

# IRON QUILL

IRONWOOD RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL | ORO VALLEY, AZ

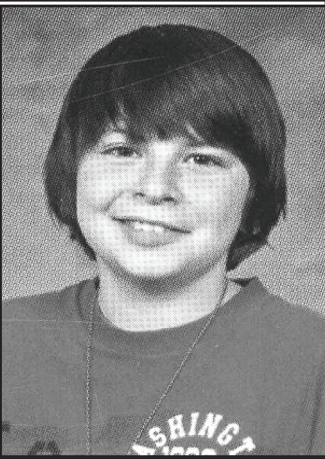
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## School shootings raise awareness, prompt walkout



Photos by Liliana Hererra  
Clockwise from top: 1) Students gathered at 10 a.m. in the front of the school on Mar. 14 for 17 minutes to participate in the nationwide school walkout in response to the Parkland, Florida shooting that claimed the lives of 17 students. 2) O'Connor's 2014-15 IRHS yearbook photo. 3) A student-made sign from the walk out encouraging students who can register to vote to make a difference in gun control laws.



Aubrey Pettitt / Liliana Herrera  
*Beginning Reporters*

In the midst of the country's attempt to get a grasp on the safety of the academic environment, Ironwood Ridge High School is taking a stand in order to protect the student body.

Due to the mass shootings in schools across the nation, leaders are looking at how they can ensure the safety of students and staff on campus.

Principal Natalie Burnett said that there are approximately 2,000 sets of eyes and ears on the seven acres that are Ironwood Ridge.

Burnett has considered securing gates and properties around campus, holding additional staff meetings and active shooter trainings.

As Ironwood Ridge is the only school in the Amphi District that does not have a perimeter fence, Burnett has requested the installation of one.

Regarding the safety of students, Burnett explained that every year, all employees are trained in an active shooter event by the Oro Valley Police Department, which includes handouts, questions and answers, information, common language and videos.

Presently, schools are required to have one fire drill a month and one lockdown drill a quarter.

Burnett clarified the different types of lockdowns. She explained that a yellow lockdown means the student body needs to stay put in a designated safe area in which the doors and windows are closed and locked.

This can be due to a swarm of bees or a sewage spill. A red lockdown is a life or death situation or an active threat, which can be called due to a threatening presence on campus.

Ironwood Ridge students practice lockdowns and fire drills regularly when students are in classes, but some question their effectiveness.

"Student wise, lockdowns and fire

drills aren't taken seriously. Most take it as a joke," said junior Ava Hanson.

A lockdown drill was scheduled to occur on Mar. 9 during the passing between second and third period. This type of drill, when students are moving to their next class between bells or are at lunch or conference periods, is not commonly practiced.

The student body was informed of the drill, but Burnett canceled it the morning of, in response to students and parents being on edge because of recent Parkland Shooting news.

The drill has yet to be rescheduled.

An active shooter drill is a new concept to Ironwood; it's something that the school has never done before.

Assistant Principal Brent Spencer described the new drill using a hypothetical situation. "[If] there's an active shooter on one part of campus, how should the rest of campus react? It's a judgment made by the classroom teacher as to what the best option is at that point. Is the best option to run, hide or fight?" asked Spencer.

Although a specific date is yet to be determined, the school does have "plans to practice an active shooter drill, which would look very different than a lockdown," said Spencer.

The school's priority of safety was brought to light in response to the number of mass shootings that have taken place on school campuses across the country. The Florida shooting in mid-Feb. is the one currently receiving the most media press.

On Feb. 14, 17 students were murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida by a former student. It was a tragedy that grabbed the world's attention, and most of all, brought awareness to this all too familiar and dangerous threat.

Students from Parkland have taken a stand for change and are actively working for the government to change

laws regarding guns. They have influenced other high school students to do the same.

This shooting, in addition to Sandy Hook, Columbine, and others, has made people question the safety of their own schools.

At Ironwood Ridge, officers are standing up, teachers are asking questions, and students are coming together to ensure safety.

On Mar. 14, at 10 a.m., approximately 400 Nighthawks gathered in respect for the victims of the Florida shooting in an organized national walk out. They stood on the sidewalk plaza in front of the school for 17 minutes to honor the 17 students who lost their lives. Administration supported the students who chose to walk out since the goal was to provide a safe and respectful environment for those who participated.

Originally, the student body planned to stand in the breezeway for 17 minutes in silence, but that was changed because it's "pretty unrealistic that all the kids would be quiet for 17 minutes, and the fact is, it wouldn't have been as powerful or meaningful as say, talking about what happened.

That's what the Parkland survivors wanted -- they wanted to talk about it, for kids to speak their minds," said junior Jonathan Pitts who read aloud the name and ages of all 17 victims in the Florida shooting.

Jasmine Drummer, senior, spoke about gun control issues and a friend of hers she tragically lost to gun violence.

"All of you coming today is proof that we can make a difference," said Drummer, during the walkout. "You're letting your voices be heard."

The walkout consisted of these speeches by students who volunteered and also contained a booth where students 18 years or older could register to vote during the 17 minutes.

Burnett explained how the school wanted "to support students and their choice on the 14th of March, to let them express their voice and feel their empowerment."

People hear about these terrifying situations and tragedies happening in places like Connecticut, Colorado and Florida, but no one ever believes it will happen at their own school or community.

Take ACES High School in Mukilteo, WA, for example.

Joshua O'Connor, a senior at that school, was arrested on Feb. 13, just a day before the Florida shooting. His grandmother found a journal filled with detailed plans of a school shooting and bombing, along with a semi-automatic rifle hidden in his guitar case.

Excerpts from his journal include O'Connor saying "I'm preparing myself for the school shooting. I can't wait. My aim has gotten so much more accurate...I can't wait to blow all those (expletive) away."

O'Connor is a former Nighthawk.

He attended Ironwood Ridge High School his sophomore year, but he transferred to the Mukilteo School District in Aug. of 2016.

Signs of a school shooter are not always obvious to other students or teachers.

"Josh was wonderful; he was a great kid. He was a little quiet, but I talked to him all the time," said CTE teacher Ryan Maish, who had O'Connor as a student in his digital media class during the 2014-15 year.

If the signs are not unclear, there is nothing that can be preventable, but Burnett stresses the importance of the concept, "If you see something, say something."

Students can use the anonymous tip line on the Ironwood Ridge Homepage to report any suspicious behaviors or concerns.

"We rather you report too much than not enough," said Officer Matt Roth, who is Ironwood's School Resource Officer (SRO). "You see a guy walking down the street with what you think is a gun, and it turns out to be a broom, great. I rather it be a broom 100% of the time. But that one time you hesitate to report something could be the wrong time not to."



Photo by Ryan Maish

Maddie Judge, sophomore, makes a good throw to first base after making a clean play at second during a home game against Catalina Foothills High School. The team went on to win the game 5-3 to add on to their season record of 16-2. They have played in two tournaments this season including the Dorado Classic and the Desert Mountain High School Tournament.

## From the Editor



**Karagan Knowles**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

For this issue, I want to talk about the power of social media, and more specifically, the power of the press and how it has given a voice that the previous generations have not had.

In this generation, most teenagers and adults get their facts from social and news media. It is how information is spread so quickly, and apparently how people in the federal government are now fired.

Social media might have been taken to a level of extreme viability if the President thinks that it is practical to fire his cabinet members over Twitter, but the point is, social media is everywhere, and every day new people join the movement.

In fact, there are around 700,000 people who join Facebook everyday. Social media is used to not only connect with family members who live elsewhere, but also to meet new people.

When I was accepted into Emerson College in Boston, I was immediately added to a Facebook chat room with other accepted students. This way we could get to know people in our majors and befriend others before the fall semester.

Social media has the power to bring people together that makes meeting them in person less awkward and prepares them for the future.

Social media provides a connection to the world around us as well as a way for people to stay involved in world issues. snapchat, Facebook. All these media sites are taking snippets from world news centers, like CNN or Fox, and educating others on what is going on.

With these internet tools completely at our disposal, the younger generation is becoming more involved in political and world affairs. We are the generation that is taking a stand and fighting for the change around us, and this is all possible because we have the ability to speak out with others who side with our views.

We are completely in tune with the news and what is currently happening in our country. We are informed of the power of protests and other students speaking out about change.

Most importantly, we are given the opportunity to make our own judgments on this information that is presented to us on a computer screen or television set.

The power of the press has been important to our constitution since the Bill of Rights was published by the framers of our country's guidelines in 1789.

The power of news media has not leveled; it has only become stronger and grown, just as the generations of people who care about our country has continued to grow.

It is social media that allows us to care about the future of the world, about politics, and about other people. The press has taken a new form, a form of social media, and a form that is readily available to people of all ages.

So enjoy your right to read the press, and our right to print this newspaper to the student body.

# Start, end time changing for 2018-19 school year



*Photo by Naseem Rezaei*

Students cross the bridge to get to their next class. The bell schedule will be changed for next year.

Naseem Rezaei  
*Beginning Reporter*

The bell schedule is changing again, and this will have a negative effect on athletes.

This year, classes run from 8:05 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. This bell schedule works well for athletes who have a 3 p.m. dismissal time as this allows them to make 4 p.m. home games with only missing the last 15 minutes of class. This was a great improvement over last year, when athletes were released at 3:35 p.m. for home games, but would miss 35 minutes of class because the school day ended at 3:35 p.m.

When athletes have away games, their dismissal times are even earlier, and they likely can miss as much as two full classes to travel across town or even to Phoenix. However, it looks like Ironwood Ridge will have a later start and release time again next year. One proposal has the day starting at 8:25 a.m. and ending at 3:35 p.m.

The reason for the change in the bell schedule is because of problems with the district transportation department. This department creates schedules for all the busses to pick up and drop off students, and they could not accommodate the new, earlier start time of Ironwood Ridge for this year. They calculate routes and times for all busses to all area schools, and they were unable to get all busses to school before the starting bell. They also had difficulty picking up students in a timely matter at the end of the school day.

The result was students being tardy to their classes regularly or arriving home later than usual after school.

"As we can tell, on a weekly basis, we have various buses late in the morning or late in the afternoon," said Principal Natalie Burnett. Burnett has been Ironwood's principal for four years.

To fix this problem, administration looked into changing the schedule for the 2018-19 school year and came up with the later start and ending times. It is their hope that the new schedule will decrease the amount of tardies of students taking the bus to school.

