

- Consumers have ethical liability
- Biases in TV news hurt journalism

# OPINION

EL GATO • FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONNEWS.COM

## Los Gatos must reassess current ban on electric bikes

by Trent Bartlett  
Sports Editor



The mountain biking community has seen an increase in bike sales and people out on the trails ever since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns hit. Electric pedal assist bikes, also known as e-bikes, have seen the biggest rise in sales. E-bike riders range in age and gender

due to the physical support provided by the electric motor.

In Los Gatos, the e-bike community has experienced growth at a level never seen before as bike customers have caused inventory shortages at Summit Bicycle, Mike's Bikes, and GP Sports. Many people who buy e-bikes are parents who want to keep up with their kids out on the trails, or want to get out for an easy ride to the top of Jones Trail.

Recently the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, which has jurisdiction over the Jones Trail and other local trails, put up signs that state park rangers will enforce Ordinance 93-1, which bans throttled e-bikes from the trails. Midpeninsula isn't the only district that bans the bikes; Soquel Demonstration State Forest and other Santa Cruz mountain districts have passed similar ordinances.

The reason such districts have banned throttled e-bikes is because of the bikes' classification as motorized vehicles.

However, in order for the mountain bikes to be classified accurately as motorized vehicles, they need a throttle, which Summit Bicycles, Mike's Bikes, and GP Sports don't sell.

The e-bikes sold in Los Gatos and used on the trails are pedal-assist bikes which don't have a throttle.

Because of this, they are put into the Class 1 of bikes, the same class in which regular bikes fit.

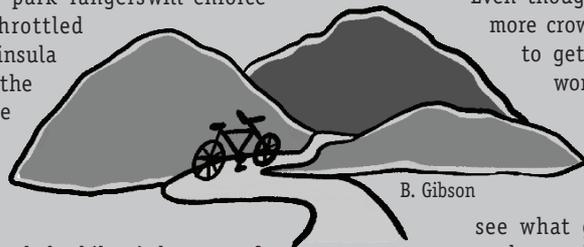
Both Summit Bicycles and GP Sports have both put up posters asking for people to sign a petition to allow e-bikes to ride.

Even though e-bikes have made the trails more crowded, they are still a great way to get exercise when people want a workout or just push up hills with help from the motor when they don't want to work as hard.

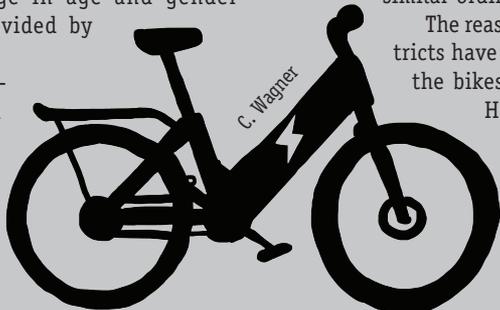
The districts that want to keep e-bikes banned fail to

see what good comes out of them. For example, my dad and his friends can keep up with my friends in Santa Cruz and on Jones Trail if they are able to ride e-bikes, allowing for a better bonding experience. E-bikes have also allowed my mom and her friends to go riding up trails they would have never done without pedal assistance.

The banning of e-bikes is just not something that is necessary considering the bikes are classified at the same level as bikes without electric assist. Los Gatos can still change the rules and allow e-bikes on the trails, but we need help from everyone in the community. Please, if possible, sign a local petition to allow e-bikes on mountain trails.



B. Gibson



C. Wagner

## Start valuing imperfection

by Alaina Fox  
Editor-in-Chief



When someone identifies perfectionism as one of their flaws in an interview or a casual conversation, I find that the comment often elicits derision and scorn. Dismissed as

a "humblebrag," perfectionism has garnered a reputation as something that people can resort to if they don't want to acknowledge legitimate shortcomings. This couldn't be further from the truth. People need to acknowledge the severity of perfectionism, and in order to negate its prevalence, we should start emphasizing the value of imperfect work.

