 pounds in 5 weeks". But this was also paired with a healthy diet, which shows that the users of the products still needed to put in extra effort; the results didn't come from the product alone.

Lizanne Goodwin is someone that has been a user of various weight loss products, and has talked about her experiences. She has been using a protein bar called Think Thin, as well as many diet sodas for six years. Since Ms. Goodwin

has used these products for a long amount of time, she has been an adequate candidate to observe how effectively the weight loss products worked. Lizanne states, "Yes, I've lost weight and kept it off by having less sugar and more protein in my diet". She also adds, "I would not recommend diet soda... I suggest seltzer water instead, which is what I drink now. I do recommend Think Thin bars. They are portable and low in sugar". Some products are certainly gimmicks however, and ultimately, the best form of weight loss comes from getting rigorous daily exercise and eating a lean, low calorie diet. The only way to lose weight is to simply burn more calories than one consumes. So although weight loss products can help aid weight loss, they are not going to magically make people skinny overnight.



Lead singer Adam Levine for Maroon 5, and Travis Scott performing hit song Sicko Mode at the Super Bowl Halftime show. Photo courtesy of Noah Yoo

## Super Bowl Halftime: not-so-super?

A review of the tradition that so many look forward to

By Joey Weeden  
Staff Writer

In the light of this year, there were four artists asked to perform during the 2019 Super Bowl halftime show. Three of them turned down the offer. On February 3rd at 3:30 viewers gathered to watch the face off of the Los Angeles Rams and New England Patriots to determine who holds the title of the 2019 Super Bowl Champions. Billboard had confirmed that Maroon 5 was set to perform the 2019 Super Bowl halftime show, alongside Maroon 5 was Travis Scott, who agreed to perform in exchange for the NFL co-sponsoring a \$500,000 donation to Dream Corps, a social justice organization. Lastly, Big Boi, who had grown up in Atlanta, Georgia also performed alongside Maroon 5.

Other performers including Pink, Car-

di B, and Rihanna stood beside Colin Kaepernick in protest of the Halftime show. The three artists refused offers to perform. Cardi B, an American rapper, singer, and songwriter pleaded, "Colin Kaepernick: As long as you kneel with us, we gonna be standing for you baby." Despite the controversy, an estimated 100.7 million people watched the show; however, the viewership dropped by 3% when compared to last year's ratings. Some say that Adam Levine appearing shirtless was the highlight of the entire game, but that likely was not enough to make people forget about the historically low-scoring game, or the social media backlash in regards to the whole performance. The one redeeming factor to the performance, according to many viewers, was the addition of the Spongebob bit, to honor the death of the show's creator, Stephen Hillenburg. Overall, the general consensus determined that the show fell flat.



It was estimated that approximately 80% of people that get gym memberships at the start of the year don't make it to the five month mark.

Photo courtesy of Jac Jenkins

## Learning life: should Liberty have a class

### on “adulthood”?

#### Opinion Poll:

What is the oldest musical artist or oldest type of music you listen to? Why?

By Jamison Capio  
Copy Editor



Michael Jackson, because he's a music genius.

-Jahaira Chavez, 12th



Tupac, because I like rap.

-Jillian Sameron, 10th



Eminem, because his songs describe his life.

-Yahya Habibi, 12th



The Beatles, their music is inspiring, and it's a different style from nowadays.

-Pamela Medina Morales, 12th



Beyoncé, she has a really pretty voice.

-Catarina Ferreira, 9th

Balancing checkbooks, filing for taxes, hemming pant legs, or changing a tire are all fundamental pieces of knowledge for living an independent adult life. However, more and more high school graduates are entering their adult lives without learning these essentials. If Liberty is debuting a ukulele class, why shouldn't Liberty provide the “adulthood” course requested online by thousands? Thousands of people have tweeted and posted of America's need to require a class on “adulthood.”