"I think that students won't be late to

class next year because of the extra time we will have," said sophomore Aubriana Borja. "I think that it depends with the buses though."

However, others believe that the tardies involved with the late buses will not improve.

Alex Prosen, sophomore who takes the bus, said, "I think that the buses will still be late next year because I was still late last year even with the later schedule."

There is still the concern about students missing a heavy amount of class time due to sports.

"Kids are missing a lot of class for sports which I think is a huge problem," said Peter Fletcher, freshman biology teacher. "They [administration] do not recognize how freshmen sometimes have a hard time with missing class time for sports."

Students are concerned about missing class time.

"Getting out later this year let's me go to class more and then go to a game," said sophomore volleyball player Andrea Vigil. "Getting out of class earlier next year for games will definitely affect this."

Students who miss class due to sports have to make up missed work during conference periods.

Along with the new starting and end times, many students are divided on their opinions over the new schedule.

Some students said they will enjoy the new starting and end times.

"I am okay with the new schedule we will be having next year. I think that the new schedule will give you more time to get to school in the morning," said Olivia Smarz, sophomore.

Others disagree.

"I don't think it will be beneficial for me because it will end up messing up my after school schedule," said Nydia León, sophomore.

A positive change on the schedule for many students is the reinstatement of conference period after both fall and winter breaks.

The only times where there will not be conference period is during the first two weeks of the school year and the Wednesday's before Thanksgiving and Rodeo breaks.

## Police Beat

Sean O'Meara  
*Entertainment Editor*

**Feb. 14**

A junior boy was arrested after being found to be in possession of Fireball Whiskey after attempting to conceal it under the desk of Secretary Bonny McGann while waiting to see Assistant Principal Spencer. The student was later released to his mother.

**Feb. 14**

A junior boy was spotted by a parent driving recklessly. The boy was later fined for weaving in and out of traffic and moving at a high rate of speed.

**Feb. 15**

A junior girl was transported to the hospital after consuming too many prescription pills.

**Feb. 16**

A student was reported making threats to the school in an online videogame. The threats were later revealed to pertain only to the videogame and not Ironwood. No charges were filed.

**Mar. 13**

A citizen of Oro Valley reported that three young girls were hitchhiking along Naranja and La Cholla. The two freshmen and one sophomore were identified as Ironwood students and were returned to the school. Discipline was handled by school administration.

**Mar. 14**

An older man was spotted trespassing and taking pictures of the student walkout. He was discovered to have no affiliation with the school or media, and was told to leave the premises.

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### Policy Statement

Published six times a year, the student newspaper of Ironwood Ridge High School is a public forum, with its student editorial board making all decisions concerning its contents. Unsigned editorials express the views of the majority of the editorial board and not necessarily that of administration. Letters to the editor are welcomed and will be published as space allows. Letters must be signed, although the staff may withhold the name on request. The paper also reserves the right to edit letters for grammar and clarity. All the letters are subject to laws governing obscenity, libel, privacy and disruption of the school process, as are all contents of the paper. Opinions in letters do not necessarily represent those of the staff, nor should an opinion expressed in a public forum, be constructed as the opinion or policy of the administration, unless so attributed. All letters should be delivered to the Journalism mailbox in the administration building or dropped off at room E103 during the school day.

# Student gives voice to those with special needs



Photo by Jillian Watkins

Clockwise: McKayla Otuafi, Pratt Ferguson, Karyssa Quintana, and Bella Santavicca. Trailblazer Katie Pratt Ferguson is leading her classmates to inclusivity by working with Student Government. She has already started making waves of change but is determined to do more.

Taylor Ernzen  
Business Editor

If you know her, you know it's impossible to not smile at her bright spirit and infectious personality. You may hear her on the announcements, have her in your class, or even see her while walking in the breezeway. Katie Pratt Ferguson, senior, is a star on the rise, and she has big plans working with StuGo under a pilot program sponsored by Special Olympics.

Special Olympics is the largest organization in the world for children and adults with mental and physical disabilities. This year they reached out to Samantha Burgin, Special Education teacher and StuGo adviser to pilot a program to create a voice for students with disabilities.

"Right away we thought of Katie," said Jillian Watkins, special education teacher, who is Katie's advocate. "We thought of her personality and how she has prior experience. She has made a speech to the mayor and has gone to the town council to make a speech about

inclusivity."

After being chosen by her class, Katie transferred into the StuGo class and has been working with them since the beginning of second semester. She is working to have it become part of the culture for students with disabilities to have a voice and giving them a place to start.

"We wanted to do something with special needs since they should have an input in what we do," said StuGo member McKayla Otuafi, "She's brought in diversity, and a lot of students are able to get closer and comfortable [with students who have special needs], so they're better leaders overall."

In the short time she's been working with StuGo, Pratt Ferguson has co-planned events with her fellow students, helped make posters, counted votes, and to help give a new perspective.

"I am having fun and I am excited," said Pratt Ferguson, "Now I am here, I want people to support my fellow StuGo [members]. It's pretty fun and we do everything."

# Horoscopes offer insight

Kat Tarro  
Assistant Editor

**Aries:** Mar. 21 to Apr. 19

You love the people you surround yourself with and would do anything for them. However, remember to make time for yourself. Your happiness comes first, always. Self care is critical.

**Taurus:** Apr. 20 to May 20

You know that haircut you've been considering getting for a while, or that person you've been wanting to introduce yourself to? Do it. Take the risks you normally wouldn't; it could pay off in your favor.

**Gemini:** May 21 to June 20

Your stress levels might be at an all time high, but just take a step back and remember to breathe. Everything will be okay, as long as you let it be. Take a deep breath, and let everything pass.

**Cancer:** June 21 to July 22

If you've been feeling a little out of it lately, things are looking up. Whatever has been bothering you will pass, and great things lie ahead!

**Leo:** July 23 to Aug. 22

Remember that you are important, valued, and loved by your friends and family. You do so much to improve the lives of those around you, and people appreciate that. Never stop being you.

**Virgo:** Aug. 23 to Sept. 22

Your bubbly personality is enviable. Look out for new people and opportunities coming your way, and take risks you normally wouldn't. You might be surprised at the payoff.

**Libra:** Sept. 23 to Oct. 22

Remember to relax and take some time for yourself; the world isn't going to end if you don't get that whole list of things done right this second. Don't overwhelm yourself.

**Scorpio:** Oct. 23 to Nov. 21

Focus on the people who surround you rather than the material items. Relationships are the most valuable part of life, and you've got to treasure them.

**Sagittarius:** Nov. 22 to Dec. 21

You're inclined to enjoy some time to yourself these days. Take a break from the routine; you know that you truly do need it.

**Capricorn:** Dec. 22 to Jan. 19

Your confidence is admirable, but remember not to be too headstrong in your actions. You aren't always right, and getting all the sides to a story is always crucial. Try to be fair in your judgement.

**Aquarius:** Jan. 20 to Feb. 18

Change can be a scary thing, but sometimes it is exactly what you need. Switch everything up a bit; you might be surprised at the effect it has.

**Pisces:** Feb. 19 to Mar. 20

Your free time is being spent in a rather lackluster way. Try taking up a new hobby rather than wasting away on the couch. You never know where your talents lie, and self-expression is one of the best ways to care for yourself.

# Promises of 'Diamonds Galore' entice this year's prom attendees

Cayla Santos  
Beginning Reporter

When a student is old enough to look back on their high school years, prom will be one of those special moments.

This year, the Ridge will be hosting prom at the El Conquistador Resort on Apr. 21 from 8 p.m to midnight.

"I'm excited to get dressed up with my friends and enjoy the night," said junior Diana Nisbett. "The location is going to be so pretty, and I can already tell it's going to be a really fun night."

During these four hours, there will be a DJ and refreshments provided by Student Government, and there will be a photobooth to take pictures.

Kevina Collins, junior, said, "I'm mostly excited to see my date dressed up."

The theme this year will be "Diamonds Galore," and the decorations will be "blingy and sparkly" according to Samantha Burgin, StuGo adviser.

Evan Gilbert, junior, said, "I'm excited to go and have a fun time by myself."

Prior to prom, students will make their nominations for Prom King, Queen, Prince, and Princess. Nominees will be posted online for the students



to see, and voting will take place at prom. At the dance, students will place their vote in the jar of the appropriate nominee. Jars will be available until 10:15 p.m., and the winners will be announced soon thereafter.

Dress code for prom is formal, students but must stay within school dress code. There will be no drugs or alcohol allowed on the premises, and the Oro Valley Police and Ironwood's SROs will be there to maintain the safety of the night.

"It's my last year in high school, so I want to enjoy my last prom with a great girl by my side, and with everyone else in my class to make it memorable," said senior Brayden Smith.

Tickets are on sale at the bookstore with a student ID for \$45 and will increase \$5 a week until Apr. 20 when the price will be \$55.

# Dancing to the beat of their own drum



Photo Courtesy Stephanie Welch

The indoor percussion group practices for their show *Boxed In*, for which they have received awards. As they prepare for competition, they stand in formation and in tune with their song.

Emily McDonald  
Beginning Reporter

Music fills the air, and students from all over Arizona gather for once cause: to change the standards of music and performing.

In music, there are many different types of performances. Everyone knows the classic concert band: woodwinds, brass, and percussion all coming together to make sweet music.

A lesser known form of music is marching band. Marching band is the same as concert band, but the musicians are joined with the color guard who provides visual aids on the football field. Concert percussion is basically concert band but only with the percussionists.

"Concert percussion is an older, less experimental type of ensemble. Indoor Drumline is more focused on making a big picture ensemble," said Damon Knepper, band director.

Indoor Percussion is an ensemble of students who specialize in one percussion instrument. Each member has to audition to be in the group, and each artist comes together to put on a show with a theme. They perform their show at competitions around the state.

Rehearsals for indoor vary depending on if it's a show week. During a non-show week, the performers usually rehearse 6-10 hours. On a show week, they rehearse at least 10 hours.

"We put so much time into indoor, and the overall outcome is always so incredible and outstanding. It is honestly worth every minute," said junior Jana Welch, who plays the bass drum.

There are three divisions of indoor nationally: Scholastic A, Scholastic

Open, and Scholastic World. Scholastic A is the smallest division nationally, yet in Arizona, there are smaller subdivisions. Ironwood is in Scholastic A both last year and this year.

"We are in a larger division this year, and we are competing against the top groups in the state," said Knepper.

The group goes to competitions where they are judged based on music, visual, and general effect. Each category is worth one-third of the score, which is out of 100. Everything is averaged out, and that is the score they receive.

