



Love over hate. Illustration by opinion co-editor Owen Blackwell.

A Christian Perspective on LGBTQ+ and Homosexuality

REPORTER JOSIAH MCCARLEY

“Why do so many Christians believe being gay is wrong?”

This is the question many LGBTQ+ individuals at San Luis Obispo High School have asked after being hurt and ostracized by the church.

As a Christian myself, I would like to apologize for any hate LGBTQ+ individuals have received and also explain Christianity’s complex relationship with sex, marriage, and homosexuality.

The Bible has a lot of really hard things to say about sex. One of these things is the condemnation of the practice of homosexuality, specifically in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, which states, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

This is not the only time it calls it out as a problem. To someone unfamiliar with a biblical idea of sex this probably seems out of place and callous.

To understand why the practice homosexuality is considered sinful, one must understand the broader idea of sex and marriage through a Christian perspective.

Sex in the eyes of the Bible is not just a means for reproduction or pleasure. It is also so much more. Sexual relationships are meant to be a symbol of the church’s and the people’s relationship with God. Marriage is supposed to be a sneak peek of the much greater love we receive from God, making sexual relationships very special and sacred. As you can imagine, such a relationship should be intimate and exclusive.

This is why sex outside of marriage is also considered sinful. It is meant to be between two exclusively committed partners. This is not to say same sex couples can’t be intimate or exclusive.

The relationship between God and man is one of two incredibly different entities. This diversity is represented in romantic relationships by the diversity of two sexes. God could have made humans asexual (single sex organisms without the need to mate to reproduce); He didn’t have to make them male and female.

This is to display that same diversity and distinction we see in our relationship with God.

Each sex has specific strengths and weaknesses, but also specific roles in a romantic and sexual relationship. Sex outside of these contexts is a misuse of it and

fails to live up to the picture it is meant to paint.

One important distinction I would like to make is that the attraction to the same sex and “practicing homosexuality,” as it says in the passage, are not the same thing.

Everyone is prone to different things and everyone struggles with different sins. I personally am tempted to act outside of God’s design for sex. This may surprise you, but there’s nothing sinful about being tempted. Even Jesus himself was tempted. Just as people who struggle with same-sex attraction, straight people are still tempted to act outside of God’s design for sex.

God sees us all the same regardless of sexual orientation. In His eyes, we’re all broken and sinful, but more than that, He sees us as His children and He loves us regardless of the sins we commit. We are saved by His grace and mercy, not by being good enough or by our sexual orientation. Anyone can accept this grace, despite one’s sins.

One of the most amazing parts of Jesus’ ministry is His incredible combination of grace and truth. He was steadfast in His truth and morals, but at the same time, He was incredibly gracious. He spent most of His ministry with sinners and prostitutes.

His harshest words of ridicule were directed at the self-righteous religious leaders of the time.

Sadly, today, all too many Christians see this idea of “all grace and all truth all the time” as an oxymoron. In an effort to show grace, some compromise what the Bible actually says and teaches thinking it’s “too harsh.” On the flip side, even more Christians forget to have grace and think it is their duty to call out and ridicule people for their sins.

Some Christians, or people calling themselves that, even go so far as to make hateful comments towards LGBTQ+ people. Such actions are condemned numerous times in the Bible. Furthermore, the Bible also says in 1 Corinthians 5:12, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?”

It is not a Christian’s place to judge non-believers. Christians should call out and help other Christians, but calling out non-Christians doesn’t even make sense, because we don’t share the same basic beliefs on what sex should be.

To any LGBTQ+ people reading this article, if you have been bullied or received hate from someone who claims to be a Christian, I would like to be the first to say sorry.

That is not how Jesus calls us to act.

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Meet the 2022-2023 SLOHS Foreign Exchange Students



Thirteen of the 2022-2023 SLOHS foreign exchange students. Photo courtesy of freshman Ava Rhodes.

REPORTER KENNEDY BELTRAM

For fifteen foreign teenagers, San Luis Obispo High School has become their temporary high school for nine months. By enrolling in a foreign exchange student program, students are immersing themselves in a completely different culture and way of life. This allows them to expand their horizons and meet new people. These students have had to transition from life in their country to life in San Luis Obispo.

Sophomore Daniela Alcon Cristos from Spain:

Alcon Cristos is from Madrid, Spain. She misses her family back home and hopes to visit them soon. “Everything is different, but I think the most different is the lifestyle of the people. In my home country, we do all the meals together. But here, everyone has their own schedule for meals.”

Senior Margherita Calderoni from Italy:

Calderoni plays volleyball and loves dogs. She misses her family back home but enjoys her host family. Her favorite American food is hot dogs. “In Italy, we don’t have clubs, sports, or any type of electives. My favorite memories of being here are all the volleyball games and the moments with my team.”

Senior Erika Cancelleri from Italy:

Cancelleri lives with other exchange students and enjoys her host family. Her favorite American food is doughnuts. “I like feeling part of a community and the engagement of all the people. There are different people in every period so you can interact with new people. Here everything’s bigger and you can choose your own subjects.”

Senior Angelique Cottereau from France:

Cottereau is from the South of France, in a town called Toulouse. Her favorite American foods are burgers and hotdogs. “Everything is quite different. Here there is a wide variety of classes and clubs that do not exist in France.”

Senior Ana Luisa Cunha Bonfanti from Brazil:

Bonfanti likes the spirit here but dislikes the length of SLOHS classes. Her favorite American food is hotdogs. “I miss my family in Brazil but I get along with my host family and feel a part of it. I enjoy the football games and the afterparties.”