But how much responsibility falls on the public education system to prepare students for life after the guidance of high school curriculum, and how much responsibility falls on the parents? Ideally, “Life 101” should be taught mostly by parents, but we can not assume that each American student will receive that guidance from their parents, as some students don't have parents to reap advice from in the first place. At every school, there are students in foster care, students that raise their siblings, and students with ill parents, who are left to guide themselves down the path to adulthood. For the sake of giving each graduate an equal chance

at success after high school, a class on personal skills should be offered at Liberty, but not required. With that, it is essential that the class is taught with a hands on approach. Liberty has previously offered personal finance, but was strictly taught through virtual simulations, making the entire notion of personal finance too difficult to apply to oneself. Additionally, Liberty offers classes such as Home Improvement, Foundations for Success, and Foods, but students are asking for a generalized all-in-one course. The class on life should be offered to junior and senior students for elective credit, since upperclassmen are closer to adult life.

Life 101 shouldn't eliminate any of the previously mentioned courses, and should stand alone in its curriculum. In addition to the highly requested information on taxes, cooking, and basic automobile maintenance, the class needs curriculum on personal networking, and resume writing to give students insight on their upcoming life in a career. Students should leave the one year course with the fundamentals of adulthood, and the resources to expand upon their knowledge. Ultimately, Liberty should be providing a Life 101 class to guarantee each Liberty graduate has the skills to start adult life on the right foot.

## Opioids are out of control

People now more likely to die from opioid overdose rather than car accident

By Stephanie Snodgrass  
Co-Editor

In the United States, the opioid epidemic has become so severe, the overall life expectancy of Americans has fallen; and yet, this crisis continues to be overlooked. Tens of thousands of Americans are dying, and no one is talking about it. Why is that? The answer: pharmaceutical companies. As of this year, death rates for opioid use has surpassed death rates for car crashes. It has been determined by the U.S. Center for Disease Control that in 2017, the number of deaths caused by opioid overdoses in the U.S. was 43,036, while the number of deaths resulting from car crashes was 40,231. Although this shift in deaths may seem sudden, or new, it is quite the contrary. This epidemic has been in the making for decades. This crisis occurred in three waves, the first one being in 1991, when it became normal for doctors to prescribe high doses of opioids/opioid cocktails for regular pain, mostly because doctors at the time weren't aware of the long-term effects, or how highly addictive the medications were. Despite the fact that there was a sharp increase in deaths, reassurance was still being given to doctors and patients by the pharmaceutical companies. Then, in 2010, prescription opioids became harder to get, so many people turned

to Heroin. It was the most appealing option because it was cheap, widely available, and extremely potent. Following this, in 2013 deaths began to follow with the use of synthetic opioids, like Fentanyl. The sharpest rise in deaths happened within the final wave in 2016, when the death toll rose to over 20,000 Americans. So why hasn't anyone been able to put a stop to this problem? The answer always leads back to the pharmaceutical companies that are providing the drugs. They have enough money and power to find loopholes, and dig themselves out of legal troubles. What happens often, is when a drug becomes illegal, they will produce a new drug with an almost identical chemical compound, but is slightly different, making the newest version of the same drug fair game. There was a lawsuit made in 2017 against two drug wholesalers in Williamson, West Virginia. Upon investigation, it was determined that from 2008 to 2015, the town had been sent more than 20.8 million prescription painkillers, like OxyContin, Oxycodone, Buprenorphine, and countless others. However, the town only had a population of 3,200 residents. West Virginia just so happens to be the state that's had more opioid related deaths than any other state in the nation. And yet, these companies received little to no major repercussions.



The United States consumes 80% of the world's prescribed opioids even though the country itself is 5% of the world's population.

Photo courtesy of Senior Airman Hailey R. Staker

Overall, the true moral question to this problem, is when will we as a society decide that enough is enough? To help put an end to the crisis, there needs to be more regulation, both on the streets, as well as in the pharmacies. Doctors will have to be more accountable in regards to looking up patient histories, and notifying other healthcare providers when there are red flags. Healthcare providers should be notified when a patient is doctor shopping, or going

from one doctor to another to get prescription opioids. Currently, there are organizations working tirelessly to get people off of the streets and into rehabilitation centers. Recognition, and most importantly, non glorification of the opioid crisis is finally making its way into mainstream media. These are trying times, and the epidemic may be at an all time high, but with the spread of awareness plus combined action, an end can be put to this crisis.