In the music category, judges are looking for how well everyone plays together, their expressiveness, and the artists' maturity. For visual, they are judged on technique, basic ballet, posture, and poise.

General effect is a little different since it is broken up into two subcategories: music and visual. The music must be effective in establishing their point, while in the visual, they must be trying their hardest to ensure that their point comes across.

The competitions are held at different high schools and venues. All of the students gather into a bus and head to the venue where the competition is being held. This year, drumline's first competition was at Perry High School in Gilbert, and the team of artists received a 68.9. On Mar. 10, at the Percussion Focus Show at Mesquite High School, Ironwood scored 81.55.

The last performance will be Apr. 6-7 at the ASU Wells Fargo Arena.

"We are more focused on making a big picture ensemble rather than in concert percussion where it's generally self-centered," said Knepper.

# Last all-school musical of the year successful

Larsen Riley  
Beginning Reporter

The drama department has done it again.

With another energized musical, they brought their latest production, "Crazy For You," to the stage in front of approximately 400 people each night, which featured a different cast of talented students.

"This show was *crazy for all of us*, and we had a blast," said Jackson Huffman, sophomore, who played a goofy cowboy named Moose.

The story revolves around Bobby, a banker and wanna-be dancer (senior Danny Fapp/junior Conner Taylor) who travels to Deadrock, Nevada with the intent to foreclose a run-down theater. Here he meets the love of his life, Polly Baker (junior Chloe Elmer/junior Elizah Knight) who fights to keep the theater open and preserve the memory of her late mother.

Polly is the only woman living in Deadrock and has no intent of marrying anyone in town.

After finding out Bobby was working for his mother's bank, Polly denies his affections for her.

He decides the only way to her heart is by portraying the famous theater owner Bela Zangler (senior Tristan Gabriel) and uses this new identity to aid in Polly in saving the theater.

"I think the choreography all came

together in the end, and it was just stunning to see it all work out the way it did," said Taylor.

The audience's overall reaction to the show was positive. On Friday night, the cast received a standing ovation from the crowd.

"The show had amazing energy from both audience and actors," said Olivia Potter, freshman.

This musical featured tap numbers choreographed by Dickson and Knight.

Dickson was helped by Analiese Bloom, junior, who student-directed the show.

Music was done by AJ Lepore, choir teacher, and Mark Pincus, biotechnology teacher, who handled most of the technical elements with the parent volunteers.

Production lasted over two months, with two-hour daily rehearsals. During tech and show week, rehearsal were four hours a day and on Saturdays.

Students in the technical theater program helped with fast set changes, sound, lights, and rails (curtains).

A total of 12 students called 'techies' handled the technical aspects of the show, and all crew members worked together in order to pull off a seamless show for the school community.

"A lot of people don't realize that some of the behind-the-scenes aspects of this show had a lot of actors help move sets," said sophomore Ashley Horger, sound operator.



Photo courtesy Ashley Horger  
The cast and crew of the musical *Crazy For You* pose after their last show. Bringing in a crowd of nearly 400 people nightly, this show closed the final playbill for seniors.

A great deal of hard work went into the second to last production of the season, which ran Mar. 8-10.

"The audience responded very well to the show. They were super impressed by all of the tap and how much work had been put into it and really enjoyed it," said Dickson.

This all-school musical was special because it was the last time all these actors performed together on stage.

The group of students really connected throughout the year, which made the finale of this musical all the more difficult.

For several seniors, it was their last high school performance.

Andrew Colby, senior, assistant stage manager who also ran the curtains

for "Crazy For You," said, "The last night before the show, the seniors said final, encouraging messages to the underclassmen. For the cast, it was a very emotional time since it was like saying an early goodbye. For me, personally I have been working with the drama program for the past four years, and it was hard looking at people in the eye as I gave them my final message.

"I made a lot of friends over the years, and I'm very proud of all those who are graduating and sad to leave others behind as we go our separate ways. My last words to those who are staying is to finish high school and make the most of it; never forget the family you have created here," continued Colby.



Photo courtesy Chris Childress  
Left to Right: Cellists Shola Abanish, Ola Abanish, both seniors, and Caven Jackson, junior, perform in the auditorium. They played baroque and modern songs throughout the concert.

## Showcasing orchestra students

Joann Chang  
Beginning Reporter

Twenty nine orchestra students.  
An audience of 100 people.  
A 35-minute long concert.  
And it all started at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Damon Knepper conducted the performance by the orchestra students who practiced daily for the past three months.

This is Knepper's second year teaching orchestra, guitar, and music and recording technology, and he and his students have put time and effort into this show.

Knepper said, "I am incredibly proud. This is one of the strongest orchestras I ever had a chance to work with."

Before the Mar. 13 orchestra concert, the students competed in an Area Concert Festival held at Catalina Foothills on Mar. 7.

They performed three songs for the judges and earned marks of 'excellent,' which is the second highest ranking.

Since the orchestra qualified for state, they will perform in Chandler on Apr. 24.

Most concerts include other performing groups such as band, guitar, and choir. However this concert was special because it was only the orchestra.

Concerts with other performing groups can be very time consuming; therefore, this was concert shortened to half an hour.

This is the reason why Knepper

chose to create a concert consisting of only orchestra, so the focus would be on this hard working group of students.

Knepper said, "It was the best performance I've ever had."

The orchestra performed several songs of different genres including, Tocata, a 17th century baroque style song, Bach Chorale, an 18th century song that is also Baroque, and Arlington Sketches and Slumber Music which are both modern songs.

Knepper chose these specific songs because he wanted a strong balance of different genres, including contemporary music.

This kind of mixture requires the performers to play something different while incorporating different techniques and approaches.

Knepper said, "It's a very healthy mix for the audience as well for performers."

While this concert was enjoyed by family and friends, it was also a learning assessment for the orchestra students.

The concert determined how much the students learned during the past quarter. Knepper added that the students were co

ntrolled and mature throughout the concert, and their sound and tune quality was very high.

Sophomore Averi Ellis, cello player, said, "I think personally, the concert was a lot better than the festival."

The last two orchestra shows of the year will be Apr. 13 and May 4.

## Time to chose the perfect college

Sydney Snyder  
Beginning Reporter

"What am I going to do after high school?"

This is a familiar question most high schoolers will ask themselves at some point or another throughout their four years in high school.

Visiting colleges can be very expensive, not to mention time consuming. But how is a student supposed to know which should fit for them?

A college fair is the answer.

The Rocky Mountain Association for College Admissions Counseling, or RMACAC, has planned a college fair for students who want to explore their options as far as college is concerned.

The RMACAC administrators have made a point to focus on Western schools in the United States.

"The college fair set up is an opportunity to gather information from colleges directly," said Amy Davidson, counselor.

The college fair will be held at The Gregory School on Apr. 28 from 1-3 p.m. where over 60 schools will be present to answer questions and introduce students to their school.

While students are not required to bring any supplies to the fair, they should come with an open mind and be ready to ask questions.

"Going to the college fair will give a broad exposure to different types of

teaching from the college representatives," said David Goldberg, counselor.

Admission is free and the fair is open to students all ages.

Colleges that will be attending include: Pima, University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Pepperdine, Grand Canyon University and others.

RMACAC has been around for over 25 years, and their spring college fair attracts 2,000-3,000 students annually.

Although admission is free to the college fair for students and their parents, students planning to attend are encouraged to pre-register for the event because it may speed up the initial process while trying to enter the college fair.

High school is filled with opportunities that can be easily accessed when using available resources.

This will help students to narrow down which college will be a good fit for them.

"I really want to check out some colleges closer to Phoenix or even up north towards Flagstaff," said Kailee Villanueva, junior.

Choosing the perfect college can be complicated, and going to the college fair is a great way to get information and explore different opportunities from the college before attending.

"I am looking forward to going to the college fair in April. I really would like to check out my options," said Kayla Logue, junior.



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# More teens turn to drugs to cope with pressures of life

Elaiah Maynes  
Beginning Reporter

Vaping, smoking and consumption of alcohol among teenagers is an epidemic that has grown tremendously over the years.

However, teens are not just engaging in these activities for fun with their friends at parties.

Today's teens are using drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with everyday struggles.

School and life can be very difficult for today's teenagers. Many are struggling with grades and school, broken homes, fighting parents and siblings, depression and anxiety, problems with friends, bullying, identity issues, fitting in, insecurities and low self-esteem.

Many are turning to drugs and alcohol to self-medicate in order to deal with their lives.

It has become relatively easy for high school students to get these items, and some students use them daily.

Some students use drugs and alcohol to help them relieve their anxiety, depression, and emotional problems.

However, teenagers who feel the need to ingest, smoke or inject something into their body to cope

with the realities of life is extremely unhealthy.

Using these substances is particularly bad for children or teens whose bodies and brains are still growing and developing. Illegal drugs can damage the brain, heart, and other important organs.

Cocaine, for instance, can cause a heart attack — even in a teen or child.

Many drugs can cause liver damage, make the body unable to fight off infection, cause the heart to beat too fast, or raise the body's temperature high enough to damage the brain, cause a stroke, and even result in death.

Unfortunately, a person in pain may not look at these factors as they try to cope with the issues in their life.

A freshmen student who wishes to remain anonymous said, "When I smoke [marijuana], I don't think about the bad things that happened that day or that my dad is sick. It just gives me a way to escape."

There are many healthier ways for teenagers to deal with isolation or anxiety problems with school or home, but many of these young teens do not see any other forms of managing their emotions.

The difficulties of handling home and school work can take a lot out of a

child.

Many studies show that anxiety among teenagers has significantly increased over the past several decades.

David Goldberg, counselor, said, "Coping mechanisms are best dealt with counseling, being with friends, participating in the community meaningfully, and [other] events.

Coping is also best done with finding activities that kids are interested in to distract them and make them happy."

Linda Alvarez, school nurse, is concerned about teens abusing chemicals as coping mechanisms.

"It's a really bad choice because it never solves the problems, and healthier mechanisms are exercise or talking to someone because then you may solve the problem."

Young adults don't understand the true consequences to these actions. Not only is vaping, drinking and smoking marijuana bad for the health, but it is illegal and there are real punishments like jail or prison.

Approximately 50.1 percent of inmates currently in federal prison are there for drug offenses, according to an infographic recently released by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Students can make an important difference with their peers at school.



