



Illustration courtesy of senior Linnaea Marks.

I am Single, and I Do Not Want to Mingle

HEALTH AND SPORTS CO-EDITOR SONIA MCSWAIN

Like many students at San Luis Obispo High School, I am single.

Although I'm single, I've had my fair share of crushes and day dreams of being in love, but nothing real enough to take me away from the single life. At first, the fact that I've never really been in love was something that scared me and made me think that something was wrong with me, but being single has taught me so much about myself.

The freedom that comes with being single has given me the chance to reevaluate the way I look at the world, given me the chance to learn to love myself, and has helped me become more confident in my actions. I have discovered that my self worth doesn't need to be validated by a partner and that being single isn't a big deal. So, why do people take such an issue with it?

The idea of being single is labeled as a bad thing, a badge of social inadequacy poked fun at and demeaned as romantic relationships are put on a pedestal.

This case is further emphasized by the glorification of dating across all forms of media. Relationships in TV shows and on social media are exalted, no matter how toxic, while single people are portrayed as something that needs fixing. The generalization of what singles are has caused society to pity them.

Growing up around this kind of content was extremely suffocating, and made me feel like I needed to be romantically involved with someone to be seen as regular. Society tells us that we must love someone to truly live, but why does that person need to be someone else? Can I not love myself and feel completely content with that?

Over the years, I've tried time and time again to get into the dating world, determined to experience the love that had been so highly praised throughout my life. The constant looking, hoping, and dreaming had me rushing into flirting, and as the people around me fell into relationships, the pressure to join them filled me. I felt like I needed to jump into things because I wanted to be able to relate to my friends, but I ended up being unhappy.

If you're unhappy, a relationship won't improve

your mood. It'll expose your true feelings.

People often associate single individuals with being reclusive, but there is a huge difference between loneliness and being alone. Being alone is a nonpermanent state of being that everyone experiences at some point. Loneliness is a state of mind that can exist, even when someone isn't by themselves.

Therefore, people who are alone aren't necessarily lonely, and people who experience loneliness aren't necessarily alone. I'd rather live in romantic solitude than feel lonely while dating somebody.

Being single isn't a bad thing, but treating it like it is only fuels the stigma. Stop worrying about if you have a large body count or not. Stop worrying that you aren't fulfilling some social goal of dating in high school. Stop trying to fill your need for validation by using people.

Being single can be a liberating experience, but only by seeing past the negative stereotypes and societal expectations can one's growth truly bloom.

Every single one of us is deserving of love, assurance, and acceptance, but you can find all of those qualities within yourself.

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NEWS

EDITOR: OWEN SPARGO



Photo courtesy of English teacher Scott Nairne.

The Hub is Helping Students with Study Skills

HEALTH AND SPORTS CO-EDITOR CATE TUCKER

San Luis Obispo High School has a class located to the right of the library, known as the Hub, which teaches students study skills and assists them with their classwork.

Before COVID-19, SLOHS did have a study skills program, but it was made exclusively for students with IEPs and 504s (support plans for students with certain special needs or disabilities). This meant only students in the special education program or ones with specific accommodations requested to the school could be in the program.

“We have always had a study skills class at SLOHS, but collectively our staff wanted to change the structure of the program so it would be more consistently implemented in order to have greater success with helping students pass classes. The Hub name is an attempt to rebrand the study skills program as it crosses the lines of students with and without IEPs,” said special education teacher Jesse Grimm.

When, COVID-19 struck, the school shifted their attention to other students that needed support too. After seeing “B and C” students as well as “A and B” students failing their classes, the idea for the Hub was formulated.

“Earlier in the [2020-2021] school year, small groups of students went back to school to get extra help, while doing their zoom classes. I talked with a couple of those students, at the end before we came back with everybody. They said, ‘it was so good, can we keep doing this next year?’” said assistant Principal Nathan Meinert.

A meeting was held to discuss a new idea: anyone that needed help could put the Hub in their schedule. Students are contacted if they might be the right fit for the Hub or can ask their counselor and see if they should be placed in the class.

“One of the big things we’ve noticed is that it’s allowing more kids who need that help to get help because you don’t have to have a specific qualification or plan, or disability to be able to be a part of it [Hub], which is cool,” said Meinert.

The Hub has many periods available for students who would like to add it to their schedule. Someone can put four core classes on their schedule and have one still be the Hub.

There have only been two full trimesters of the Hub so far, but it has proved to be promising for the students taking part.

“I have seen positive effects on my grades because of the Hub. It gives me a lot of time to work on

what I am missing. I can concentrate better too,” said Hub student and sophomore Sugey Rodriguez Huerta.

Studies have shown that having good study skills help all students significantly, whether it is increasing confidence and self-esteem or reducing anxiety about tests and deadlines. Knowing they have this class will give comfort to anyone who is stressed about a due date or needs assistance with organization.

“This class helps with my stress. When I don’t have time at home to complete something I know that I have time during study to get things done and work with teachers,” said Hub student and freshman Riley Passanisi.

If a SLOHS student wants to be involved with the Hub but does not need the extra resource, they can look into being a peer helper as well!

“We also have peer helpers in the class, who are great. Juniors and seniors or some students of a younger age, that help,” said Hub teacher Adam Basch.

Hopefully, students at SLOHS who need assistance with any study skills can now get the help they need.

Sources: ncbi.gov

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Photo courtesy of junior Owen Blackwell.

The SLO Railroad Safety Trail Helps with Student Safety

REPORTER MADI TORRES

Many students at San Luis Obispo High School interact with the train tracks near school frequently, which can create concerns of danger for students, something the school and city are trying to alleviate.

Students occasionally hang out on the tracks before school, after school, and during lunch. There are many policies being put in place to help with a lot of these problems. One example of this is the rules dictating who can leave campus and who can't during school hours.

"SLOPD are aware of our concerns regarding our proximity to the tracks and our desire to keep our students safe when they are off campus, and they patrol these areas. When thinking about lunchtime specifically, open campus privileges are reserved for students in 10th through 12th grade. We

do have staff at our gates and who do supervision around our campus during lunchtime." said principal at SLOHS Rollin Dickinson.

Students also cross the tracks to get to and from school. The city of San Luis Obispo is adding a new leg to a railroad safety trail from Orcutt that will go through downtown and then end near Cal Poly.

The trail already runs from Orcutt road to around downtown. This trail is known by many residents, and goes through a few major neighborhoods in the surrounding area.

When finished with construction, the trail will be 1.4 miles long. It is intended to allow pedestrians and residents to use the path for recreational bicycling, walking, or rollerblading. This makes for a safer commute to school for students that walk or bike because they will be somewhat more protected from motor vehicles and trains that pass through.

The plan is called the Railroad Safety Plan and has

already finished many projects including a bridge that was put in at the intersection of Pepper Street and Phillips Lane.

There is also a bridge with two crossings going over highway 101 and the train tracks along with the Jennifer Street Bridge that has long been a part of the SLO railroad safety trail.

"People should not be walking along or hanging out on or near train tracks. It is potentially dangerous and illegal. Though I have not received specific concerns from community members regarding students crossing train tracks, we of course want our students to be safe and to make good decisions." said Dickinson.

With our close proximity to the train tracks, it's really important for students to follow these rules and make safe decisions!

Source: *Slocity.org*



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Abolish Class Ranking: it Only Hurts Students

CO EDITOR IN CHIEF OWEN SPARGO

San Luis Obispo High School's class ranking system creates an unnecessary environment of competition between students and leaves many feeling that their worth is tied to a ratio. It's a flawed method of measuring student performance that has little to no use in the college admissions process, and something the school must abolish.

Class ranking is based on a student's weighted GPA, on a scale of 0-5.0. The class ranking is displayed under the transcripts portion of every student's Aeries portal. It's easy to access, just like checking your grades. Almost every private college asks for class rank (only if your school has it!) when applying. Even if a college doesn't ask, it's readily available on the official transcript submitted by our counselors.