## To build or not to build: an examination of the proposed wall

By Austin Belcher  
Co-Editor

Recently, the United States was locked in a standstill as President Trump and House Democrats debated to pass a funding bill, a typically run of the mill process: the controversy emerges from the contents for funding of border security. The President and Republicans want the legislature to include 5.7 billion dollars in funding for a partial wall along the U.S - Mexico border. Trump is right, the southern border has proven to be extremely problematic for the United States, and a wall is ultimately the solution. The border is a place where laws truly don't apply, an area of no man's land between the U.S and it's southern counterpart, under the jurisdiction of the Mexican Cartel. The extended wall is not only to restrict to the passage of illegal immigrants into the United States, but to cut off the pipeline of illegal substances being trafficked between the nations. Between 2012 and 2015, close to four million pounds of narcotics were seized at ports of entry along the border, and just last month, the largest Fentanyl bust ever was made at an Arizona checkpoint, where border control agents seized 254 pounds of the sub-

stance hidden in a cucumber truck. Enough Fentanyl to kill 27 million Americans, as merely 2 milligrams can cause an overdose. A wall, coupled with more security agents and ports of entry, could drastically reduce the unchecked amount of lethal narcotics flowing into our nation. The Cartel has ran the southwest United States into oblivion, and contributed immensely to the national opioid epidemic and rampant waves of gang violence. In the last year, the crisis created by these addictive drugs rose to the number one killer in the United States, outpacing heart disease and car accidents. This has undoubtedly become a national security issue, and President Trump is well within his means to declare it an emergency and use funds to build the wall. Gangs like MS-13 are the main traffickers of humans, sex, and narcotics in border states, and their presence must cease to exist to create any sort of progress in the region. California and Texas report the highest levels of human trafficking, a factor contributed to by the open border, where traffickers can come and go as they please without any documentation. California has shot down any attempt the President has made to secure the border, and has been left to endure the humanitarian di-



President Trump standing in front of a prototype of his proposed wall plan giving a speech

Photo courtesy of Las Cruces Sun News

saster they created. 2.5 million illegals currently live in California, straining social resources while not putting into the system that provides for them. Millions of Americans feel their presence is no longer appreciated, they sense themselves becoming a minority in their own country, a major reason lead-

ing to the election of Donald Trump in 2016, a candidate strong on border security. The proposed wall is not about race, not about hate, and everything about safety. As the crisis continues, building the wall is in Trump's as well as the rest of the United States' best interest.

## Slum tourism: With many searching for a unique adventure, how far is too far?

By *Gavriel Curameng*  
Staff Writer

Most people depict a vacation as a relaxing trip to a resort or a theme park. Abroad trips may include visiting relatives and seeing the major cities in that country. But for some, a trip may include a visit to the impoverished districts of a country, called slum tourism. Slum tourism originated in London and New York as the wealthy would visit the “slums” to gain insight on how others live their lives. This industry soon expanded is now in many parts of the world, particularly third world countries such as Brazil, the Philippines, and India. Similar tours are also conducted in some parts of the United States, including New Orleans. These tours range in levels of activities, from walking tours to staying a night to truly experience “the slums”. However, slum tourism has sparked quite a debate over the century. Supporters claim it provides tourist a better understanding of poverty in the world. It debunks myths on impover-

ished areas. Tour guides also claim that the community being toured benefits, as some of the profits from the fee to be on the tour are given back to the people.

“Through our educational walking tours, visitors experience a wide range of these business activities: recycling, pottery-making, embroidery, bakery, soap factory, leather tanning, poppadom-making and many more” notes Reality Tours and Travel, a travel company giving tours to various parts of impoverished India. They state these are educational tours that help the residents, claiming to give eighty percent of the profits earned. These profits are given to their sister organization, Reality Gives. They have implemented a strict no photo policy.

Others claim that slum tourism is unethical. Some say these people are being exploited. Most of these tours do not directly benefit these communities, as they are there to simply visit the area and gain insight.