Photo Courtesy [www.thefix.com](http://www.thefix.com)

Pain pills are prominent in the lives of those who feel pressured, stressed, or are recovering from an injury. These medications can ultimately cause liver, heart, and brain damage.

Goldberg said, "What we need to do as a school is to have a student driven SADD chapter (Students Against Destructive Decisions) where students bring awareness to their peers in a positive and affirming way."

Schools could also provide more resources for students who are in crisis.

Alvarez said the addition of a social worker to the school's staff would be beneficial because "when the counselors are busy, we don't really have another person who can just sit and talk with people and help them figure out an issue."

## Common characteristics identified among high profile school shooters

People can reach out, help others through difficult times

Emily McDonald  
Beginning Reporter

Imagine this: you're in your third period class when you hear a POP, POP, POP.

You run outside the classroom to witness bullets whizzing through the air and terror filling the school.

The school is now in lockdown.

Unfortunately, this hypothetical has been a reality for students and schools all over the United States.

What can be done to prevent this from happening?

School shootings have been a huge topic of discussion inside and outside of the school walls.

The increase in shootings since the start of 2018 has left the public and media buzzing.

Yet, a common trend within the shooters can be found.

Many offenders have been identified as suffering from stressors.

"Of the 68 shooters, 91% showed some signs of stress before they killed. In psychology, 'stress' means that they demonstrated behavior that other people saw as disturbing, strange, or dangerous," said Anne Fitzsimmons, psychology teacher.

Some examples of "stresses" are neglect, abuse, household history of mental illness, and bullying.

These conditions can negatively affect one's self esteem, mental health, and physical health.

When a person is feeling these negative emotions, they show these signs in their everyday life.

If someone is isolated, has emotional outbursts, or shows violent tendencies, they could be at risk.

"If you see something, say something," said Ellisa Beamish, counselor.

This is a very important saying that has been flooding schools.

One of the best ways to prevent a tragedy like this from happening is to address one's issues before they get out

of control.

Help is always available to students at Ironwood Ridge; there is always a trusted adult one can talk to.

Also, there is an anonymous tip line for reporting people who may be at risk.

Coping mechanisms are important for all people.

Exercise, talking to a trusted person, and finding a creative outlet are all healthy coping mechanisms anyone can use.

Drawing, singing, playing an instrument, and writing are just a few of the different activities one can put their negative energy into.

According to David Goldberg, school counselor, when someone is seen as unstable, they can be sent to the emergency room with a parent or guardian.

From there, if they are a "Danger to Self" or a "Danger to Others," they are sent to Northwest Hospital.

If a mental illness is not treated, the untreated person can erupt in a violent outburst.

This is only the case when the person has a mental illness with violent tendencies.

Just because someone has a mental illness does not mean they will become a school shooter. These people just may be at risk.

If individuals are to properly deal with these common day stressors and get people the help they need, then society may be able to avoid these violent urges within people.

It can be preventable.

Fitzsimmons said, "Since we know that many of the shooters felt isolated or left-out in their workplaces, homes or schools, I think [people] might not realize how powerful [their] young voices can be.

"Say hi to 17 people you don't know and engage them in a short conversation. Ask them about their day, or ask a question that requires more than a yes or no answer and then listen," continued Fitzsimmons.

## Drug, lacing overdoses on the rise among teens

Taylor Ernzen  
Business Editor

It's the classic scene of a teen party. Dancing, red solo cups littering the floor, the cute student looking at you from across the room.

Then, someone starts passing around a little pill.

Suddenly the party has become a dangerous crime scene, and anyone who takes them could be a victim of drug-lacing.

Drugs continue to be a problem among teenagers, but what many teens may not realize is the potential of lacing that raises the stakes and can lead to accidental overdosing and possible death.

"I think it's a big issue, and there's no difference in grade level," said Isa Russell, junior. "People don't understand how bad they [drugs] are, and the affects they can have on your life."

Drugs can be cut with different substances such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and fentanyl.

Fentanyl especially is 1000 times stronger than morphine, and as much as two salts can be fatal.

"Depending on if they knew what they were buying or unintentionally, they are used to using a certain amount," said School Resource Officer (SRO) Bryan Carr.

"The brain will tell them to keep going, and if they take something laced, then a number of things can happen. Cardiac arrest is most common, but ultimately it can lead to an accidental overdose," continued Carr.

Rohypnol, known as the date-rape pill, e-cigs with oil or wax, and even marijuana brownies are considered forms of lacing since the potency is much higher.

Even opioids, which have become an epidemic in the United States, are considered to be a lethal painkiller.

In the Oct. 17, 2017 article "Drug Overdoses Killed More Americans Last Year Than The Vietnam War," by Ashley Welch, CBS reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that 64,070 people died of overdose in 2016.

This is a 21% increase since 2015.

Even if the lacing does not kill the participant, it can still have unforeseen consequences on drug addiction and the future of the recipient.

Arrest, loss of health, and an eradication of a social life are just a few of the side effects of drug addiction.

"Prescription pills, capsules, crushed or snorted - no matter how it is taken, it can lead to horrible effects. You can be sexually assaulted, robbed, or even killed," said Carr. "You don't know what you'll get. It's just a never-ending cycle of drugs."

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# How Safe Do Students Feel At Ironwood Ridge?



**Jon Bartolic**  
Senior

"Ironwood Ridge I feel is a pretty safe school. Oro Valley is one of the safest cities in Arizona; we don't get too many threats, and it's a pretty small town. It's probably one of the safest schools here."



**Jasmine Pallanes**  
Freshman

"Overall I feel safe. I think I'll feel safe as long as there isn't an immediate threat on campus."



**Tiffany Felix**  
Freshman

"In general, I feel pretty safe around campus. I do think that there could be more safety precautions to keep us safer."



**Nyala Franklin**  
Junior

"I feel pretty safe. The hallways of this school just give me a sense of safety like everything will be fine. Anytime I see the officers, I feel safer, too."



**Cody Velarde**  
Sophomore

"I feel safe here because not only do we have two SROs on campus, but there is a police station right down the street. I don't think anyone is dumb enough to try to do anything here."



**David Nelson**  
Sophomore

"I feel pretty safe here. I've never really had any reason to feel threatened. Plus, I feel like at least some teachers are prepared to do whatever's necessary to keep us safe."



**Trevin Tate**  
Sophomore

"I feel pretty safe here. We do have the police on campus and the police station isn't too far away. I think the cops would be able to respond pretty quickly to any threat we call in."



**Emily Baks**  
Senior

"I've never had any reason to feel in danger at this school. I've gone here all my life, and I've always felt safe."



**Chris Kelly**  
Senior

"I mean I don't really think about how safe I feel because there's never really a threat to us."



**Mason Edwards**  
Senior

"I feel safe here, but school shootings aren't a thing you feel coming on. I'd be willing to bet the students who have died in school shootings felt pretty safe as well."



**Josue Chavez**  
Junior

"I feel relatively safe at Ironwood. We have pretty good security, and the teachers have been good about training students. If anything were to happen, I think we would know what to do."



**Anthony Sciannameo**  
Junior

"I feel pretty fine. I have never really interacted with anyone not being cool or just being mean for no reason."

# What Do Nighthawks Think About School Walkout?

**Sabrina Liu,**  
Sophomore



"I think that administration made a good decision to both support staying in class and walking out because this issue is obviously very polarized and controversial. The people that spoke outside were amazing, and it was just a really good 17 minutes to honor our fellow students."

**Sean Turecek**  
Sophomore



"There was a lot of people who didn't care and messed around the entire time. It was disrespectful to the cause. There were a lot of ways that it could have been handled better, but not all of them would work."

**Talie Taylor**  
Junior



"I think the walkout was handled well by administration, but I think the students had the wrong idea about it. It just seemed like most of them didn't understand the true meaning of the walkout. A lot of people seemed to just treat it as free time to be social."

**Sydney Cote,**  
Sophomore

"I think the walkout was handled pretty nicely. Administration was also very respectful of students' decisions on whether or not to participate."



**Taite Moralee,**  
Junior



"To me, the walkout was surprisingly organized. I expected there to be a lot more resistance from teachers wanting students to stay in class, but there didn't seem to be any. A lot of teachers actually seemed to support and encourage students to walk out."

**Levi White**  
Junior

"I actually didn't go. Other people made it seem like a protest, and I didn't want to protest."

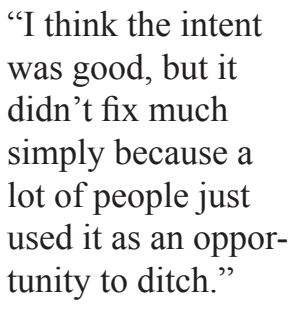


**Chandler Rhodes**  
Sophomore



"I think that it was handled alright; there were a lot of people that were talking, so I felt that it was a little disrespectful. The best parts of it were the speeches and the moments of silence for the victims of the Parkland shooting."

**Ulan Luna**  
Freshman



"I think the intent was good, but it didn't fix much simply because a lot of people just used it as an opportunity to ditch."



**Alex Kowalewski**  
Senior



"I think the people that were asked or chose to speak did so very well. The speeches were all very touching, but unfortunately quite a few people weren't nearly as respectful as they should have been."

**Lindsay Ranta**  
Senior

"I thought it was well done. The speeches helped make it serious and helped get the point across. Listing the names of the victims made it really important."



**Jacob Malanado**  
Freshman



"Although I didn't attend the walkout, it seemed like a pretty good idea. There didn't seem like there were enough teachers acknowledging it. Also, most people just took it as an opportunity to miss class."

**Mikayla Peterson**  
Senior

"I think it went very well. People were really respectful of the location and other students, and I was really proud of what took place."



# What Should Congress Do About Gun Laws?



**Alejandra Delgadillo**  
Sophomore

"Congress needs to be more careful about who can have access to guns and needs to put further emphasis on background checks, especially as they pertain to mental health."



**Bethany Felix**  
Sophomore

"I think they should make gun control a little more strict. You should need a license to sell a gun of any kind. We need to lower the likelihood of people with bad intentions attaining them."



**Savanna Cooper**  
Junior

"I don't think congress should do anything about gun laws. People who kill others have destroyed our privileges to own guns. People who hunt have to give up their passion in order for people to think that the country is being kept safe, and that's really sad."



**David Ramirez**  
Junior

"Congress should enforce gun laws and have background checks."



**Savannah Griensted**  
Sophomore

"I think Congress should background check individuals who are interested in having guns. However, considering it's America's Second Amendment right to 'bear arms,' guns should not become illegal."



