

# SafeRides changes its operational system for the new year

by Rachel Salisbury

Opinion Editor

The SafeRides program is an essential component of LGHS, providing students with a dependable way of getting home on Friday nights. SafeRides has recently changed its leadership, venue, and number of volunteers. The program has had to make some impactful adaptations in order to operate under different conditions.

The most significant of these adjustments is the change in schedule: SafeRides will now run solely on Friday nights and no longer on Saturdays. Instead of spreading volunteers thinly over the span of two nights, SafeRides has decided to adequately staff what they have found to be their busiest night. Karla Albright, the Executive Director of SafeRides, says "In the event that we have loads of dedicated volunteers on our teen/adult board, we will discuss expanding services to another night."

The operation hours have also been shortened. The program now runs until 1:00 AM instead of



courtesy, K. Albright

PROMOTING SAFETY: SafeRides is a transport system for teens.

2:00 AM. They have found that the last hour of the night is when there is the least amount of demand for the program. In order to increase the number of volunteers willing to stay for the full duration of the program, they have stopped running at this time.

SafeRides has also moved venues and made some administrative changes. It was previously run out of the Venue, but when that location became unavailable, it had to move elsewhere. Luckily, the United Methodist Church offered their teen center, Cafe Hope, to SafeRides and solved the location issue. There was also a shift in leadership, as the three young adults who worked on the program retired last year. A new teen/adult board is being created to run the program, and Albright says, "they will be making decisions on how to adapt the program to best meet the needs of our community."

SafeRides plays a crucial role in the safety of LGHS students, because it serves the realistic needs of the student body. Instead of ignoring the fact that some students abuse substances, SafeRides offers

a pragmatic solution that serves to prevent drunk driving. SafeRides is not just available to students who are impaired; it is available to all students who find themselves in an unsafe situation without a way home on Friday nights. SafeRides is a confidential program that does not aim to judge the morality of the decisions that students make. The program has been successful, with no LGHS teenage deaths related to drunk driving since SafeRides began ten years ago. This is a great improvement when compared with the average of about one death every three years before the program began.

Although this program is supported by the students, there is always a need for more volunteers. Volunteering for SafeRides doesn't just give students community service hours, as the program also offers training in SafeRides procedures and gives volunteers an opportunity to work with other students. To learn more about SafeRides, come to the next training day on Oct. 30, find SafeRides on Facebook, or contact them at LGsaferides@gmail.com.

## El Gato visits Great America

by Jonathan Friedland

National Editor

Great America's sixth annual Halloween Haunt began on Sept. 27, Ruth Murai, Justine Reyes, Maddie Abene, and I had the pleasure of attending the "fright-fest" with complimentary VIP passes. The haunt will remain open from 7 PM until midnight every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through Oct. 27. Students also receive seventeen dollars off the admission price of forty-five dollars by showing a valid student ID.



DARK ALLEY: The Underworld Alley is a zombie-themed scare zone.

Attractions include the "Slaughterhouse Annihilation" maze. The park is filled with several other mazes including "CornStalkers" where "scarers," camouflaged in the hay, were waiting to jump out and frighten you. On a different side of the scariness spectrum, "Toy Factory" features crazy and eccentric optical illusions. The overall ambience in the park is tremendous as the public is visibly excited for Halloween.

According to Roger Ross, Great America's public relations manager, "Halloween has become a month-long celebration. Just like Christmas in the month of December, people are excited for Halloween throughout the entire month of October." Great America represents that excitement by giving "the ultimate Halloween experience as it provides everything from haunts, to rides and shows."

New to this year's haunt are two mazes and an action theater that features a riveting underground ride. Three thrilling scare areas and six mazes return from past years to keep the public in the Halloween spirit as they walk through the park. Ross commented, "If people keep coming to the haunt, we will keep expanding."



FUN AND GAMES: In addition to attractions, the park has games.

In addition to the haunted mazes, most of the rides were open including Flight Deck, Drop Tower, and the newly constructed Gold Striker which reaches speeds of up to fifty-four miles per hour. Great America also showcased several shows including a rock-and-roll musical on ice and a stand-up comedy performance.

Overall, the Great America Halloween Haunt is one of the most exuberant and enjoyable places to celebrate your Halloween.



HAUNTED GRAVEYARD: Fog and Tombstones create an eerie effect.



J. Reyes

HALLOWEEN THEMED GREAT AMERICA: In celebration of Halloween, the park is featuring a Halloween Haunt, with mazes and haunted houses.

## New teachers join LGHS

by Ari Sweedler

National Editor

Before **Mark Krail** became a football coach at LGHS, he taught at various places for twenty-seven years. Most recently, he was a P.E. teacher at Santa Clara High School. His spare time is dominated by his passion for football, as Krail noted that "coaching takes a lot of time." When asked about his favorite basketball player, Krail responded with Michael Jordan, because "he was great on offense and defense. He was a great teammate who made others around him better. Because of this, he was the ultimate competitor." If Krail had a goldfish he would name it Max.



A. Sweedler

**Monica Minson** is the new biology teacher at LGHS. She loves the outdoors and is very active in her spare time. She grew up in a small town of 500 people on an island in Maine called "Verona Island." In this small town, Minson was always outside hiking, exploring, or running. Minson has completed fourteen marathons, including ultra marathons, with the most recent one being the Oakland Marathon last spring. Minson has also biked across the country "both ways, from Canada to Mexico... and New York to Washington to Oregon." She greatly enjoys biking, and hopes to bike from Florida to Canada this summer. Minson loves the color purple. "Everything in my house is purple!... I'd always buy purple soap over blue soap to make everything match," Minson laughed.

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