Like an SAT score, it's a way of comparing students to one another. And that's precisely the issue: it tries to turn seniors' high school careers, including all their successes and failures, into a singular number. Because a student with a higher class rank is automatically smarter, right? If someone is passionate and really cares about school and grades, then it's of course safe to assume they would be in the top 10 of their class.

But this number is much too oversimplified to communicate the nuances of a high school experience.

"It's literally a singular number, and it doesn't include your activities, your interests or what passions you are pursuing. It defeats the whole purpose of what high school is, which should be finding what you're interested in," said senior Cevina Manzano.

Since it's not based on unweighted GPA, the class rank favors "AP students" who take mostly weighted classes.

"Class rank is indeterminate of ambition. Environmental science is not an AP class but you can be really interested in it and get an A plus, but you will not have a GPA boost," said senior Sabrina Garcia.

For the purpose of climbing the ladder and outcompeting classmates, some students load up their schedules with weighted classes galore, regardless of their

interest in them. I mean, it's impossible that so many people are genuinely excited to learn about Calculus AB and BC (sorry Math department).

For seniors who don't fall into the "AP student" category, aren't planning on attending college, or just don't put the greatest emphasis on their rank and grades, it fosters toxicity.

"A lot of people ask about your class rank and if they're higher, then they think about you in a different way. I hear a lot of people talk about it, especially when they're at the top and it's very competitive but in the wrong way," said senior Naya Koc.

High and low class ranks are thus tied to stereotypes and assumptions that we have of one another as students.

"The conversation around class rank has become much more 'Am I better than you at this?'. And people will insinuate that if you have a high rank, you only care about GPA so you didn't take any elective classes," said Sabrina Garcia.

If the toxicity the system brings isn't enough evidence that it must be thrown out the door, it's not that crucial in admission processes either. In fact, many larger schools don't have class ranks so their students don't submit a number but aren't disadvantaged. And as admissions become more holistic and standardized testing becomes optional it's clear that we shouldn't place so much emphasis on a singular number.

Some would argue that class ranks are necessary for determining valedictorian and helping high-achieving students feel rewarded.

"I think that academic rigor and achievement should be rewarded and shown in class rank. It's something that you can look at as your accomplishment. You don't have to base your worth on your class rank, but it just demonstrates your dedication and your involvement in school," said Sophia Garcia.

Though this reward may be worth it for some, there are plenty of other ways the school can reward these students. If we think of the majority of our student population (anyone under maybe the top 30), class ranking only creates feelings of inadequacy. If this is something the school can prevent, it's their responsibility to help in forming an environment that is less competitive.

Abolish class ranking; students shouldn't be defined by a number.

Settling the Marvel vs DC Debate

REPORTERS WESLEY BARTLETT AND SIENA BOSCARO

Ever since DC comics originated in 1934 and Marvel comics followed in 1939, people have debated which of the two was superior. Now, with both comic series' having their own cinematic universes, it's about time someone came to an answer. Freshman reporter and DC fan Wesley Bartlett faces off sophomore reporter and Marvel fan Siena Boscaro regarding storylines and movies.

Bartlett about storylines: The DC Extended Universe (DCEU) has superior storylines since Marvel's storylines never ended up mattering. "Loki" and other post-"Endgame" projects have been extremely detrimental to the past films' existences. "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier" demonstrated that Captain America never cared about his alleged family, the Avengers. "Wandavision" showed Wanda enslave and torture an entire town and then leave without any repercussions. Loki said that The One Who Remains orchestrated all past events in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), and thus no characters had any choices. "Eternals" introduced a cast of characters that could have saved the world from any of the Avengers-level threats and "Hawkeye" finished it off by showing that Hawkeye was never useful and he was easily replaceable by Kate Bishop. Phase four, the post-Endgame films, has killed the past and doomed the future, while the DCEU has only been improving since its conception.

Boscaro about storylines: What has been revealed about Captain America in "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier" is not a knock on his heroism. Once again, he did what he had to do for the greater good of humanity. Kate Bishop didn't replace Hawkeye, they worked together until Hawkeye felt that Kate was ready to become her own hero (plus we all know Hawkeye's retirement had been years in the making). The entirety of phase four is about the transition into a new generation. DC doesn't have that. They only have one phase: being worse than Marvel. These storylines Wesley is bashing are not some gimmick the Marvel corporation is playing, it's a meticulously planned deeper step into the franchise everyone knows and loves. The MCU storyline within itself is top tier, as it builds up each character's personal backstory with movies or TV productions, and then brings them all together in a battle to save the world. While I do enjoy the dark themes used in DC, Marvel uses a more lighthearted approach that makes the movies more accessible for everyone to watch and enjoy.

Bartlett about movies: Yes, Marvel movies are probably better than DC. Like so far, Marvel has had far better cohesion between movies and overall better stories. However, as I stated previously, phase four has not been going well for Marvel and the DCEU has gone nowhere but up. In 2021, "Black Widow" was hated on and "Shang-Chi was just very meh. "Eternals" actually has a forty-something percent on Rotten Tomatoes and the only actually good movie was "Spider-Man: No Way Home". Until Spider-Man, the MCU was pretty weak during 2021. Meanwhile, people really liked Zack Snyder's "Justice League", and "The Suicide Squad" was a brilliant film that everyone loved. Also, DC actually has the audacity to make their movies rated R which allows the comic characters to do and say the things that they realistically should. Marvel keeping all of their movies at PG-13 keeps them from using characters effectively and DC definitely has more variety. The Marvel formula has absolutely been overused while there is no true pattern between DC movies. The repetitive story structure and tones of Marvel movies have worn out, and unless Marvel takes drastic steps to make their stories more engaging, DC will keep getting better while Marvel will continue to deteriorate.



Photo illustration courtesy of sophomore Siena Boscaro.

Boscaro about movies: There's not a lot to say except Marvel seems to be the clear winner. DC has several well known characters but you can't just make a million Superman movie renditions. Eventually they'll run out of ideas. The same thing goes for Marvel but that's why they ended phase three and gave the well known Avengers team an ending. Phase four is a transitional period to the very bright future ahead of Marvel. They are setting up movies called the "Young Avengers" (which will be a new team, similar to the original Avengers, filled with younger characters such as Billy and Tommy Maximoff (Wiccan & Speed), Kid Loki, and Kate Bishop (Hawkeye)) which, in other terms, means ten more years of fantastic film. The next generation of the MCU is still being told as fans sit and watch phase four. But DC is in a loop of the same characters. There's hope for them to add some heroes from the comics to the big screen but they need to start NOW. They needed a business plan that would have stopped them from using all their good characters in one decade. And guess what? It's not the 2010's anymore; time is running out. Creating these complicated stories is no small feat, and I have a lot of respect for Marvel in doing it so eloquently. Watching all the movies interconnect with each other while also watching an entire universe form before your eyes as superheroes fight to save the world, is truly special. There's a lot of that the DCEU just can't accomplish. The DCEU has found success in things such as "The Suicide Squad" and "Batman" but they've already made a loads of those movies so the clock is ticking; and it will run dry.

DC has had a tumultuous past but Marvel has an uncertain future. While this article is attempting to compare apples to oranges, it is still clear that Marvel has had superior films in the past, though the future remains to be seen.

70 Minute Class Periods: Do We Need Them?

REPORTER WESLEY BARTLETT

San Luis Obispo High School students have registered for their next year of classes, but many have had complaints about the registration process.

SLOHS operates on a trimester system, which should theoretically allow more variety in classes. However, since there are only five available class periods, the course variety is still limited.

“I don’t have room to take the electives I want next year,” said freshman Avery Johnson.

As colleges and universities become increasingly selective, AP classes become more in demand. Since AP classes provide a GPA boost and count for college credit, college-oriented students feel that they have to take AP classes to stay ahead of the curve.

“AP classes are important because colleges really prefer them, so in order to stay ahead of the game you’re kind of expected to take them,” said freshman Jordyn McNabb.