“Despite claims about the potential benefits of slum tours, research indicates that the majority of residents fail to share in the profits generated. Fur-



Photo courtesy of Hannah Reyes Morales of *National Geographic*

Pictured above are tourists taking photos at the slum as if it was a museum, which displays the unethical traits of slum tourism.

thermore, poorly run tours can add to social stereotypes and exacerbate the marginalization of slum areas and the people who live there” claims travel ethic’s group, Tourism Concern. They continue elaborating that profits given back to the community are hard to track. Many of these tours are conducted by outside businesses that claim most of the money from the tours. They also note that there is still a safety barrier from the tourist and the people they are viewing. Since tours are designed for

safety, a true experience may never actually occur on the trip.

“Despite sincere attempts by tour operators to mitigate offense and give back to locals, the impact of slum tourism stays isolated. Ghettoized communities remain woven into the fabric of major cities around the world” stated National Geographic. They also note that more and more travelers have the desire to adventure on trips that are unique to the tourist, and slum tourism fits this need. They also disprove the

“No-Photo” policy, showing that this rule is not always enforced.

Despite efforts to help the poor, slum tourism is not the solution to the growing problem of poverty. People are being treated like animals in a zoo for people to be viewed. These trips are to view people, not help build stable housing, a clean water supply, or provide food. This is not to discourage trips to help the poor, but trips to see the poor and do nothing to solve a problem like this.

### He Said, She Said: The Male vs Female Perspective

## Living in the #Me Too age: the fight to end silence

By *Max Knecht*  
Staff Writer

As a celebrity, you have an important role in today’s modern day world. Since your name is being spread all over television and news, you have to make yourself look as good as possible so you don’t lose your fame and fortune that you’ve worked hard for. Take musical icon Robert Kelly, better known by his stage name, R. Kelly for example. In the early 90s to mid 2000s, R. Kelly was labeled as a musical legend for creating incredible hit songs like “Ignition”, “I Believe I Can Fly”, and “Trapped in the Closet”. He is also responsible for creating some of the music industry’s most talented artists, like platinum recording artist, the late Aaliyah Haughton. At the time of his success, R. Kelly was known as one of the most inspiring artists in the game, but was also known for his dark sexual past that he tried to hide. Allegations for sexual assault were placed on Kelly from multiple women for several years, but for some reason, he was never found guilty, never punished, and at one point the world had forgotten how sick in the mind he really was, and still is. In July of 2018, Kelly released a single titled “I Admit

It” where he sings about denying all of the rumours about his sexual allegations. After this happened, the news of R. Kelly died down for a few months, until the end of December 2018 arrived and Lifetime released “Surviving R. Kelly,” a six part mini series detailing the sexual abuse allegations on the man himself.

And here we are in 2019; currently, R. Kelly is back in court for the allegations and is hoping that all of this just goes away. Kelly is one of many male celebrities who have been accused of some sort of sexual assault or harassment in the past three years. Because of this burst of men getting caught for doing dirty actions, strong women in America decided back in October of 2017 to begin the #MeToo movement, a social media hashtag that was popularized by actress Alyssa Milano when she retweeted a fan’s tweet discussing the use of the hashtag for victims of sexual assaults.

Now, being a male in this America, I can see being intimidated at some points. However, when I was younger, my parents taught me common sense, so I knew the difference between right and wrong. At an early age, you’re taught never to lay a hand on a woman with negative intentions,

so seeing all of these male celebrities who are supposedly our “role models” and “heroes”, make these choices has me thinking, “Did their dad not teach them, ‘don’t put your hand on a lady’, or even just common sense?”

There are men in this world who are actually stating that all of these allegations being thrown at these celebrities are “unfair”. When it comes to these men being accused of sexual assault, I see them as innocent until proven guilty. But that point of view can also change when you are being accused of it from several different people, as R. Kelly is.

The only solution I see for this sexual assault mess is if these guys get their act together by getting some professional help. Even if one hasn’t thought of or been caught doing something yet, they should also still educate themselves on how the law works.

By *Monique Willis*  
Staff Writer

A new buzz has come out known as the #MeToo movement. #MeToo is a movement where women stand up to unspoken sexual abuse; women expose their stories of experiencing sexual harassment & abuse. As the newly

released documentary TV series, “Surviving R. Kelly” has #MeToo flooding the internet from several social media outlets, there’s a lot of opinions and unanswered questions spouting all about.