**Shawn Melonis**  
Sophomore

"Nothing, other than make it harder to obtain a gun and make some things illegal."



**Matt Cappelli**  
Junior

"I believe that strict background checks should be imposed, as well as banning assault and automatic weapons. Mental evaluations should also be insituted."



**Caden Skinner**  
Freshman

"They have not done enough; I think Congress needs to enforce stricter gun laws and make them harder to buy."



**MacKenzie Kopf**  
Freshman

"Congress should strengthen the gun laws by doing really good background checks. They should only allow pistols and shotguns for a regular background check without having to get a medical background check."



**Reese Holloway**  
Senior

"I think they should change the law so you have to be older to buy guns, and more restricted rules as far as buying them. For example, how easy it is for people to get guns illegally needs to change"



**Brandon Esbit**  
Junior

"There are so many ways a person can get a gun. If you put stronger laws on gun control, there is still the black market where they can get guns. Gun safety is what people should focus on -- like alarms at school and more officers on campus -- it's all about funding and money."



**Jose Barreto**  
Freshman

"They should enforce gun laws by having people take a training course and be monitored by going to a government office every few months or so to show they are still capable of having a gun. If someone does something wrong with gun, it should oonly effect them and not everyone around them."

# How Can Violence In Schools Be Decreased?

**Josh Norris, Sophomore**



"I feel like the violence in schools could be decreased by adding more security or adding substations instead of having substations in other places. A school as a substation would be safer because it is more protected. A substation is a small police station where police officers fill out paperwork, take a break, or eat their lunch."

**Luciano Dagnillo, Sophomore**



"We can be nice to all kids and do everything in our power to prevent bullying or discrimination of any kind. Promoting kindness is something we have a can be nice to all kids and do everything in our power to prevent bullying or discrimination of any kind. Promoting kindness is something we have a real responsibility to do."

**Chris Johnson, Junior**



"Violence in schools could be decreased by having more School Resource Officers and arming the monitors."

**Lauren Barberii, Freshman**

"We aren't going to be able to control gun violence by taking guns away or making them illegal. We need to figure out how to support students emotionally so they don't feel like it is a last resort. One way is by hiring more SROs, counselors, and school psychologists. Supporting every student can ensure the safety of the entire school. This will demand an investment of time and money, but students are worth it."



**Evan Martin, Sophomore**



"I think that we can increase the amount of people that are in the security teams at our schools."

**Shane Erickson, Sophomore**

"I think we should spread awareness about people's situations, and what you should and should not say to others."



**Carson Hughs, Junior**



"We can try to be nicer to others even though that's really cliché. But try not to judge people as much as we do. And live by the one saying 'if you don't have something nice to say, then don't say anything at all.'"

**Alicia Cordova, Freshman**



"It's more of an awareness of what's going on around you, instead of just watching it pass by. When people talk behind each other's backs, drama builds up and people really don't understand the impact of that. Better security would help as well, but our school has a pretty open campus, so that's a bit more difficult."

**Cristina Rivera-Torres, Junior**



"As individuals, I don't think we can decrease violence in schools until we take the role ourselves as being more benevolent humans and adopting a more peace-driven mindset. It starts with small steps, and it's an active effort to be forgiving and move forward from there."

**Kiana Chan, Junior**

"That's a pretty difficult question to answer. I believe that there is always going to be violence that will go on in schools. There isn't really a way to stop it; it's just a part of the world around us now."



**Esteban Gamon, Senior**



"The issue is that people think that the main concerns are people who are bullied, but it's not just them. It's the kids who are facing mental issues, and we have to take that into account. Administration and teachers are very apathetic towards mental disorders. There needs to be more understanding. Plain and simple: just be kind."

**Zoe Karl, Junior**

"Is there really that much violence here at Ironwood? I don't really think it is an issue at our school."



# Exchange student experiences America

Henry Erichs  
Beginning Reporter

Wanting to get the American high school experience, Frida Thomsen left her home country of Denmark to attend Ironwood as an exchange student.

Every year, students from all over the world leave schools in their home country to go abroad for a semester or an entire academic year.

They are hosted by families that apply to give these students, who leave their familiar environments and families, the opportunity to experience culture, community, and be an active member of a different family and society.

Ironwood has several students this year that did exactly that.

Thomsen, junior, from the town of Frørup, Denmark came here in August and lives with her American family.

The family she is staying with volunteered to host an exchange student and got paired with Thomsen.

Terri Amonson, assistant principal, said Ironwood allows up to five exchange students each academic year.

Alongside Thomsen, Ironwood Ridge hosted Mex Pankey, a junior from Germany who already returned to his home country, and Henry Erichs, a sophomore, also from Germany.

Thomsen had journeyed across Arizona and most of the west coast before being an exchange student, and she wanted to further her experience and spend an entire year here.

"I've always loved America. The first time that I came here, I was about nine," said Thomsen.

Her home country of Denmark is significantly different from the U.S.

Denmark is a Scandinavian country slightly bigger than Maine. It is bordered by Germany in the south and lies between the North and Baltic Sea.

The country has a population of 5 million, compared to Arizona's 6 million, and has a very distinctive culture.

One of the traditions in Denmark that differs from the U.S. is they dance and sing to celebrate the eve of Dec. 24.

"We are very traditional people and celebrate things that went way back in our country's history. We also have a lot of Christian traditions that we celebrate



Left: Thomsen appreciates her time in Arizona and enjoys sightseeing. In showing her love for the state she lives and goes to school in, she draped herself in the state flag.

Right: Thomsen loves the Sonoran Desert. Her American Family took her to Antelope Canyon.



Photo Courtesy Frida Thomsen

but not necessarily believe in, like Christmas, getting married or conformation," said Thomsen.

Danielle Rutherford, art teacher, recalled meeting Thomsen last August upon her arrival.

"She was so nervous. I was the first teacher she talked to in this school", said Rutherford.

Thomsen has come a long way.

"She was very shy at first, but now she is not shy at all," said her Alyssa Cole, junior, friend of Thomsen.

Rutherford elaborated on teaching exchange students and their impact on other students in her classroom.

"They [exchange students] are just some of the most driven and committed students. They see that people their age travel, and it encourages them to travel too and see the world."

When living in various countries, one encounters different cultures.

Thomsen shared her observations about coming to the United States.

"Of course it is different," said Thomsen. "The Danish school system works differently. The American [school system] is not harder, but we just do it differently [in Denmark]."

Thomsen said that in Denmark teachers rotate instead of the students, and groups of 24 students stay together all day and follow a block schedule.

Thomsen prefers the American school system.

"It is a love-hate relationship. I am glad my future doesn't depend on the American system, but when you are a hard working person, it helps you achieve more. If you're not, it doesn't offer as much help as the Danish does."

In an American high school, sports are a big deal.

For most, a high school without athletics is not a real high school. Thomsen took advantage of this very distinctive element of American culture.

She played basketball and participated in swim and dive. This semester, she is a thrower for the track team.

"It's all club-based in Denmark. There are no school sports, and there is no school spirit."

Thomsen is always willing to talk about her home country and likes to answer questions.

"She taught me a lot about the Danish school system, and I know how to say 'bless you' in Danish," said Cole.

Thomsen remembers some of the questions she has been asked.

"Usually they are serious questions; but one time I got asked if we celebrate Thanksgiving in Denmark."

Thomsen misses the Danish cuisine, but she will miss much more about the U.S when she returns to Denmark at the end of the school year.

"I will miss so much: The mountains, the weather, Target and all my friends," said Thomsen.

## ~Dear Iris~

Dear Iris,

Lately it seems like my friends have been really distant. We used to be so close and would do everything together. We were inseparable.

Lately though, I see them doing things together without me. I didn't think anything of it at first, but then I noticed that it was happening a lot more, and it was starting to make me upset. In a way, I also introduced them to what is now a mutual friend, and I've noticed that they have all been hanging out together, too.

It makes me upset because they don't include me in their plans but will send me pictures of them all together. I've confronted them about it a few times, but they seem to keep making excuses.

I've started getting closer with other people, but I miss my other friends.

What should I do?

Sincerely,  
Lonely Girl

Dear Lonely Girl,

I'm sorry this is happening to you.

Friendships in high school can be hard sometimes because everyone's schedules are different, and it can be hard to find time and make plans with people you were once close with.

It's good you've been able to build new relationships with other people.

Sometimes things like this happen, and you'll end up being closer with the new friends in the long run, rather than the ones you thought you'd stay close with.

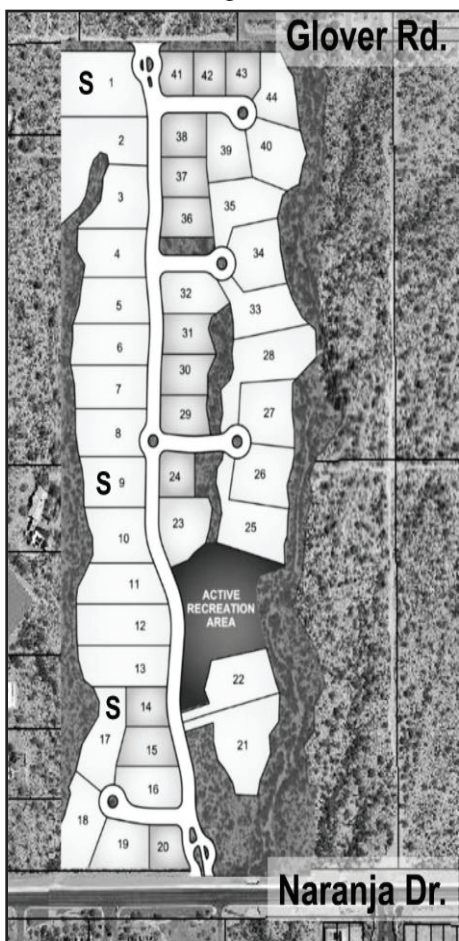
If you want to try and save the old relationships, try making plans with them.

Friendships don't just go one way. Everyone has to put in the effort, and as easy as it is to blame others, sometimes you can be part of the issue. By inviting them to run errands with you, or help you study for an upcoming test, you are able to hang out with them in a different setting.

I wish you the best in whatever you decide to do.

Sincerely,  
Iris

# Nearly 1,000 new houses to be built in Oro Valley



Blueprint courtesy Bayer Vella

The desert land located between Ironwood Ridge and Wilson, just north of Naranja, is scheduled to be developed. New homes will be built on this property, much like the housing to the east of the school that also runs along La Cholla.