AP classes, however, are a two-trimester commitment that must be completed

in the first two trimesters. Furthermore, if a student plans to take the AP exam to get college credit, they must also complete a seminar in the third trimester. These seminars count as electives, rendering the need for electives that people enjoy relatively useless.

People are already frustrated with how long class periods are, and including more class periods throughout the day that are shorter would help alleviate that frustration.

“I think classes should be sixty minutes,” said Teddy Gonzalez.

This new class schedule would still begin at 8:00 am and end at 3:10 pm, but there would simply be space for another elective or graduation requirement so that everyone could take the class that they wanted.

College admissions officers recommend four years of all five core subjects, math, english, social sciences/history, foreign language, and science. When we have five class periods, this makes the goal impossible.

Seventy minute class periods are excessive. By removing even ten minutes from each class period, that time could be restructured into another class period, and give students more options for this next year.

Cheer Should Count as a Sport at SLOHS



Photo courtesy of SLOHS Cheer Instagram.

REPORTER MAGGIE MCKAY

Here at San Luis Obispo High School, cheerleading doesn’t count as a sport. In other words, being a cheerleader does not count for Physical Education credits, as it does for every other sport on campus. Is there a reason for not including cheer?

“Cheer is not considered to be an official CIF sport, which is kind of a funny anomaly because it’s not considered to be a club or an activity either, so it’s this weird outlier,” said Athletic Director Marci Beddall.

Because cheerleading isn’t considered a CIF sport in our district, SLOHS isn’t able to clear the cheerleaders of P.E, or have cheer as a fifth period class as our other athletes do.

“When you only get to practice two days a week, you don’t really get to get stronger,” said cheerleader and sophomore Calista Bryan.

“I feel like we definitely deserve P.E credits for cheer because of how much work we put into our practices,” said cheerleader and sophomore Audrey Drenckpohl.

If the sport were to be an official CIF sport, the cheerleaders would be able to get in more practices because the school would be able to make cheer a fifth period class.

Many of us here at SLOHS know that being in the marching band gives students their P.E credits, because of the physical effort it takes to march and play at the same time. If this reasoning is valid amongst others, the same views apply to cheerleading.

Cheerleading requires strength, coordination, and teamwork. It is often considered one of the hardest sports due to its strenuous practice and risk of injury.

Not to mention, the definition of a sport according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary is “an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment,” in which cheerleading fits all of the criteria for.

“We are constantly practicing our stunts, tumbling, jumps, and cheers, and those things take a lot of effort and hard work,” said Drenckpohl.

Regarding the marching band, there may be an alternative for receiving P.E credits.

“I know in the past, we’ve had gymnasts and other off campus athletes that have applied for an application to get their P.E credits, so the band may have done something similar,” said Beddall.

Whether the intent is to address the topic with the district, or directly to CIF, there should overall be more consideration on adding cheerleading as a CIF sport, so that our SLOHS cheerleaders receive the same opportunities and benefits as the other athletes on campus.

Sources: Bleacherreport, NCBI, Merriam Webster

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Student Love Languages: Have They Changed?

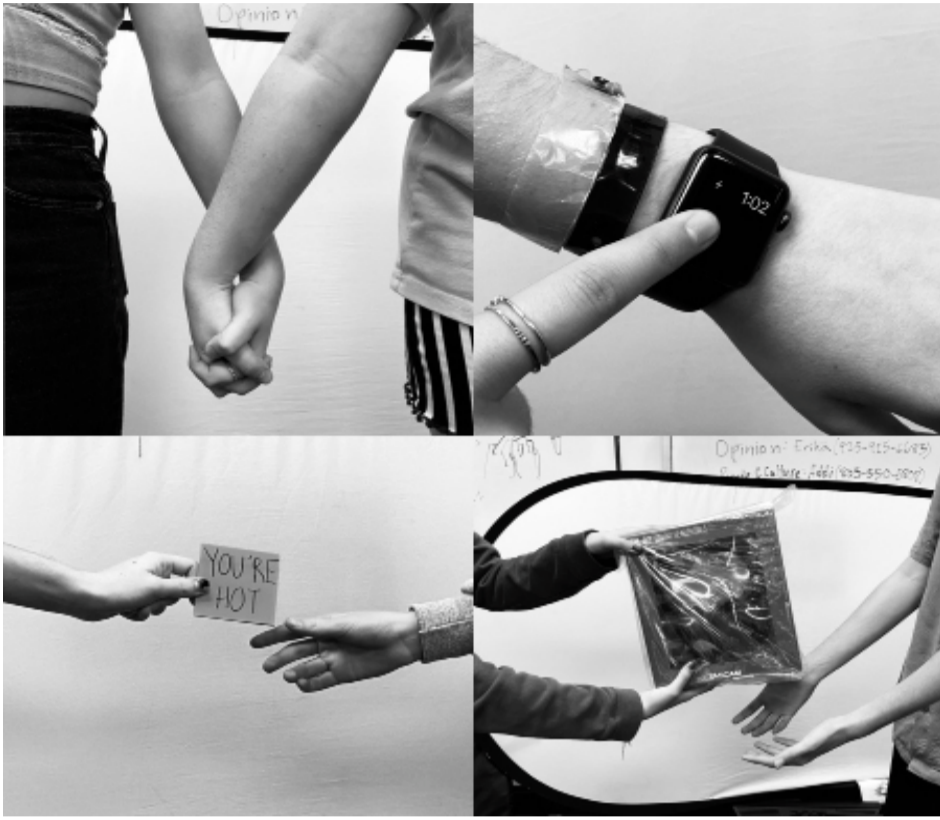


Photo courtesy of co-Health and Sports editor Sonia McSwain.

REPORTER ALMA TINOCO

San Luis Obispo High School students can agree that they've seen their share of couples on campus. Some have been around and others have recently sprung up during the pandemic. Every person has a different way of showing affection, so *Expressions* reached out to couples on campus about how they show their affection and if it's been affected at all during the pandemic.

Expressions: Which of the five love languages, words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service, receiving gifts, do you identify with?

Senior Nina Ramezani: I would say mostly quality time, that's the best way that we can bond with each other.

Senior Weston Jenkins: Quality time for sure, and acts of service.

Senior Berlyn Ellsworth: I think it's quality time for me.

Senior Gustave Stork: Quality time.

Sophomore Aminata Brosseau: Time. I think it's important to be able

to have time alone with someone. I think you're able to connect with people on a deeper level when you're able to spend time spend quality time with each other.

Expressions: Why do you align with that love language(s)?

Ramezani: I feel like the closest we get is usually when we're together and just spending time with each other. It's just his presence and my presence for him is enough for us.

Jenkins: Quality time makes sense, because it's more of spending time with someone that you actually like to be around. I think that's actually one of the main points of a relationship is actually being able to spend some time with the person and enjoy it. I think that [acts of service] goes into the same thing of having trust in a relationship or being comfortable with helping each other out.

Ellsworth: I like activities and making memories and I like traveling.

Stork: I think that the best way to form a connection with somebody is just to spend quality time with that person and enjoy their company.

Brosseau: I'm not a very physical person, I'm kind of shy a little bit. I just find it easier to become closer with people just by spending time with them.

Expressions: Which love language do you think your partner identifies with?

Ramezani: Probably the same as mine, just spending quality time.

Ellsworth: I think his is also quality time.

Stork: I'd say probably the same.

Brosseau: His is probably physical.

Expressions: Did your relationship start before or during the pandemic?

Ramezani: Before the pandemic.

Ellsworth: During the pandemic.

Brosseau: During the pandemic.

Expressions: Do you think that the pandemic has affected your love language in any kind of way?

Ramezani: It has, but it also forced us to take other kinds of love language. Before quarantine we never really called or Facetime each other. When quarantine started we couldn't see each other.

Jenkins: There was a long time where we couldn't see each other for a while just because everything was shut down.

Ellsworth: Quality time was kind of taken away. We were separated or we weren't allowed to hang out unless we got tested beforehand. So it was a hassle or a luxury to hang out with them.

Stork: I'd say probably so, definitely at the beginning finding quality time was hard because of COVID-19.