I once heard perfectionism described as "not making sure that everything you do is perfect, but knowing that nothing you

do will ever be perfect." Perfectionism is extreme self-criticism in the pursuit of

flawlessness. Contrary to popular belief, perfectionism does not lead to more accomplishments; in fact, perfectionism and achievement are inversely related. Stemming from anxiety, perfectionism discourages people from trying new things out of fear that they may not succeed. It's common knowledge that refusing to venture outside of one's comfort zone is a barrier to success, whether that's in academic, professional, social, or extracurricular spheres.

Beyond the restrictive nature of perfectionism, we must acknowledge its associated health detriments. Anxiety, depression, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, PTSD, and a laundry list of other mental health issues accompany perfectionism. Of course, these disorders create physical health problems. Given these health consequences and higher rates of suicidality, life expectancy for perfectionists is lower than it is for non-perfectionists. In an interview with BBC, child development and perfectionism researcher Katie Rasmussen even described perfectionism as "an epidemic and public health issue."

Concerningly, studies indicate that perfectionism is on the rise. So, what can we do about it? The first step is to start appreciating seemingly subpar work. "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly" has become one of my favorite mottos. Perfectionism can be debilitating; without the guarantee of total success, avoidance seems like the best option. It's crucial to keep in mind that doing less well than you want to is better than doing nothing at all. This is particularly important for those struggling to take care of their physical and mental health. If you can't do an exercise regimen, take a walk across the street. If you can't take a walk, sit outside for a little bit. Sure, it would be ideal to do more, but that's not feasible for everyone, and that's okay. When we start accepting that our best doesn't always look like the most extreme option, we can work toward being comfortable with our capabilities.

(Sources: BBC, APA)

# Perfection



C. Wagner

## Clothes don't have gender

by Sonali Muthukrishnan  
National/World Editor



Harry Styles, a former member of the boy band One Direction, made history this December as the first solo male featured on a Vogue cover. The cover photo captures Styles in a field, decked

out in a light blue ruffled ball gown, complemented by black detailing and a short black tuxedo jacket. Styles's cover led to attacks from conservatives like Candance Owens, an American author and political activist, for expressing himself with traditionally feminine clothing.

For teenagers and millennials alike, Styles's feminine outfits come as no surprise for a generation that strives to tear down gender constructs. Styles is one of the music artists unapologetically adopting fashion trends traditionally associated with the opposite gender, just like Young Thug, Jaden Smith, and many others. In general, males tend to receive more attention from conservative circles when they refuse to conform to gender-based societal standards regarding clothing.

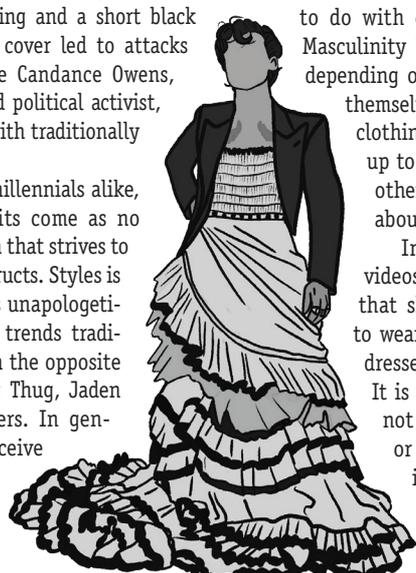
What is it about men accepting themselves and their style that makes others feel so uncomfortable? The simple fact is that clothing has no gender. Fashion trends transition frequently, moving from one to the next. A trend that

traditionalists once considered masculine at one time became feminine, or vice versa. Pants are a perfect example of this fluidity. Fashion trends have always been gender-fluid, so why can't these men explore all fashion, including feminine clothing trends, without experiencing backlash?

Owens attacked Styles on Twitter saying, "Bring back manly men," alluding to her belief that Styles is not masculine enough because he chooses to wear feminine clothing, despite the fact that masculinity should have nothing to do with clothing or social perception. Masculinity has many different definitions, depending on the way men perceive it and themselves. Men are not defined by the clothing they choose to wear. It is not up to us, as a society, to dictate how others, particularly men, should feel about themselves.