Jordan Good  
Beginning Reporter

Looking for a new place to live? Around 800 new homes will be built in Oro Valley in the very near future.

With a growing population comes more development, and many concerns and issues have grown about the well-being and preservation of the desert landscape that encapsulates Ironwood and the rest of the town.

"When you just build houses, you create urban plight" said David Goldberg, counselor, as well as a Tucson and Oro Valley advocate.

Goldberg believes in building up, not out. He also believes living in the city would be the most beneficial for Oro Valley's rural environment. Many environmentalists and community members alike believe in living in "proper Tucson," rather than its surrounding city of Oro Valley.

They suggest that much of Oro Valley is being overdeveloped and the environment is being disregarded from the developmental perspective, in the progress.

An increase in the land values and overall growth of the area are responsible for the staggering amount of development near Ironwood Ridge High School.

In an interview with the *Iron Quill*, Bayer Vella, the planning manager for

Oro Valley, stated that Oro Valley is already 85 percent built out, meaning that the area is almost fully developed.

He also noted that due to the town boundaries, Oro Valley does not plan to be overdeveloped in the future, but "there has been a lot of concern, a lot of questions," resulting in countless meetings as well as public hearings, Vella said.

"There is very little developable land left in Oro Valley," said Vella.

Vella explained that there are legal limitations and boundaries as to how much of the land in Oro Valley can be developed, and that this limit has almost been reached.

In other words, people should not be concerned that Oro Valley will be overdeveloped, as the limits in place prohibit that line from being crossed.

Vella said that he is unaware of property values or the cost of the developments. However, he insisted that the town of Oro Valley's financial health continues to be strong.

There are two pieces of land ready for development between Ironwood Ridge and Wilson K8 schools.

They are titled Saguaro Viejos 1 and 2, and Viejos 1 is planned for 44 subdivision lots, while Viejos 2 is planned for 178 lots.

Additional homes will be built in the surrounding area.

'Shannon 80,' located along Shannon

Road, is planned for 80 living units, and the largest piece of development runs from Naranja to Lambert and is planned for 570 units.

"That's a lot of homes going near Ironwood," said Vella.

Vella also said that over the next four years, La Cholla will be expanded from two lanes to four lanes, "almost mirroring La Canada," as a result of the recent housing development along La Cholla.

Oro Valley is no stranger to complaints of the development of land.

Before Ironwood Ridge was built, a city-wide dispute erupted over the plot of land that is now this high school.

Environmentalists as well as many community members warned Amphitheater School District about the protected and declining species of Pygmy Owls as well as the rural Ironwood Forest.

The school was built to accommodate a natural habitat and opened in 2001.

Oro Valley is in a dispute with Marana regarding a plot of land in between them, which is currently owned by the Arizona State Land Department of Pima County.

"At the end of the day, it's a democratic decision," said Vella. He also stated that much of the development in Oro Valley is customized to fit neighboring concerns.



# Performance creates conversations about alcohol, sex, suicide

Shana Brown  
*Beginning Reporter*

Math, science, social studies and more. These are the subjects we are taught in school.

But what about the subjects of alcohol abuse, drug addiction, premarital sex, and standing up to bullying?

BreakDown Tucson is a group of teens who bring a powerful, dynamic message to students in Arizona that addresses the concerns of these topics.

This group empowers and educates by promoting personal health and self-care as well as sticking up for yourself and speaking up.

"I feel like it was an important message that needed to be discussed. I feel like everyone should've seen it," said sophomore Katie Jeffers about the performance.

This program travels to schools around Arizona in the hopes of passing along an important message to students in high school and at any age who may be going through difficult times.

Several students, like StuGo member Allison Cherrington, attended the performance alongside classmates.

StuGo invited the group from BreakDown Tucson to Ironwood, and while all teachers were invited to bring their classes, attendance was limited to the 650 capacity of the auditorium.

"I think that underclassmen were the main audience of this performance because high school exposes them to all of these things, and they definitely aren't prepared for all of it," said Cherrington.

On Mar. 12, BreakDown Tucson shared their important message during third and fourth period classes.

It brought an influential message to fight for life, no matter the circumstance.

BreakDown Tucson addressed topics through skits and discussion among actors on stage.

The topics of suicide, teenage pregnancy, STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and testing for it, sexual assault, domestic violence, alcohol

and drug addiction, abortion, human trafficking, and bullying were featured.

They used statistics they gathered from teens around the nation.

For each topic, a skit was shown, as well as some dances, to express the emotions of the topic.

In order to appeal to the audience, they used colorful lights and a good sound system.

Throughout the performance, before each topic was covered, national statistics were shown to give a general idea of the problems around the nation.

"I was super pleased that someone is actually paying attention to important things like this. A lot of the time schools keep quiet about the things that were talked about, and I think it's important to inform students about the severity of it all," said Cherrington.

The performance started with a main storyline of a party with alcohol that led to the coma of a young teen high schooler after a car accident.

According to BreakDown Tucson and their stats from around the nation, 63% of high school students drank alcohol and 33% had alcohol in the last month.

Further, 8% have driven while intoxicated and 20% had driven with a drunk driver. To add, 41.5% had driven drunk and texted while driving.

As the show continued, it moved on to the topic of rape and sexual interactions between teens.

Regarding this topic, 6.7% of teens nationally have been forced into sex; 66% of the time, teens do not speak up.

One in five sexually active teens had sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Consequently, some of these teens get pregnant, and 700 teens give birth every day. Only 15% of pregnant teens finish high school.

The crew of BreakDown Tucson then moved on to a touching dance about domestic violence since 10% of teens are in a violent relationship.

Afterwards, they continued on with the topic of STDs.

There are 25 categories of STDs

and over 10 million people are affected every year. Four out of 10 girls get an STD that can later lead to cancer.

The performance wrapped with the most common problem in teenage years.

Bullying is something that affects people all over the world throughout all ages. One in five kids were bullied in the last year, and 15% are cyberbullied.

Also, 160,000 students miss school because of bullying, and one in 10 students drop out of school as a result.

"I thought the performance depicted the very hard times that students in high school face. The acting displayed the bad decisions that teens make and the dancing also added an entertaining aspect. Overall it was a very good, and I'm glad I got to see it," said junior Sebastian Taylor.

As the show neared its end, statistics specific to Ironwood Ridge were shared.

When approximately 600 students entered the auditorium at the beginning of the show, they were told to take a survey and to be completely honest.

Hughes revealed the results of the student poll: 55% had been bullied in their lifetime, 20% self-harmed in the last year, and 33% had contemplated or attempted suicide in the past year, and 33% had used drugs and 65% know someone their age who is pregnant.

"I felt very shocked knowing that so many people were going through those things" said Jeffers.

## Nighthawk Stats

*Students took a poll at the beginning of the performance.*

*Here are the results:*

- 65% Know someone their age who is pregnant
- 55% Have been bullied at some point in their life
- 33% Contemplated / attempted suicide in the past year
- 33% Have used drugs
- 30% Self-harmed in the past year

| CONTACTS:                        |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| SUICIDE                          | 800-273-8255 SuicidePreventionLifeline.org |
| PREGNANCY                        | 520-622-5774 HandsOfHopeTucson.com         |
| STD TESTING                      | 520-979-3430                               |
| SEXUAL ASSAULT                   | 520-327-7273                               |
| DOMESTIC VIOLENCE                | 800-799-7233 TheHotline.org                |
| Struggling with PORN?            | 385-313-8629 FightTheNewDrug.org           |
| ALCOHOL & DRUG ADDICTION         | 800-662-HELP (4357) SAMHSA.gov             |
| Struggling with a PAST ABORTION? | 520-622-5774                               |

A list of important contacts are listed on the back of BreakDown Tucson's business card. All students were given a business card at the end of the performance.

# National scandal surrounds University of Arizona Basketball team



Angela Andrews  
*Beginning Reporter*

The University of Arizona was expected to have a great season this year, but that was before the wiretaps, the bribery allegations, and the

fight for eligibility.

Instead they became one of the biggest stories in college basketball, and it was not for their accomplishments on the court.

On Feb. 23, ESPN reported that FBI wiretaps listened into calls between the University of Arizona basketball head coach, Sean Miller, and sports associate, Christian Dawkins.

Allegedly, Miller and Dawkins discussed paying \$100,000 to DeAndre Ayton to recruit him to play with the Wildcats his freshman year.

This is a problem because it is against the rules to pay student athletes.

This rule is heavily enforced by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association).

In order to give all schools a fair chance to recruit star athletes, all athletes must have equal opportunities and compensation.

Even if schools wanted to pay some of their players, they would be forced to pay all players the same amount of money.

Ayton, a 7'1" center who was born in the Bahamas, is considered to be one of the top freshmen in the country.

Ayton moved to San Diego, and it was there he played basketball for his freshman and sophomore year of high school.

He transferred to Hillcrest Prep Academy in Phoenix for his junior and senior years.

Ayton committed to Arizona in Sep. 2016 after considering scholarship offers from Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland and San Diego State.

In 2017, Ayton was ranked the no. 3 player in the ESPN 100. Ayton averages 19.9 points and 11.2 rebounds per game in his first and only college season.

"The telephone calls between Sean Miller and Dawkins were among 3,000 hours of conversations intercepted from Dawkins' phone by the FBI," according to the article *FBI Wiretaps Show Sean Miller Discussed \$100K Payment to Lock Recruit* published to ESPN on Feb. 25 by Mark Schlabach, ESPN Senior writer.

Miller is a three-time Pac-12 Coach of the Year and has been coaching the Wildcats for nine seasons.

The Arizona Board of Regents approved a contract extension for him in Feb. 2017.

"I'm not a fan of Sean Miller," said Erin Dickey, sophomore. "I would not be disappointed if he left."

Miller's contract states that even if he is fired with cause, the university would have to pay him his base salary.

That adds up to roughly \$10.3 million through May 2022.

"At this time, we have no reason to believe Coach Miller violated NCAA

rules or any laws," said Robert C. Robbins, U of A President, said after a meeting with the state Board of Regents, just hours before a home game was set to begin.

As of Mar. 1, University of Arizona officials have decided to keep Miller as coach of the men's basketball team.

"I am glad that Miller is back. He can lead the Wildcats to victory," said Dane Johnson, sophomore.

The drama in Arizona continues as Allonzo Trier, junior, fights for his eligibility.

Trier was ruled ineligible after trace amounts of Ostarine, a banned substance, was found in a drug test.