Brosseau: With time it was difficult at first, but then I got used to it more so I kind of adjusted.

Many couples on campus seem to appreciate quality time with their significant other. With COVID-19 restrictions, couples overcame the obstacles posed by COVID-19. Not everyone shows how they feel the same way, but one thing many have in common is spending time with the one they love.

Foreign Exchange Students Finding Love in America



Photo courtesy of reporter Etienne Brennan.

REPORTER ETIENNE BRENNAN

Foreign exchange students are the newest on San Luis Obispo high school's campus, which gives them the opportunity to bond with new people and form new relationships- Not just in a romantic sense, but in a platonic way as well.

The students who came to SLOHS for this year left everything behind, whether that is family members and/or a previous relationship. It can be intimidating coming from another country to America because of the major difference in culture.

Most of the students this year have come from Spain, Italy, or France, but it is not limited to that. The majority of the students, however, said they haven't had a hard time with the transition.

"Coming here has been great, people are so nice and open to talking to me," said senior Alessandro De Gara.

For the foreign exchange students, thanks to the great environment we have at SLOHS, making friends has been easy.

"I have made some great new friends while being here that I think I'll be able to keep in touch with when I leave," said sophomore Santiago Pago Egea.

Making friendships at SLOHS has not been hard for the foreign exchange students, while getting into relationships has been a little more difficult. "Coming here making friendships was easy and a given, but I wasn't looking for a boyfriend," said senior Ludovica Saurwein.

Getting into relationships, on the other hand, has been a little more difficult.

"I did not leave Spain in a relationship or plan on getting into one when I got here. It has been great meeting people here and getting close to them, but being in a relationship with someone I would have to leave does not sound fun," said De Gara.

When Saurwein came to SLOHS, she was still in a relationship at home in Italy, however shortly into getting here she broke up with him.

"I broke up with my boyfriend back home after getting here because I am a very physical person. I need to talk to the person and be with them. So I could not stay with him knowing I was going to be gone for so long," said Saurwein.

Leaving relationships behind can be hard, but also necessary.

The students who have gotten into relationships at SLOHS keep in mind that they will be leaving at the end of the year. Leaving typically means the couple is going to have to break up when the exchange student leaves.

"I'd prefer to not think about when Ludo leaves because I would rather just think in the present. But when she does leave I'm sure it will be hard and we will have to break up because we're not cut out to be long distance," said senior Luca Marino.

SLOHS Students Implicitly Have Beauty Standards

NEWS EDITOR OWEN SPARGO

At San Luis Obispo High School, beauty standards that prioritize a certain type of “aesthetic” molds dating culture as it informs who students consider attractive or worth being in a relationship with.

These aesthetics exist in many forms and differ in their impact on each student’s selection of their partners. This can look like having the money to be “fashionable” (which, in reality, is just dressing with the ever changing trends that once considered brands like Lululemon or scrunchies a fashion statement), having Eurocentric features (smaller noses, blonde hair, blue eyes), or being skinny.

“Beauty standards do exist at SLOHS. Our community is really white so that feeds into the standard of being a skinny white girl and if you don’t fit that, I think a lot of people try to force themselves into that standard when they aren’t it naturally. People who do fit into it are praised and glamorized,” said senior Tekuru Schwartz.

This makes sense when we consider the way that beauty has been historically marketed to us. Models on the cover of fashion magazines or muscular celebrities become the image that pops into our heads when we think attractive, so people create expectations for what is considered hot or not.

One very interesting study in Nicaragua tested this concept by going to an area with no electricity and exposure to television or much media. When split into two groups, one was shown pictures of plus-size models and the other was shown “skinny” models. When later asked what their ideal body type was, the subjects mostly answered along the lines of the images they were originally shown. We naturally change our expectations of what is attractive based on the standards shown to us.

“I feel like some people limit themselves to people who have to look a certain way. Subconsciously, they try to look for Eurocentric beauty. If a small nose is pretty, they don’t actively try to look for people with small noses, but it’s implicit,” said senior Nivashini Saravanakumar.

Additionally, people relate better to those who are similar in terms of ability to fit the beauty standard because they’re hypothetically easier to get along with and provide a sense of comfort.

“People more often date based on social standing at our school rather than who they actually have a connection with. It’s so stigmatized to talk to somebody that’s not in your part of the social hierarchy. Wealthy, more popular white people are not really going to date people outside of that group,” said Schwartz.

This can also be seen in the homogenous styles or “aesthetics” of many couples at SLOHS.

“I’ve never seen significant others with two totally different styles. People are more comfortable with their own style and they just get closer to a certain type of people,” said senior Mackenzie Nguyen.

This affects the amount of interracial relationships that exist at SLOHS, as people are afraid to cross social boundaries in the creation of their relationship.

“I don’t see many mixed couples at school. When I do see couples, they’re mostly just within the same race,” said Saravanakumar.

These beauty standards become harmful as they force people to change elements of themselves in favor of being more attractive. People do everything they can to fit a toxic image that just isn’t them.

The solution isn’t so easy. These are internalized ideas we have, but what we can do is change the emphasis we put on fitting these standards.

“I think that beauty standards affect everyone in some way, but as time goes on you have to realize that meeting some sort of a fabricated and far-fetched standard isn’t going to bring you fulfillment in the long run,” said senior Ipek Karagozlu.

Rather than trying to change little parts of our physical appearance, we should focus on building meaningful relationships with others that aren’t based on an “aesthetic”. After all, perfection is in the eye of the beholder right?

How Do SLOHS Students Interact with Exes After Breakups?

PEOPLE AND CULTURE EDITOR ADDI WOODS

Many San Luis Obispo High School students have been in a relationship at some point in their lives, but what happens once they break up? Do they stay friends or become enemies? How do they handle encounters with their ex at school?

“After a breakup, you are grieving the loss of that person. It’s natural for students to lose focus on other aspects of their lives while moving through the stages of grief. In most cases of grief, you’re grieving the loss of a life. With a breakup, that person still exists, so you are more likely to have reminders of that loss. Especially on a high school campus,” said counselor Chris Inman.

Expressions talked to a couple of students that have recently gotten out of a relationship to talk about the after effects of a breakup.

Expressions: Are you on good or bad terms with your ex?

Senior Alex Thorne: We’re on pretty good terms, he sits behind me in one of my classes.

Freshman Charli Hicks: Good. We’re friends and we still talk every day.

Expressions: How do you handle encounters with them at school?

Thorne: I’m pretty normal but he’s a little awkward. But hopefully, he’ll get over it.

Hicks: Well, we walk together to classes sometimes so I still see him a lot at school.

Expressions: How was your mental state affected by the breakup?

Thorne: A couple of weeks after it was a little shaky. I made some bad choices, got a little worse, but we’re good now.

Hicks: Not much, I just zoned out in class a lot.

Expressions: How did you get over your breakup?

Thorne: I guess I kind of faked it till I made it and then eventually forgot about it.

Hicks: I haven’t. So whether you’re best friends with your ex now or if you’ve blocked them on every social media platform, remember you’re not alone.

How Much PDA is Too Much PDA?



Illustration courtesy of reporter Owen Blackwell.

OPINION EDITOR ERIKA SPARGO

No matter who you are, chances are that you’ve witnessed— maybe even participated— in it before: public displays of affection.

Whether it’s seeing that one freshman couple kissing in the math building as if the apocalypse is dawning upon us, or that one couple that keeps getting

“featured” on the San Luis Obispo High School “ship or dip” Instagram accounts (but keeps getting dipped), we all know what’s going on.

Frankly, it’s an epidemic that’s sweeping our country and destroying our education system.

That’s right. PDA.

Expressions reached out to multiple students to get their opinions on PDA at school.

Expressions: What forms of PDA do you think unacceptable among students?

Freshman Ariel Gatti: I don’t like PDA at school at all, especially the making out. It’s gross. And weird. It’s weird seeing that kind of stuff when I’m casually walking through the hallway and just trying to get to my next class. Hand-holding is okay, I guess, but if it’s more than that, dude, go to the bathroom or something. Just go take it somewhere else, not at school.