The Me Too movement shines a light onto the horrible things men have done to women and gotten away with concerning sexual abuse and harassment. It’s simply amazing to see women standing together and understanding they don’t have to live with the weight of their experiences on their shoulders. It’s very encouraging to see women coming out of hiding and exposing the trauma they have suffered. It magnifies the true bravery and strength built inside women that men try to strip away. There is an overwhelming amount of cases where men get away with sexual abuse and harassment. #MeToo gives women a chance to open the eyes of the world and express the feelings and true hardships they undergo when dealing with sexual abuse and harassment. As #MeToo takes off, more and more women are beginning to expose the large base celebrities whose crimes have gone unpunished. It has become very easy to finger point and spirals into a follow the leader situation where it is popular to join in. But it might

just be taking away from the meaning women are trying to display. The movements big break happened after “Surviving R. Kelly” and this documentary is a perfect example for what I’m implying. The series shows several women coming out and speaking on the ways R. Kelly sexually abused and harassed them. Many question the truth of it all as there were so many women with similar situations all abused by the same man. It’s a very easy chance at attention when making these accusations. Are there women taking advantage of the movement and only seeking attention?

Overall, the #MeToo movement is very inspirational and brave. I definitely hope to see it continuing to flourish and help end the abuse. Women are making a voice for themselves and taking a stand against sexual abuse and harassment, acts that will never be acceptable. It’s always heartwarming to see people standing together to fix issues and flaws in society. Women are holding up a light that will shine brighter than all the mistreatment placed upon them by men throughout the world.

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## Choosing career over college

By *Viivi Kajula*  
Staff Writer

The last years of high school can be stressful for most seniors. Their schedules are filled with applications for schools and scholarships, standardized tests, campus visits, counselor meetings, and not to mention the countless essays and personal statements. However, all seniors seem to have one shared goal: holding the acceptance letter from their dream college in their hands. But even if it may seem common, going to college isn’t on everyone’s to-do list.

Brandon Prosser, a Liberty High School senior, is one these students. He has decided to pursue his music

career instead of attending college. He points out that “People who don’t know what they’re doing yet, often go to college, and then end up putting themselves in debt and don’t find what they wanted in the first place.” However, Brandon isn’t completely opposed to the idea, and he mentions that he’d possibly take classes related to his passion. “If I go to college, it’ll be strictly to help my career, otherwise I wouldn’t”, he concludes.

Brandon isn’t the only one to take this path. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 66.7% of 2017 high school graduates were enrolled in colleges or universities in October 2017. But surprisingly, not all of those who were enrolled will complete their education.

A California Competes report (2018) states that only 55% of California’s college students get their associate degrees in three years or bachelor’s degree in six years. Unfortunately, the ones to leave without a degree out are usually from first-generation or low-income families.

The teenagers who skip college are not taking their decision lightly. Many of them have solid plans for their future, and they know their goals can be achieved without a college degree. Brandon has already laid the foundation for his career by actively working on his music for the past few years. He’s determined to make money off of music through royalties, portions of ticket sales, as well as merchandise and

instrumental sales. “And if that doesn’t make enough to live off of, I’ll have a job to supplement it, so I can be able to invest back into my career”, Brandon explains. “College is viewed by some as the only way to success, but it’s really not”, he points out. “Anyone with an entrepreneurial mindset would agree”.

Choosing career over college may be frowned upon by parents, peers and teachers. Grandparents and neighbours might tell you that only a college degree will guarantee someone a job in the future. But there are many careers that don’t require one. Besides, as Brandon notes, “at the end of the day, following your gut and intuition is most important.”

### Editorial Policy

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The *Lion’s Roar* gladly welcomes letters to the editor; they will be edited for the linguistic accuracy, good taste, and space. They may be up to 400 words in length, and are due no later than three weeks before publication to [libertyslionsroar@gmail.com](mailto:libertyslionsroar@gmail.com). The *Lion’s Roar* staff reserves the right to adjust or reject letters to the editor for any reason.

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