Trier's stepfather first gave him Ostarine mixed into a drink back in 2016.

He told the NCAA that he consumed the drink without knowledge of what

was in it.

The NCAA ruled that he could play once the drug was out of his system. Trier sat out the first 19 games of last season. Traces of the drug appeared again in a test Trier took in Feb. 2018.

The NCAA reviewed Trier's case and determined his argument was worth looking at. Arizona announced after a week long process that the junior guard won his appeal with the NCAA and is now eligible to play.

This year Arizona was intended to make it to the Final Four, but they lost to Buffalo 68-89 on Mar. 15 during the first round of NCAA March Madness.

"Next season I have high hopes for the Wildcats," said Kolby Lathrop, sophomore.

*Information, Statistics from SportsIllustrated.com*

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# Agree2Disagree

**THE ISSUE: Should student announcements be changed?**  
**Kat says YES** **Sean says NO**

Picture this: you're sitting in class, chatting with your friends before the teacher begins class. She walks up to the front of the room and opens her mouth to speak, before being cut off by the speakers above your heads as they crackle to life. "Good morning, Nighthawks," they say.

But is it good?

Each morning during fourth period, students are presented with information about events and activities going on at or around school via the student announcements.

However, there are some issues with the presentation of these announcements, and changes need to be made.

"They repeat the same things over and over, and not a lot of people pay attention to them," said Madi Boutchyard, sophomore.

The volume of the announcements is one of two extremes. The speakers are either much too loud, as they are in the Newspaper lab, or much too quiet, like in Mr. Minor's classroom.

The announcements have become an unwelcome interruption that a large portion of the student body views as a distraction.

While this is an issue with the speakers, the frustration is associated with announcements. If it was easy to fix, the issue would have been rectified some time ago.

"I can't even hear the announcements half the time, and when I can hear them I want them to stop. Usually, I can only hear them when I'm taking a test, and I want to focus on that rather than listening to information that I either already know or don't need to know," said Ashleigh Davidson, junior.

Additionally, the surplus of information is somewhat unnecessary. The information rarely changes, and the constant detail and repetition of it can get tiring to listen to.

"I think it's silly that they're announcing what's for lunch now," said Cam Trainor, junior.

The announcements are much too long and detailed to be announced daily to students over the announcements. Information deemed critical could easily be consolidated into a minute or two, rather than five or six.

How many times do you need to be told to look for lost hydros in the office? They are expensive; if yours is lost, you're probably already on the hunt.

Students who play sports are going to know their release time for games and practices. Coaches tell them this information. This is an unnecessary announcement, as release times do not pertain to the majority of the school's populous, and rattling off sports schedules each day wastes time better spent on learning.

Colleges visiting our school to make contact with our students is important, but rather than detailing each college visit every day, it could be posted in the library and/or counseling office.

The announcements should be shortened to directly serve students the necessary information.

It's the last day for seniors to get their yearbook picture taken? Announce it. An active shooter drill is scheduled? Tell us.

High school age students do not need to be spoon-fed the same information day after day. At this point, you're a young adult. The real world is not going to bend over backwards for you; you must learn the art of advocating for yourself.

While not to discount the necessity of the student announcements, the vehicle for the information can be greatly improved to deliver it in a far more focused and efficient way.



**Kat Tarro**

**Sean O'Meara**

Student announcements are the method by which we are all informed of current school events and activities.

They are the free and timely medium by which administration

and clubs can inform the student body en masse of activities in which they may wish to be involved.

Ironwood Ridge is lucky to be the home of many clubs and to have an administration which promotes and organizes these activities for our student body.

Everyday, there are extracurricular activities, which students may wish to participate in, but may not be aware of.

Announcements are played everywhere, and school has a dedicated time to listen to them, ensuring every student is made aware of all communal and academic activities.

Some students believe the announcements hinder more than they help, arguing that they cut into class time and disrupt what should be the beginning of fourth period.

What seems to go unrecognized by many students is that fourth period is designed to be longer in order to compensate for the announcements.

Teachers should allow students time at the beginning of class to listen.

Fourth period is homeroom, after all. Students also have said the announcements are either too loud or too quiet, and therefore are either painful to listen or useless, as they cannot be heard.

This dilemma, while actually an issue with the speaker system, can be justified as trying to ensure the students can hear them over the din of their classroom or ensure the class remains

quiet to listen to them at a lower volume.

The only genuine issue with the announcements is that not enough students or teachers take them seriously.

This is not at all a fault of the announcements themselves, but rather the fault of those listening.

Sure, any student can find this information in other, less noisy places.

Students could take their time to navigate the Amphi website, or to go to the library or counseling office to find what they're looking for.

But what are the chances that any student will actually do that?

None. No chance. Zero percent.

Students are teenagers, and teenagers are lazy.

That's something everyone knows and can admit.

If students are not forcibly spoon-fed this information, it will never get to them.

Additionally, not all information in the announcements is known about beforehand.

If students had to rely on themselves going online or to message boards, they would never find out about anything other than what they were explicitly looking for.

People don't appreciate the importance of our announcements, and pay no attention to them.

In order to make the announcements more effective and worthwhile, students and teachers need to show a little more respect toward those presenting the information and those consumers who may benefit from said information.

Announcements may be viewed as an inconvenience to some, but the dissemination of communal information is very necessary and helpful to many in their academic careers.

Announcements are the easiest and most accessible way to do this.

Any perceived "issues" with the announcements are derived only from those listening.

## Humor Me: Real change is happening against bullying in the south

Sean O'Meara  
*Entertainment Editor*

Another student has fallen victim to bullying and has experienced major consequences in his academic career.

Hunter Stevenson, senior at Cordova K-12 School in Georgia, filed a complaint on Mar. 7 against kindergartener Hannah Johnson.

The simple issue has escalated into a disciplinary hearing, spurring on anti-bullying movements across the country.

Stevenson filed the complaint the day after the incident.

His complaint, stained with tears, detailed what happened:

*"I was walking through the elementary wing after hours to see one of my old teachers, and Hannah was sitting at one of the timeout desks in the hall drawing. I stopped and said 'hi' and asked what she was drawing. She yelled at me to go away. I told her that wasn't very nice, and she yelled at me again, and she turned and stabbed my leg with a pencil. I ran away, and as I was running, she screamed at me that I had cooties."*

The horrifying encounter outlined in this document sparked major concerns among Cordova Administration.

Principal Dianna Baker met personally with Johnson after receiving word of the complaint.

Baker said, "She didn't even know she did anything wrong. She didn't remember committing this borderline crime."

Baker expressed concerns about students unknowingly bullying others, and she pressed the need for more awareness for bullying.

Administration has already put plans in place to further local awareness; increasing advertising for anti-bullying seminars and forcing more students to share their stories about traumatic experiences in their personal lives with the strangers of their communities.

Stevenson, who is claiming mental damages, argued, "The use of cooties is a serious form of harassment, and neglecting to tell me before we engaged in conversation put me at serious risk."

He also requested that the College Board redact his SATs, taken only days after the traumatizing incident.

He further requested to be allowed to retake them after appropriate therapy.

The heart-wrenching School Board hearing for Stevenson's case was held Mar. 15.

"Hunter's story brought the room to tears," said Stevenson's mother.

The boardroom reportedly applauded Stevenson after he pointed to Johnson, proclaiming, "No one should have to go through the horrors of cooties that she's put me through!"

Stevenson's pediatrician was called to testify who expanded upon the serious nature of cooties.

"There are very few medical professionals experienced enough to administer a cooties shot, I myself am not certified to do so, and the ailment will likely affect [Stevenson's] college career in the years to come."

The hearing ran short as the board insisted they "have already reached a verdict." Johnson's mother is said to have complained about "improper conduct" before being escorted out of the boardroom by security.

Found guilty on accounts of harassment, criminal neglect, and crimes against humanity, Johnson was sentenced to spend every recess and lunch of her academic career in a maximum security time-out corner.

Stevenson's father had one last request for the board before Johnson was released.

"I would ask you, as part of the sentencing, to grant me five minutes alone in a locked room with this demon," before asking for just one.

The chief board member apologetically declared, "That's not how our academic system works."

This answer sparked rage in Mr. Stevenson, who responded, "Well, I'm going to have to," before charging at Johnson.

Johnson was unharmed, and court authorities detained and removed Mr. Stevenson, who apologized and was released without penalty "due to the emotional nature of the case."

Stevenson is now a prominent figure of the anti-bullying movement, redefining it with his new ideas for reform, like his idea of silent protests.

"We will gather outside police stations, blocking their vehicles, to protest the police department's inaction on bullying and the mistreatment of callers by emergency line operators."

He went on to explain the protests are "a tribute to the idea that if no one says anything, no one gets hurt."

Stevenson's ultimate goal for reform is to expand this idea to schools, in what he believes is a permanent solution.

"Students have been trusted for too long with the right to speak, and it is time we take this right from them," he said in a Washington speech delivered as part of his Anti-Bullying March.

# Baseball team talented, focused on winning



Photo by Ryan Maish

Junior Romeo Reiff, right fielder, keeps his head down while swinging at a pitch in a game against Mesquite. The team has had some rough spots but is finding their rhythm as a team.

Alyssa Woods  
Beginning Reporter

This season the baseball team has started off strong, but they have hit a few bumps along the way. They have a current record of 8-10.

The varsity team kicked off the season by placing second in the Cowboy Up Tournament held at Kino Sports Complex over Rodeo Break.

“We have a lot more talent offensively but don’t have a lot of pitchers

this year,” said senior pitcher and third basemen Kamden Kautz.

In the tournament, the team beat Cactus High School with a score of 5-2, Campo Verde High School 10-0, and lost in the championship game against Centennial High School 12-7.

Senior catcher Cory Buechler thinks they played well in the Cowboy Up Tournament but not so well in the last few regular season games.

Buechler is looking forward to winning more games and finishing the season with at least 10 more wins.

“I enjoy spending time with the guys, having fun, and playing baseball,” said Buechler.

The varsity boy’s baseball team lost pitchers due to graduation last year and is struggling to keep their ERA (earned run average) down.

Varsity coach Kevin Baker said they have the ability to make it to state, but it’s up to the players.

There are 10 more games in the regular season, and they need to win six

more to make it to the state playoffs.

Kautz said the team hit a roadblock when they lost to Flowing Wells.

On the flip side, an achievement they had was beating a team that placed second place in last year’s state tournament.