Senior Evan Sosa: I think as long as you’re not completely all over each other and making out constantly, I don’t feel like there’s that big of a deal with it. I think the farthest you should be going is kissing each other. If you’re going farther than that, groping each other and being outwardly sexual, that’s too far for a school setting.

Freshman Shawn Williams: I think that couples making out in the hallways is overkill because it can be pretty awkward at times.

Expressions: Are there any ways in which you think that PDA might be a disturbance or distraction to the education of other students?

Gatti: Well for one, if it’s during passing periods, couples stand in the hallways and make it harder to get to classes easily, especially when there’s traffic. And the couples expressing affection in class are just unnecessary and disturbing.

Sosa: I think if it’s being done in class, yeah. If you’re keeping it outside of class, like during breaks and passing periods, I think that’s a different story because no one’s actively trying to learn and you’re not in that same learning setting.

Williams: Well, it can be distracting for students trying to learn but it’s also distracting to students in the relationship because it redirects where their focus is.

To that one couple macking in the hallway at 10:30 a.m.— you know who you are. Please stop. You’ll see each other at the end of the period.

HEALTH & SPORTS

EDITORS: SONIA MCSWAIN & CATE TUCKER

It's Spring Sports Time!

REPORTER MADI TORRES

Winter sports at SLOHS have just wrapped up and that means that the Spring sport groups have already been practicing and competing! The sports that are in season right now are Track and Field, Stunt, Boys Volleyball, Swim and Dive, Boys Golf, Boys Tennis, Baseball, and Softball!

Expressions reached out to SLOHS coaches and student athletes from a few teams asking them questions about their team and season so far.

Expressions: How is the team environment so far? Are you enjoying it?

Track and Field Coach Adam

Basch: It's great to see so many athletes out for Track and Field. We are all enjoying the warm winter and getting ready for the season.

Freshman and a member of the

Stunt team Hannah Van Doren:

The team environment is very positive and everyone on the team makes you feel included. It's such a great opportunity and I'm so glad I'm on the team. I would encourage anyone who is interested in stunt to try out. It's a great place to make new friends and also connect with people outside your grade level.

Expressions: How is the team looking so far? Do you think you'll have

a good season?

Basch: Our girls are defending league champions for the last three seasons and our boys finished a close second at league last year. We always try to gear up for the league meet as well as send as many athletes as possible on to the CIF meet.

Van Doren: I think our team has been working very hard for this season. We definitely have very strong players and I do think it will be a good season. Some of us who are newer are getting used to learning all the routines but it is nice that we are put into them right away and are training hard to perfect them.

Expressions: How are your practices being affected by Measure D and all the construction if any?

Basch: It is less than ideal (since we do not have a track, or jumping or throwing facilities) but we are making it work. The coaches and athletes have had a great attitude and are being flexible and making it work for this year. Tell people to follow us @slohstrackandfield on Instagram!

With that note, you can follow @slohathletics on Instagram for updates on current sports! Let's get excited and cheer on all of our fellow Tigers!

Students Juggle Time

REPORTERS EDRAS DOMINGUEZ AND MADI TORRES

Time is very crucial to SLOHS students. Time management makes a good habit of organizing our daily habits. Balancing a job and a sport can be stressful to do at the same time.

Expressions: What job are you currently doing and what school sport are you currently playing?

Junior Benjamin Shaker: I am wrestling for SLOHS and I work for my dad at SLO Froyo and Snofari.

Freshman Chloe Stansel: I babysit and I do ballet.

Expressions: Would you say you get enough sleep or do you have problems sleeping?

Shaker: I sometimes have problems sleeping because I don't get enough sleep because school is so long.

Stansel: I would say that I do not get enough sleep. I get five to six hours a night.

Expressions: What's your daily routine like?

Shaker: I wake up, brush my teeth and then get dressed. I go to school, wrestle and after school I go to work. Get home, do homework, video games, and finally sleep.

Stansel: Well, usually I go home and then I'll have a music lesson.

Then I go to dance and I get home at either 8:30 or 9:30 depending on the day. Sometimes rather than a music lesson, I'll be babysitting and then I go to dance. And then there's homework.

Expressions: Does your homework load have an effect on your schedule?

Shaker: My homework load takes a lot of time out of my day and I cannot do any extra things outside of school.

Stansel: I need to skip dance just to do homework or I'm not able to babysit because of homework. Or if I do end up going to dance and babysitting then homework will get delayed until like after 9:30 or whenever I get home. Depending on the workload, sometimes it will keep me until like midnight.

Expressions: Would you say that your job affects your grades at all?

Shaker: It doesn't get in the way of school and grades because I make school more of a priority.

Stansel: No, not at all. I prioritize my schoolwork over anything else.

Time is a crucial variable in a SLOHS students life. Use it wisely.

Who says Martial Arts are for Men? Women can be black belts too!

REPORTER MIA CLIFFORD

The idea that martial arts is a "man's sport" deters many San Luis Obispo High School women from even trying the art. High ranking female martial should be more common, but our male-dominated society has dictated otherwise. Removing the stigma around the sport and welcoming women will increase the amount of confident and self aware females in our society.

As a female martial artist, having the confidence to defend myself is something I pride myself in. My journey to black belt has majorly changed the type of person I am today. It has provided me with morals and standards that I apply in my everyday life. United States Academy of Martial Arts (US-AMA) in San Luis Obispo has given me a place to train and develop my skills.

First degree black belt and SLOHS senior Leslie Galicia remarks on her martial arts journey.

"US-AMA is a dojo where we learn six different martial arts. That includes karate, kung fu, aikido, judo, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and taekwondo. We focus on the main principles of each art and kind of blend them all together like a melting pot. Each week is a different martial art that we focus on," said Galicia.

US-AMA black belts specialize in the art of Karate. This dojo has a unique style as six different martial arts are being taught under one roof. As students progress through advanced ranks, they are able to focus on a new martial art as their specialty. As Galicia trains for her second degree black belt, her focus shifts from karate to Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Galicia is an experienced martial artist and teacher. She has been practicing martial arts for 8 years.

"I was introduced to martial arts because one of my aunts would watch movies with Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. As a kid, I would always be interested in doing martial arts just like the movies," said Galicia.

As a female, pursuing a male dominated sport is no easy feat. I have trained under two dojos for a total of ten years. The amount of females who I have trained alongside doesn't begin to compare to the amount of males.

"I would encourage other females to do martial arts. It boosts your confidence and your self awareness. The way that you carry yourself is with more dignity. It allows you to see people in a different way that's a little bit more respectful," said Galicia.

Throughout her martial arts journey, Galicia has learned many important life skills. Etiquette practiced in the dojo has transferred to her daily life and impacts how she treats others and herself.

"One of my biggest takeaways is realizing how strong the human body could be. You don't have to look physically strong to be able to effectively defend yourself. I've realized how much humans can do, and especially females, not just males," said Galicia.

Practicing martial arts is an enriching and empowering journey. It provides you with a sense of confidence and virtues that women and men alike should experience.