In one of her many Instagram videos regarding Styles, Owens stated that she would not tell people what to wear. She later calls men who wear dresses "perverted" and "disgusting." It is fine if you are a man who does not feel comfortable wearing a dress or painting your nails. It is okay if you are a woman who is not attracted to more feminine men. But that does not make it acceptable for you to shame others who feel comfortable adopting nontraditional fashion trends.

Gender-neutral fashion has emerged in our society and it is here to stay because younger generations wholeheartedly embrace it. Who cares if men feel more comfortable wearing feminine clothing?



B. Gibson

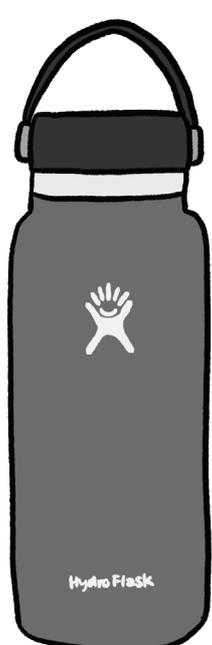
## Sun presents sustainability as consumer responsibility

by Esther Sun  
Editor-in-Chief



As climate change increasingly threatens our generation and climate marches seem to provoke very little real progress, it can be tempting simply to throw up our hands and absolve ourselves of responsibility. More and more, we have been shifting our discourse to blame climate change on corporations, whose actions we seem to have no power over.

This mindset is not only flawed, but is also extremely dangerous. In the capitalist economies of the Western world, consumer complicity in unethical practices encourages corporations to continue such practices. We can blame climate change on the 100 oil and gas corporations that cause 71 percent of carbon emissions, but we are the very consumers who provide profit to those same corporations with our spending habits. If enough people refuse to buy from companies that produce such heavy emissions, those corporations will be forced to adjust their practices to align with consumer demand.



Hydro Flask

Therefore, those who are able to afford an electric or hybrid vehicle when deciding which new car to purchase are obligated to seriously consider doing so.

Those who are able to take public transportation should try to do so as much as possible. For people who can afford to buy ethically-produced clothes, it is morally imperative that they research whether certain companies engage in sustainable practices and buy from the companies that do.

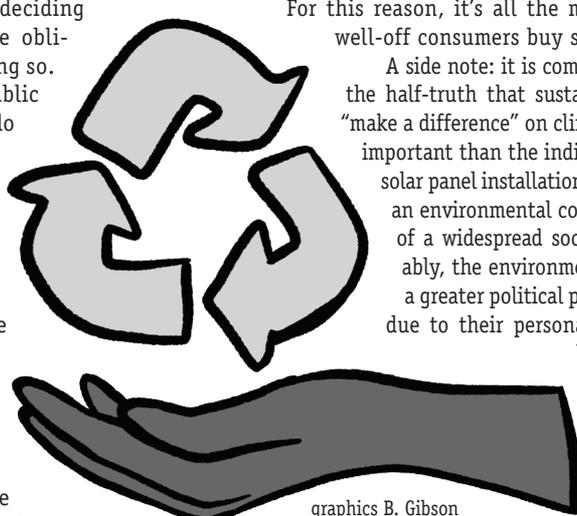
To clarify, my argument regarding consumer responsibility only applies to people with the financial ability to engage in ethical consumer practices. Eco-friendly products can be fairly expensive precisely because of the ethical practices involved in making them. Many

low-income individuals cannot afford to pay such prices when they are struggling to pay rent or

provide food for their families, and they shouldn't have to. For this reason, it's all the more critical that financially well-off consumers buy sustainably.

A side note: it is completely unproductive to spread the half-truth that sustainable lifestyle habits do not "make a difference" on climate change. What's even more important than the individual reusable water bottle or solar panel installation is our society's development of an environmental conscience. If it becomes enough of a widespread social imperative to live sustainably, the environment will inevitably also become a greater political priority for voters and taxpayers due to their personal involvement in sustainable living. Thus, it will be more likely that we can elect officials who have the power to regulate corporations and hold such officials accountable for doing so.

We need to stop presenting sustainable consumer habits as part of an optional lifestyle whose adherents deserve praise. In a capitalist society where industrial production is putting our very planet at risk, we as consumers cannot absolve ourselves from responsibility. (Source: The Guardian)



graphics B. Gibson