

## PANTHER EDITORIAL

*Hey, let's respect school property*

Imagine yourself in the school bathroom, pleased to be alone, unbothered, at peace. Suddenly, the lights go off due to a power outage. With no windows or natural light, the room is plunged into total darkness. You lose your sense of direction – your only guide is the subtle drip-drip-drip of one of the faucets.

You are a victim – of the latest version of the Devious Lick challenge.

About a year ago, the “Devious Lick,” a TikTok challenge, spread widely through schools, encouraging students to steal soap dispensers and other school property, especially from bathrooms. Now, our boys’ bathrooms are suffering just that kind of theft and vandalism.

Is this seriously happening? C’mon, guys!

It started with ripping soap dispensers out of the bathroom walls. We all know that soap is needed for effective hand washing at all times, and is even more essential today, as COVID and flu infections continue to rise. Also, since soap dispensers are attached to the wall, they are difficult and costly to repair. A new soap dispenser can cost as much as \$60, according to Facilities Manager Jorge Carrillo, let alone the cost of labor involved in the installation.

Beyond soap dispensers, emergency lights have been torn out of the bathrooms, leaving everyone less safe. The emergency bathroom lights turn on automatically during an emergency, including a power outage, so peo-

ple don't get stuck in a pitch-dark bathroom. When they are torn and damaged, Jorge has to order new LEDs and systems, which cost more than \$66 each and take time to install.

OK, so you've read this far and maybe you're feeling good about yourself because you don't vandalize



PHOTO COURTESY OF JORGE CARRILLO

An emergency light from a boys restroom left broken.

bathrooms. Good job! You've managed to meet basic bathroom care expectations. But what about littering on campus?

The dorm quad usually gives a pristine and fresh feeling, but lately, students have left their food and trash there, attracting seagulls and crows who then scatter the food around. Imagine having to pick up scattered rice stuck between the individual blades of artificial grass. Talk about tedious and time-consuming! Our janitors work hard to keep our campus clean, especially the dorm quad, which sponsors love to see when they visit campus, according to Jorge.

As a school community, we simply have to do our part to help. How hard is it to put our own dishes away and throw away our trash into one of the many easily accessible dish buckets and trash cans around campus?

We, *The Eastside Panther* editors, second Jorge when he says, “Que tengan cuidado - si hay un problema, que simplemente me avisen, comuníquese.” (I want them to be careful, and if they have any issue or problem, they can simply let me know. Communicate.)

Indeed, communication is key. If you see a problem – a mess in the dorm quad, a problem in the bathrooms – speak up about it so it can be handled as quickly as possible. But equally important, make sure you are not part of the problem to begin with.

*Holiday cheer leaves some of us un-cheerful*

**danibrito**  
in my opinion

The smell of gingerbread and hot chocolate, the twinkling colorful lights of the Christmas tree in the corner, laughter and chatter filling the air -- the Christmas spirit is here.

That's how the holidays are described, but it's really only like that in the movies.

The holidays are always presented as time to spend with your family and friends, to have a happy spirit, and to be grateful for all that you have. It sounds nice, but sometimes it isn't like that at all. The holidays can be the loneliest times.

When you see the happiness that others radiate, or seem to radiate, it can cause many sorrowful feelings that others say don't belong in the “happiest time of the year”.

Sometimes I don't like the holidays. They can bring up bad memories and cause stress and anxiety. While I do enjoy some aspects of the holidays, the bad tends to outweigh the good, making me

feel very lonely. It becomes just another time to watch others enjoying a fulfilling life, going out with friends, and spending time with family, while I sit at home and my mom and sister go about doing their own things. When I express my unhappiness, I'm often met with judgment and told I shouldn't feel sad because “You're getting gifts” and “You sound ungrateful.”

What many people miss is that when you are lonely or sad, material things won't fill the hole you feel. When I feel like that, I need to spend time with people I care about who I know care about me. Unfortunately, it isn't always possible because they are busy, they live too far away, or I am not allowed.

When this happens, I feel bratty, like I should be focusing on all the good things, and that indulging in these feelings is my fault. But feeling this way isn't a crime. The holidays aren't all happy, smiles, and laughter. Sometimes stress gets to you, sometimes you are alone, and it's OK to acknowledge

that. The holidays don't suddenly make our feelings disappear, so why should we have to hide them?

When you notice family or friends feeling blue during the holidays, do your best to support them, show them that you will be there for them. Even if they don't take you up on your offer, they will always appreciate it.

*“The holidays aren't all happy, smiles and laughter.”*

*Some students can't read whatever they want. Be grateful that you can.*

**arianadelabra**  
in my opinion

Under the warming rays of the sun, you can bury your nose deep in a good book, like *All Boys Aren't Blue*, by George Johnson, a memoir about growing up queer in a Black community. Librarian Tina Ehsanipour might walk by and compliment your mature yet realistic choice of book. You feel the joy of being understood.

But it isn't this way everywhere. Students in many high schools are hearing, “Hey, you! Put that book down! That's not allowed on campus.”

Yes! That's correct. In our democratic country, with free speech for all, schools are banning books.

Since July 2021, Republican politicians and conservative activists have organized in parent and community groups to ban books that address issues of race, bodily autonomy, gender, and most commonly, sexuality. They argue that these books are forms of pornography and grooming. They swarm school board meetings

to force schools to keep the books out of their libraries. PEN America's Index of School Book Bans lists more than 1600 books that are banned in American high schools across the country, but most prominently in the southern states.

Books in public schools are subject to being censored by school districts or parents who believe that the contents are too graphic or expose children to non-conservative ideas.

With more and more books being taken out of the hands of young curious readers, we need to make the most of our freedoms. Everyone needs to become aware of this injustice and keep reading and exploring as much as they can.

Tina explained that books have the ability to unite communities.

“When we read, we can really connect and learn more,” she said. “Even if it's not our own experiences, I think it's important that we read across, that we read other people's experiences, because it's through those stories that we learn and grow.”

“You sometimes don't know you exist until you realize someone like you existed before,” wrote George Johnson in *All Boys Aren't Blue*. Lines like these remind everyone everywhere of the importance of compassion and respect for others, not only for their community, but even those they may feel are different. But without access to liberating words, future generations will miss out on the chance to learn and grow.

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## Awards

**National Scholastic Press Assoc.** Pacemaker, 2007  
Best of Show, First Place, 2006

## Peninsula Press Club

First Place General Excellence  
- 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

The Panther welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be signed and the staff reserves the right to edit all submissions for length, grammar, potential libel, invasion of privacy and obscenity. Send letters to:

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