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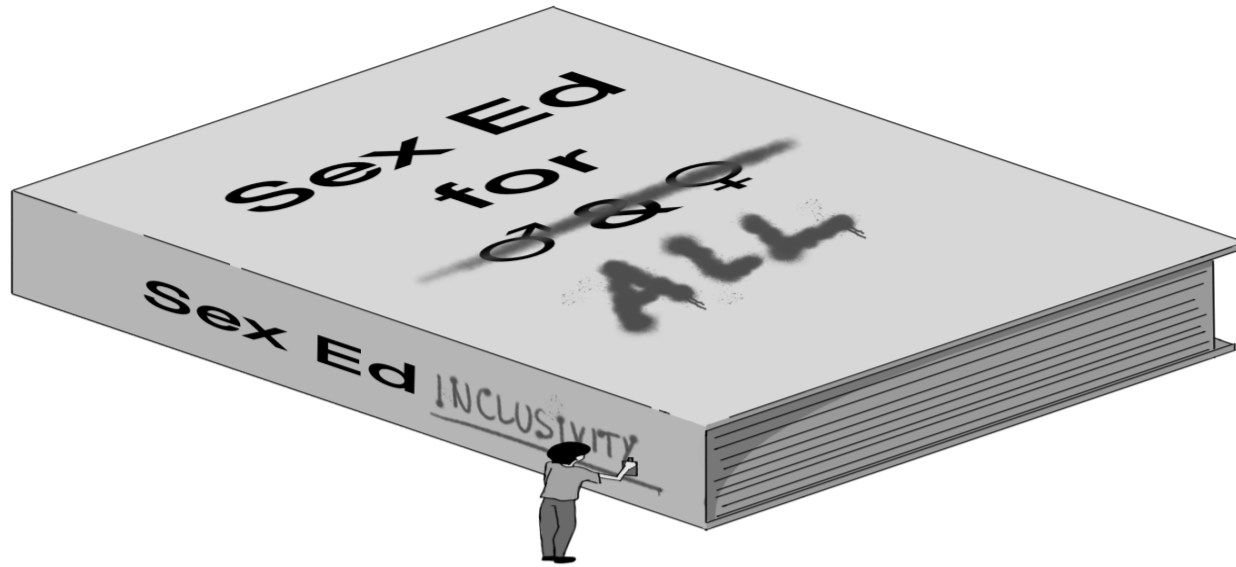


Illustration Courtesy of senior Akiko Murakami.

HEALTH AND SPORTS CO-EDITOR SONIA MCSWAIN

Taking a health class is something all San Luis Obispo High School students must do in order to graduate. In this course, students are educated on numerous topics pertaining to health ranging from mental wellness to consent. The information being taught includes the sexual education unit, which focuses on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and how to practice safe sex. Although LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education is required in California, many queer students feel that the required curriculum misses the mark when it comes to providing realistic instruction.

“I think that LGBTQ+ topics are often ignored or blocked out because being cisgender and heterosexual is the default. The health programs chose to center on that because it would typically cover the needs of most of the students, however with that mindset, queer students have been corralled into a category that they don’t align with, and that is extremely unfair to them. If we could just expand the content to better include queer students, it would be a lot more accommodating to them and their needs,” said freshman Brookie Rogers.

The SLOHS health department utilizes information from organizations such as Positive Prevention Plus and the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO) when teaching about the various forms of sexual orientation and gender identity. This content discusses the gender binary and the different types of attraction, but fails to offer any sort of statistics.

For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gonorrhea rates were forty-two times higher for gay and bisexual men compared to heterosexual men in 2020. In addition, according to The Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ youth are four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

It’s important to have this type of data present in our education system in order for non queer students better understand the lives of people different than them.

So, where are important facts like these in the current curriculum?

“When I took health this year, it seemed like there was an effort made to include more LGBTQ+ related topics, but to me, it felt performative. It was like it was designed by cisgender, heterosexual people and felt to me like they were just barely scratching the surface of LGBTQ+ related topics with a few slides in a slideshow. Once we finished looking at the slides, we moved on from there like that was all we needed to know, when in reality, there is so much more to learn. I’m tired of the school perpetuating heteronormativity. The school feels like an unsafe place for students like me to come out because the culture the school is producing doesn’t make me feel comfortable to be myself. Do better SLOHS,” said an anonymous freshman.

In order to improve conditions, the experiences of queer students need to be listened to and understood in order for the campus culture around SLOHS to become more inclusive.

“It is important to create positive, powerful and withstanding change through the lives of all students through education. We are starting a conversation while recognizing and validating the presence of the LGBTQ+ community in schools, hopefully creating more tolerant and informed campuses. We need to create better campus environments for those discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, sexual identify and expression by identifying, enhancing and including education on LGBTQ+ terminology and issues,” said health teacher Dan Monroe.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community will continue to face high rates of discrimination and STIs if we don’t provide inclusive information to all students regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

In order to decrease these worrisome rates, health curriculums need to be more thorough in the way they educate young people about safe sex.

Sources: cdc.gov thetrevorproject.org

How is Lack of Sleep Affecting San Luis Obispo High School Students?

REPORTER OWEN BLACKWELL

San Luis Obispo High school students lack sleep, which can negatively affect their grades, relationships, and mental health. Whether it’s from large amounts of homework, sports, or stress, many students get adequate sleep.

Expressions interviewed students about their experiences with sleep or lack thereof, and how it affects them.

Expressions: How much sleep do you get on an average school night, and what factors affect this amount?

Freshman Andreas Pifer-Herrera: I’d say probably five hours. What really affects that is probably the amount of work I have to do. For one, I work three jobs. So I’m constantly working until about, you know, ten or midnight, sometimes I close so that’s a big factor. Plus I have to go home to do homework.

Senior Cyrus Balderama: I say like five hours of sleep, and it’s because I work and so like I’ll get home later and homework to do.

Junior Charlotte Dierks: I would say like six hours, six or seven. Homework and late practices affect that most of the time. I have volleyball practice until like 9:30 P.M. some days of the week. I have to get home and then shower and eat and do homework so then I’ll be going to bed later. If I have a lot of homework that day then obviously go to bed later. If not, I try to go to bed at a reasonable time like 11-ish.

Expressions: How does the amount of sleep affect your schoolwork, relationships, and/or mental health?

Pifer-Herrera: I would say it does have a big impact. On my mental health just more because I think it just makes it doesn’t give me a lot of motivation to want to go to school. Lack of sleep removes my motivation to want to go to work, you know, want to go out and do fun things

Balderama: It’s just hard. I remember one time I couldn’t keep my eyes

open in class. I think it’s just really hard to focus when, especially kids who have other things to worry about in life, like paying rent or whatever, you’re more worried about those types of things and lack of sleep doesn’t help learning.

Dierks: At this point in the school year, no matter how much sleep I get, I’ll still be tired. So it’s all kind of the same now you know what I mean? Like yeah, it’s all just tiring. Everyone’s obviously just more tired. And I mean, getting up for school like super early. Obviously sucks. No one likes to do it.

Expressions: Do you think the school could do anything to help students in regard to getting adequate sleep?

Pifer-Herrera: I think they could be definitely assigning little to no homework, probably zero. That definitely is a big factor. Because you know, we come here six hours a day, I think that should be a sufficient amount. Just for us to get our education and learn the amount of knowledge that we need.

Balderama: I think that they should make homework optional, or at least no due dates. The school could also do comprehensive work that can be done in class, you know, just to make sure that our students are up to date, so it doesn’t have any stress.

Dierks: I feel like just starting later, because there’s a study that shows that teenagers’ brains don’t actually turn on until a certain time and I know it’s not eight o’clock in the morning. So I think if we started later, that would help a lot.

As we start the final trimester and look to next school year, the administration at both the high school, district, and county level should take steps to protect students’ mental and physical health by ensuring they get adequate sleep. With school starting at 8:30 A.M. next year, hopefully students will come to school well rested. It is up to students and parents to make their voices heard to the SLCUSD Board of Trustees and the San Luis Obispo County Board of Education if they want to see change.

What are *Expressions*' Favorite Movies?

OPINION EDITOR ERIKA SPARGO

The staff of *Expressions* is full of students who enjoy watching a wide range of movies in their free time. Whether it's cheesy rom-coms, twisted psychological thrillers, or heartwarming Disney animations, here's *Expressions*' movie recommendations.

Reporter and junior Hudson Jones: I think that a lot of students would enjoy "Double Down," directed by Neil Breen. It starts out just coherent enough to get a semblance of a plot, but it morphs into an absurdist comedy at some point.

People & Culture editor and freshman Addi Woods: I would recommend "Grease," "Dead Poets Society," "Pitch Perfect," "Step Brothers," "Mean Girls," "Clueless," "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," "Bad Teacher," and "We're The Millers." Everybody should definitely watch all of these movies at least once in their life.