Kautz believes the team members have talent but need to click as a team. He said that while the team has good hitters, they need more pitchers.

Overall, Kautz is looking forward to a good season and winning of games the rest of the season.

The boys played in the Best of the West Tournament, Mar. 19-21, and beat Centennial, 14-2, Elk City out of Oklahoma, 12-2, and Notre Dame Prep, 5-4.

Baker said their entire schedule this year is tough. He said the goal for the season is to be successful for the seniors, and noted that Buechler has stepped up as a team leader.

The team played Mountain View High School at Chase Field on March 28 and had won 5-3.

## Track season starts with new coach

Makenna Ritzel  
Beginning Reporter

“Everyone in life has hurdles -- some high and low. I choose to run over my hurdles rather worry about them,” said junior Carmine Russo, track and field hurdler.

Russo is currently no. 2 overall in state for the 300 meter hurdles.

This year, 69 student-athletes and their coaching staff are looking forward to building a great culture with the track and field program and being interactive and supportive of the other sports programs on campus.

“Our goals for the rest of the season is to have many athletes run personal records. We also would like to place in the top ten at the state championship meet this year,” said Le’Sean Marks, varsity track and field coach.

This is Mark’s first year coaching at Ironwood. He studied at Grand Canyon University (GCU) and got his certification to become a coach at National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Although the JV and Varsity practice together, they are not allowed to run at the same time.

JV runs in the dual and tri meets where they compete against one or two other schools, and the varsity team runs Fri-Sat during invitationals.

The track team has had six meets so far, three of which were invitationals that can allow the individual athlete to qualify for the state meet.

The runners are already celebrating a series of achievements including placing in the Queen Creek Invitational.

Other achievements were earned at the Chandler Rotary Mar. 23.

The boys’ 4X100 meters relay team

placed 4th in state.

The girls’ team, with freshman Lata Helu, sophomores Hannah Price and Hannah Irwin, and senior Berkeley Larsen, placed third in state and missed beating the school record by a margin of .04 seconds.

“I am excited to break the 4X100 [school] record for Berkeley because this is her senior year,” said Price.

But that isn’t Price’s only goal. “I am also trying the 300 hurdles. I am number 22 in state right now but .04 seconds away from making the state playing time,” Price said.

The season is also looking good for individual athletes.

Senior Tony Torres is ranked no. 2 in the 1600 meter.

Varsity thrower Parker Bays, junior, is no. 6 in shotput and no. 9 in discus.

“The key to my success is showing up to practice day in and day out even when I don’t feel like it. I’ve been able to dedicate myself to track alone, and along the process, sacrifices needed to be made so that I can be the best I can possibly be,” said Bays.

The team is certainly on the way to meeting their goals for this season.

“Just like any other sport, I like watching our kids compete, getting better, and try to do their very best. [Then] there are some kids who happen to be in a spot where they’re talented enough to win a state championship. We have some pretty talented kids out there,” said Tony Jacobsen, Athletic Director.

Marks does not coach the athletes alone. He has the assistance of four coaches: Science teacher Stacey Wilson who coaches distance; Naomi Helu who assists horizontal jumps; Soma Helu oversees throws, and Kimberly Mash who helps the athletes in the hurdles.

## Season playing out well for the Lady Nighthawks



Photo by Ryan Maish

Senior Marcella Franco, outfielder, squares up a line drive in a home game against Catalina Foothills High School. The girls went on to win in a close game 5-3 to add to their 17-5 record.

Maddy King  
Beginning Reporter

It’s a strong start for softball.

The varsity team began their season by playing in the CDO Classic during Rodeo Break on Feb. 22-23, where they won five games and lost one.

Their current record is 15-2, and they are excited for the season as they continue towards the state championships and become closer as a team. JV is undefeated, playing seven games.

“I love it. I play because it’s my life, and I play for the sisters that you make with it. It’s more than a game. It’s more than just hitting the ball. It’s becoming a family with your teammates and becoming the best that you can be at the sport,” said senior captain Izzy Pacho.

This is Izzy’s third and last year playing for Ironwood Ridge, and next year she will continue on to play softball at the University of Arizona.

“I would like to be the best captain that I can be, and I don’t want to be [a captain] that lets down her team,” said junior Danae Cuaron, who is a captain on the junior varsity team.

Though both teams have had a good season, there are some challenges ahead for them.

The big rivalry game against CDO will prove to be difficult, as will playing Sahuaro and Cienaga.

Last year, twice during the regular season, Sahuaro and Cienaga played for the Division 5A State Championship, so the Lady Nighthawks will have to do their best when playing these teams. To go to state, the girls have to win at least

half of the games in their conference and rank in the top 15.

“It’s a fun game. It’s a fast game, the girls are super positive, and we have fun. It’s really good to have your teammates and schoolmates come out and watch you play,” said Dave Martinez, varsity softball head coach.

Martinez has been the assistant coach for 20 years, and this is his first year as head coach.

Martinez replaced Rich Alday, who left for a coaching position at Pima College. Martinez said this is a huge step, and he is focusing on all parts of the team.

Winning the state title, to play at the highest level, and to be the best they can be are his goals for this year. He also said the coaching staff is very good, so the girls will be learning new skills to do what they know best.

“I love the competition, teamwork and communicating with others is great. Having a big family with all the girls is great,” said Carmen Cordova, a captain on the junior varsity team.

This season shows promise. The girls on the team have been playing for a long time, and they are ready to show what they can do out on the field.

“I think this year we’ve really come together and have played more as a team. As for having a lot new players, you wouldn’t be able to tell we’re a whole new team. I think as long as we continue to play the game the right way and play for each other, we have a great chance of making it to state and winning it all,” said varsity captain Jaiden Reid, junior.



Photos by Ryan Maish

Left: Tyus Williams, freshman, competes in the first meet of the season against Flowing Wells. Right: Junior Justin McGrath throws shotput in a recent track meet.

# Boys volleyball striving to be the best



Photos by Ryan Maish

**Left:** Tom Jackson, junior, goes in for a kill as the opposing team attempts to block his shot. Jackson won the team a point and has been a strong player all season. **Right:** Outside hitter Jrue Jantz, senior, serves the ball during a close game. He focused on the ball which was an ace for his team.

Leah DeSpain  
*Beginning Reporter*

Good chemistry isn't only found in science classes, but it is used on the courts to maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses.

The men's volleyball season is off to a strong start with a record of nine wins and five losses.

The Ridge played in the Las Vegas Invitational Mar. 9-10. They beat out Valley (2-0), Cheyenne (2-0), El Dorado (2-0), and Cienega (2-0). They made it

into the silver bracket, but lost against Arbor View in the first round (2-1).

In the regular season, the Nighthawks had big wins against Sahuaro (3-1) and Catalina Foothills (3-0), but a close defeat to undefeated Mountain View (3-2).

The varsity team is ranked no. 3 in the Arizona Conference 5A Rankings, no. 13 in Arizona and no. 234 in the country, according to [Maxpreps.com](http://Maxpreps.com).

"I feel like we played really well. We lost a five-set match against a really tough Highland team [Phoenix].

We played tough against all of our opponents. Varsity traveled out to Las Vegas for an invitational with 32 teams from Nevada, California, and Arizona, and they performed very well finishing in the top ten against some really good teams," said varsity coach Ashleigh Houlton, who has been coaching the varsity team for two years.

"Out of all three seasons, I think this team has worked the hardest and improved the most. Everyone gets along really well; everyone wants to be here and no one who doesn't," said varsity

setter Justin Miller, junior.

"We have seen a lot of improvement with the players on our team this year," said floating setter Donny Welsh, sophomore.

The Nighthawks are gearing up for the state tournament in May.

"Our coaches say we don't always have to win the game, but they want us to be the most technical team in the state. If we become more technical, we can be the best in the state," said Miller.

The next home game will be against Canyon Del Oro on Apr. 5 at 6:00 p.m.

## Boys tennis in full swing after a successful start



Photo by Ryan Maish

**Michael Robillard, junior,** prepares to hit a forehand back to his opponent. He takes a step into position as the ball approaches at an angle and points his tennis racket to the opposite side of the court.

Maddie Toia  
*Sports Editor*

The boy's tennis team started off their season 7-1. The group is comprised of one senior, six juniors, three sophomores and one freshman. They are currently ranked no. 6 in the state. Their season started by playing Desert View; they won 8-1.

"We are playing much better than last year, enough so that we have made team state and not just individual. We are hoping to continue playing like this," said junior Evan Gilbert.

The team fell short to Catalina Foothills but beat Walden Grove 9-0 the day after. They continued their winning streak by beating Marana 9-0, Sabino, 6-3, and Sunnyside, 9-0.

"I have been playing since I was eight years old, and along the way, I have never had such a team as the team I have now," said junior Nick Chenault.

The boy's tennis team went on to beat Rincon 5-4 in a close match and Mountain View 8-1.

The boys have six games until the end of their regular games before tournament play begins.

The boys hope to secure a spot for themselves in the playoff season.

## Sand volleyball starts off with intensity, keeps momentum

Leah DeSpain  
*Beginning Reporter*

Women's sand volleyball is starting off strong this 2018 season with seven wins and one loss.

With 24 total girls on the team, the Ridge has been dominating the beach category with an overall record of 7-1. The girls defeated Canyon Del Oro 5-0 and had a tight win against Chandler 3-2.

The Nighthawks are ranked no. 1 in Division I, Section V and ranked no. 8 in Division I.

"I'm happy with what's been going on so far. There are always the little things that we can improve on, but overall, I am proud with how we are doing," says Varsity Coach Bill Lang.

With the new sand courts, training and practicing has become more

convenient than in previous years when the girls had to practice at the offsite facility. A total of 30 girls tried out this year; varsity has a total of 18 players and junior varsity has six players.

"I am very proud of how this season is coming along so far. We all get along very well and work very hard. The level of improvement was amazing and I see a bright winning future ahead of us," said varsity defender Kaytlin Helmandollar, sophomore.

According to coaches and players, this season was the greatest turnout, compared to the last two seasons.

"I am really proud of how everyone is doing and getting used to the new sand. We receive a lot of compliments from other coaches on how well we word and how we hold ourselves, and for that I am really proud of us," said defender Taylor Salese, senior.



Photo by Ryan Maish

**Taylor Salese, senior,** prepares her serve. The competition for beach volleyball is intense, and she and her partner need to focus in order to earn points. Beach volleyball teams are made up of two players, which is different from court volleyball, which has a team of six athletes playing together.