Reporter and freshman Madi Torres: The "Kingsman" series is for sure my favorite because it's a series, which in my opinion, are always better than non-series, and two, Taron Egerton is in it and he's one of my favorite actors. The plot is also really cool.

Reporter and sophomore Siena Boscaro: One of my favorite movies of all time is "The Social Network." I think it's really well filmed. They switch back and forth from the present and flashbacks and I think that really helps carry the storyline. I don't think it's the most engaging movie for teenagers because it can get a little technical but I really enjoyed it.

Health & Sports Co-editor and freshman Cate Tucker: Some of these are clichés but, top three have to be "Die Hard," "Elf," and the new "Death on the Nile" with Gal Gadot based on an Agatha Christie book. They are all great for anyone that just wants a good movie to watch. Also, "Legally Blonde" is a great classic plus "Legally Blonde 3" is coming out in May of this year.

Reporter and junior Mia Clifford: One of my favorite movies is "The Grand Budapest Hotel," written and directed by Wes Anderson. I really like the unique cinematography and witty humor, as well as his elevated use of color. I would recommend this movie and others by Anderson if you like unconventional and interesting films.

Reporter and junior Owen Blackwell: My favorite movie is "There Will Be Blood." The film features unique cinematography and amazing sound design but the character development is what really makes the movie great.

Reporter and sophomore Maggie McKay: Some of the movies I like are "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Juno," "Catch Me If You Can," "Green Book," and "Isn't it Romantic."

News editor and senior Owen Spargo: "Finding Nemo." Iconic.

When you're hopelessly browsing through Netflix with nothing to watch, feel free to check out some of our favorites!

Sof's Album of the Month

A&E EDITOR SOFI SHAW



Photo courtesy of pitchfork.com

San Luis Obispo High School students are excited about the great album drops that have come from the first couple months of 2022. One of the best music releases so far is "Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You" by indie rock band Big Thief. Big Thief has dropped some iconic projects like "Masterpiece" and "Capacity" that any indie rock fan could recognize from their album covers.

"Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You" was released on February 11, three years since Big Thief's last project.

The opening song, "Change," is an immediate display of the band's emotional lyricism and depth. This song tells the age old tale of the inevitability of death and change. The lyrics ask the question: "Would you live forever, never die / While everything around passes?"

The question of if a person could live forever would they be happy is one that has gone unanswered but is put beautifully into words by this song. This is all backed by light acoustic guitar and drums with a folky sound.

The track "Certainty" is the most popular off of the album thus far. It definitely has more country/folk streaks.. Notably, the harmonies are reminiscent of singing around a campfire with a group of friends (who happen to be musically inclined).

"Little Things," about half way through the album, was another single off of the album. Lenker's vocals are echoey and surreal on this track. This song represents a whirlwind romance that may be a little toxic. "Leaving me undressed / Like some cheap classic movie / Maybe I'm a little obsessed / Maybe you do use me" This relationship dynamic is not foreign to the average high school student.

The twelfth track, "Dried Roses," is a simple country track that goes through the motions of a morning. "Steep the black coffee / Set the plates, pour the tea." This song is a strong demonstration of the fact that simple lyricism can be beautiful. It's raw, vulnerable, and evokes personal images for the listener. The way Lenker sings the lyrics is bittersweet as if reflecting on a long gone moment.

"The Only Place" is the penultimate track on the album. It's a sweet declaration of love in the context of the end of everything. The speaker says that when everything around them dissolves the only place that matters will be by their loved one's side. This song is relatively ambiguous and could be about platonic, romantic, or familial love. It's a good way to start rounding out the record.

Finally, "Blue Lightning" finishes off the album with an eccentric country bang. It's an optimistic and open ended track that wraps up the album with the listener satisfied.

Check out "Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You," Tigers!



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Do SLOHS students think Euphoria is realistic?

A&E EDITOR SOFI SHAW

San Luis Obispo High School students are processing the popular TV show “Euphoria” as the second season comes to a close. The show follows a group of high school students and their respective struggles. “Euphoria” has depictions of sex, drug usage, and mental health struggles. People often go back and forth on whether or not the show is realistic.

What most people have found is that there are more realistic parts of the show than others. The relationship dynamics and substance abuse are things many high schoolers have been witness to. However, some specific and yet iconic scenes have given the show a reputation for being overdramatized.

“Of course there are drugs and alcohol in actual high school. But we’re not going to massive ragers where people are fighting or having sex in a pool. That part is just unrealistic,” said senior Talia Doane.

The show’s protagonist Rue Bennett, portrayed by actress Zendaya, struggles the most with the aforementioned substance abuse. The first season she mainly had a pill addiction, and the negative effects were barely addressed. In season two, her addiction escalates to heroin and other harder drugs.

“In this new season, viewers see Rue in a very vulnerable state going through heavy addiction and withdrawal patterns, it shows the reality of drug use which is something important for young people to acknowledge,” said senior Scout Carr.

Season two has done a better job of showing how detrimental the effects of drug use can be. Not only physically, but in regards to a person’s relationships and mental well being.

On the other end of the spectrum, characters like Kat, Cassie, Maddy, and Jules mostly deal with social issues, making them and their relationship dynamics more relatable to the non-drug user in high school. Maddy and Cassie’s iconic friendship is wracked with tension in the second season while Cassie secretly hooks up with Nate Jacobs, Maddy’s ex.

“Nate and Maddy’s relationship is very much two of my friends’ different re-



Photo courtesy of [rottentomatoes.com](https://www.rottentomatoes.com)

lationships/situations. So those two are very realistic,” said Doane.

Some characters are more likable than others. Whether or not a person would want to be friends with them is dependent on their personality and interests as depicted in the show. People like Nate and Cal are not the most appealing to form a friendship considering the fact that the watcher gains insight into their morality and questionable actions.

It’s hard to say who is a good person or bad person because the watcher sees all the gray areas.

“I would wanna be friends with BB because she would make me laugh all the time and seems like a cool person to chill with.” said Carr.

Despite everything, there is a universal truth that high school is filled with drama, friendship, love, and betrayal.

While Euphoria is dramatized, it represents this truth perfectly.

SLOHS Choir: Is It a Good Elective?



Photo courtesy of senior Devan Minicucci.

FEATURE EDITOR KARL KARSH

There are many electives at San Luis Obispo High School that students can take, one of which is choir. In choir, students learn different songs, sing at concerts, and build a fun, supportive community.

Expressions talked to various students in choir to see what they’re up to and how they feel.

Expressions: What is a notable thing that you are currently doing in choir?

Junior Natalie Ellman: We are preparing for our performance in March! We are practicing choreography and singing while dancing.

Freshman Oliver Lyons: Probably being able to do some percussion for a song we’re performing soon.

Freshman Avery Johnson: We are currently preparing for our Spring Concert, so we’re singing without sheet music and working on what needs to be improved, like singing louder.

Expressions: Do you enjoy choir and what you’re doing in it?

Ellman: I really enjoy choir. It’s super fun and has a good community.

Lyons: Sort of. I love singing but it’s also a pretty personal thing to me.

Johnson: Yes, I enjoy choir! Our choir nicknamed ourselves “Intro to Life” because beyond singing we have a lot of interesting conversations and stories.

Expressions: What’s your favorite part about choir?

Ellman: My favorite part is probably when I get to sing a solo. That and hearing my peers sing their solos.

Lyons: We have a lot of really funny conversations and funny moments in class.

Johnson: My favorite part about choir is probably the people in it. It’s a very fun atmosphere where we have a lot of jokes with each other and a more open environment to interact with chances to share about our current lives, discuss the pronunciation of Tapatío, and hear stories from our teacher at the beginning of our class period most days.

Expressions: Would you recommend choir to other students? Why or why not?

Ellman: I definitely recommend choir. It’s really fun and has a great community. Even for students who aren’t great singers, it’s an amazing way to improve.

Lyons: Yes and no. If you enjoy performing and want to put your voice out there, then go right on ahead! But if that stuff makes you nervous, maybe avoid it.

Johnson: I think it depends. If you have an interest in music and singing, whether you have experience or “talent” or not, it is a very fun class to be a part of. Obviously, in choir, we sing a lot, so if you’re not interested in singing then choir probably isn’t a great class for you. I personally ended up in the class instead of Musical Theater (led by the same teacher), but because I intended to take a class focussing on singing, choir has still been a very enjoyable and helpful class to take.

Everyone has different interests and talents that make them choose certain electives. If you enjoy singing and being part of a community of people who are passionate about singing, choir is definitely the elective for you.

What Have the Culinary Classes Been Cooking Up?



Photo courtesy of digital media teacher Zachary Roper.

REPORTER AHMEE SMITH

San Luis Obispo High School culinary classes are mostly known for being a place where students learn how to cook. However, many may not know the specific foods and skills that culinary students learn.

Students in culinary arts get to learn about food-handling, learn how to cook specific dishes, and then eat their food all in-class. They have been able to make a variety of dishes so far.

“We make a lot of vegetables and bread. It’s mostly based on the unit though. We did a soul food week where we made a bunch of African American food and

southern cooking,” said sophomore XC Clements.

Being able to make a variety of food will help students diversify their cooking and make it more enjoyable. It gives them the skills to make healthy and nutritious food on their own.

“We’re currently in our butchery and advanced bread-making unit, so we’re making brioche buns for pulled pork sandwiches,” said junior Alice Daguia.

Students have learned how to butcher whole animals, bake bread, make cheese, and create many other advanced foods. These skills are essential for saving money and properly executing each dish.

One thing that will help many students in the future is the ability to get a Food Handler’s Certificate.

To make food commercially, you need to have specific certifications that make sure you can handle food safely. If you take Culinary II, you are able to obtain that certification for free where it would otherwise be paid for by you or an employer.

“We explore all the things about safety and sanitation which is super important in this industry because otherwise, we make people sick. There are three thousand people a year who die from foodborne illness, which we call food poisoning, so we have to be very careful,” said culinary chef Nathan Jagers.

The culinary classes are fun and useful, but they aren’t without stress. When students aren’t cooking or preparing food, they are cleaning or organizing.

“We have to make sure everything gets done on time so you know that you can leave class when class is over and make sure everything gets cleaned and put back in the right place,” said Daguia.

Even so, the fast pace is meant to model a real kitchen setting. Plus, the skills you obtain and the food you learn to cook are worth it.

“Everybody’s got to eat, so why not eat well?” said Jagers.

Masks vs No Masks: What do Students Want?

REPORTER OWEN BLACKWELL

Some students hate them with a burning passion, but some can’t bear to let them go. Masks have become a dividing topic amongst students at San Luis Obispo High School.

On February 16, the California mask mandate ended and San Luis Obispo Counties ended a day later. Mask mandates have remained in schools until March 12.

Expressions interviewed students on their views regarding masks.

Expressions: Do you care about wearing masks?

Senior Sydney Yeager: I think it’s a good idea that needs to happen because the virus just keeps hurting people, and not enough people are wearing masks. Wearing a mask allows us to not get COVID-19.

Senior Brian Vormbaum: I don’t care, but it’s way nicer without them. At this point, I feel like we shouldn’t have to because they already lifted the mandate. They say that kids don’t get sick with COVID as bad. So they’re saying the whole reason we had to wear masks in the first place was to protect like our parents and grandparents. Now that at risk people don’t have to wear them, why should we since we aren’t even getting sick.

Freshman Charlotte Perrine: I think it’s a good idea that we have them on during school especially because a lot of times people aren’t saying three feet away. It’s pretty hard for the long stretches of classes, especially because the classes are so long. I have asthma so if I have to run to get to class, then it’s really hard for me to catch my breath when I have to put a mask on right away.

Freshman Gabe Vigil: Masks are super annoying and they just get in the way of everything. They aren’t that beneficial and it’s annoying having to wear them constantly. Teachers badger me about it, but I have glasses, and they are always getting fogged up. It bothers me too because sometimes they’re like little fuzzy things get on your face and [stuff] like that.

Expressions: What do your friends think about having to wear masks?

Yeager: Everyone wears them. A lot of my friends are daughters or sons of healthcare professionals, or they pay attention to the news and see what’s going on.

Vormbaum: I’d say all my friends have the same ideas as me, no one really cares anymore. It would be nice to just get rid of them and be done with it all.

Perrine: They think it’s a smart idea to wear them and we all pretty much wear them inside and outside of class. No one’s anti mask, but we don’t like wearing them.

Vigil: They all hate it. I’ve not actually met a single person that likes wearing masks. Everyone’s just against it. No one really likes it. It just feels like it’s like another chore to do each day. It’s uncomfortable.

Expressions: How will you react when the mask mandate is lifted on March 12?

Yeager: I’m gonna continue wearing a mask, because I see so many people getting sick and everyone’s just going to the hospital. There’s a 13 year old in SLO going to the hospital, so I’m going to wear my mask and protect everyone because it’s just a thin cloth, and it’s not going to bother me. If it can save a life and there’s a really good reason for me to.

Vormbaum: I’d be really happy to just be bringing it back to how high school used to be and how it should be. Honestly since I’m a senior I don’t really care, but for the younger kids it’s important to be able to interact normally without masks.

Perrine: I would be happy, but I also would wonder, what’s changed? Why are we lifting it? Are we lifting it because people are complaining or because there’s been an actual lowering in COVID-19 [cases]?

Vigil: I would be happy coming to school. I’d have it be optional, because I do understand some people’s point of views. If it was lifted and we had the option to not wear masks it would make school five times better and it wouldn’t be so obnoxious to come to school.

Expressions: What do you think the school should do to protect students from COVID-19?

Yeager: I think just continuing to wear masks and social distance. Probably encourage people to get vaccines

Vormbaum: I feel like it’s just up to everybody how they want to protect themselves. We know what works and what doesn’t work, and people can make their own decisions. If you really are scared about not wanting to get sick then wear your mask. It’s up to you at this point. We’re eventually gonna move on with life, we have to at some point.

Perrine: I don’t really think that the school can do anything more during school. I don’t think anyone’s gonna follow any more restrictions, but I do think that they’re doing what they can.

Vigil: They should give students the option to wear a mask, if you want to wear masks you can, if you don’t want to wear one then you shouldn’t have to. You can risk it if you want, if you don’t want to risk you don’t have to risk it. Also Trump 2024.

Students at SLOHS understand the benefits of mask wearing, but many are ready to be done with them. On March 12, masks will become optional, and it will be interesting to see who keeps them on, and who takes them off.

What Special Items do Students Bring to School?

REPORTER HUDSON JONES

Students at San Luis Obispo High School bring unconventional personal belongings to school, and there’s an interesting explanation for each person.

Expressions interviewed two students about their unique belongings.

Expressions: What’s normally in your school bag?

Senior Charles Carter: I usually bring an iFixit tool kit along with my school equipment. I don’t think a lot of kids bring tool kits with them to school because not everyone needs a toolkit in daily life.

Junior Morgan Howland: I bring a flashlight for some reason.

Expressions: Why do you bring it?

Carter: Whenever something breaks, I can easily fix it quickly and efficiently, so I can continue working or help someone else continue working.

Howland: I like exploring, but sometimes my backpack didn’t have a light so now I always have one.

Expressions: Does it serve a practical purpose in school?

Carter: I would say it is not directly practical for school unless you count fixing school devices.

Howland: Not really, other than being a funny conversation starter.

Expressions: What do you think it shows about yourself?

Carter: I think it shows that I tinker with technology and dabble in mechanical engineering.

Howland: It might show that I like being prepared.

Expressions: Do you think other SLOHS students should bring what you do?

Carter: Yeah, you might not think you need it. A situation that arises where you do need a toolkit worsens without one. It’s better to be prepared.

Howland: I don’t think it is very necessary, but it’s very useful when I need it so I think people should have one.

From tool kits to flashlights, SLOHS students have some pretty odd items in their schoolbags. You should ask your friends what mysterious things they’re carrying around at school because you may be surprised.