Senior Giorgia De Rosa from Italy:

De Rosa enjoys SLO and her host family. She loves the SLOHS football games, especially the first one. Her favorite American food is peanut butter, something she didn’t have much of in Italy. “I like that we change classes every period, I love that. In Italy, you have one group, and the teacher changes classes.”

Senior Rebecca Dinapoli from Italy:

Dinapoli lives in a big city in Italy and is adjusting to life in a small town like SLO. She misses her family back home but is having a lot of fun here. “In Italy, we don’t change the classes but the teachers do. We have eleven subjects per year and we can’t change them.”

Senior Alessia Licciardi from Italy:

Licciardi is from a small town near Milan and loves discos. In Italy, her family consists of her parents and brother. Her host family in America con-

sists of her parents, sister, and two dogs. “I feel really good about SLOHS. In Italy, there are no dances, sports, or activities after school. And the lessons are super boring compared to here. Although one thing I dislike about SLOHS is that the food sucks.”

Junior Emi Mizukami from Japan:

Mizukami is from Japan and is adjusting to the different environment and atmosphere we have here at SLOHS. “SLO is very pretty. The people here are unique and my host family is sweet. I’m glad I came here.”

Sophomore Faye Niven from Germany:

Niven lives in a tiny village in Germany, smaller than SLO. She loves living with her host family and seeing how they spend their day. Her host family has two other kids and she is the middle child. “I miss my family very much. I also miss my home and friends, but I am so incredibly glad to be here and to be able to try an American life.”

Senior Lucie Plantevin from France:

Plantevin is from a little town near Grenoble in the French Alps. She misses her family and friends back home but she enjoys SLO very much. She loves discovering new places and cities in California. “I really like my host family, they are really nice. We do a lot of activities together and I really appreciate being with them.”

Senior Andrea Punzi from Italy:

Punzi likes the layout of SLOHS but isn’t a fan of the construction. She would love to be here when it’s all finished. Her favorite American food is In-N-Out. “Almost everything here is different from my school. The size, the fact that you have to walk from class to class, everything is mixed with all the grades, it’s rather nice.”

Senior Lucia Skoricova from Slovakia:

Skoricova is on the SLOHS tennis team and loves donuts. She likes Americans’ passion for sports at school and the consistent weather all year round. “I really like the nature here because it’s different from what we have in Slovakia but I really like it. I miss my family but I’m still enjoying it here.”

Senior Malibu Uzunlar from Turkey:

Uzunlar loves the Turkish coffee shop, LOKUM, downtown. She misses the culture and diversity of her hometown but likes the environment of SLOHS. “We don’t have enough classes and the ones we do have are too long. In Turkey, our classes are like 45 minutes each. My favorite thing about SLOHS is probably the student support system. The teachers and counselors are super interested in helping all the students.”

Sophomore Luna-Chiara Waible from Germany:

Waible loves spending time with her friends and going to football games. She doesn’t feel homesick yet because she has taken time to call her family and friends as much as possible. “My host family is great and I really enjoy spending time with them. They have a lot of animals which makes me really happy. I miss my family, friends, and dog.”

Although the food and long classes may not be a favorite for our exchange students, overall their experience so far at SLOHS has been positive.

Let's Catch Up With New SLOHS Physics Teacher Marie Pink

REPORTER ATTICUS DRAKE

In the wake of the massive amount of resignations during the COVID-19 pandemic, San Luis Obispo High School has, in the past three years, been hiring new teachers left and right. One of the newest SLOHS staff hires is Marie Pink, an AP and College Prep physics teacher.

Students are also excited to see Pink teaching at SLOHS.

"Ms. Pink is the perfect addition to the school. Out of all the teachers, I think she's the one who shows the most spirit. During Hello Week for Reach Club, she dressed up as a green crayon on the last day. It was awesome" said junior Yanelly Cardenas.

Spouse of the already-known substitute teacher Christopher Muench, Pink is excited to be teaching in the place of former physics teacher Brendan McCloone who left last year.

Expressions took it upon themselves to check in on Pink's thoughts about SLOHS, the students, and her new job so far.

Expressions: What are your thoughts on SLOHS so far?

Pink: I'm loving it! I have a lot of fun with students during my silly activities I use to teach physics.

Expressions: Is SLOHS better or worse than your previous school?

Pink: I feel like SLOHS is a better fit for me and my teaching style. I really enjoy teaching a rigorous class where students have the opportunity to both have fun with physics while also learning a lot. The students here have a wide variety of specialties and experiences. It is really fun teaching

students with such diverse backgrounds.

Expressions: What made you choose teaching as a profession?

Pink: I enjoyed tutoring in high school and went on to teach recorder lessons during college as a side job. I also grew up helping my aunt during her field trips (she was a third-grade teacher) and loved working with kids and teaching them. My dad was particularly upset with me when I switched my major in college from mechanical engineering to physics when I decided to go into teaching. I wanted to do a job I loved every single day instead of only having two weeks of vacation a year where I get to do what I love. I really love teaching and hope that all of my students can tell that I chose this because it is what I love to do, it isn't just a job for me.

Expressions: What colleges did you go to? Would you recommend them?

Pink: I got my Bachelor of Arts in physics with an emphasis on preparation for teaching and a minor in music, my physics teaching credential, and my Masters in Science Education all from San Jose State University.

Expressions: What other teaching jobs have you held?

Pink: I worked in the Bay Area at Branham High School teaching physics, AP physics, and Principles of Engineering for six years. I taught at Atascadero High School for four years teaching AP Physics, Physics, and Environmental Science.

Students are just as excited as Pink is to have her teaching here as she brings her school spirit and positive energy to her new, already fully decorated classroom.

Sorry, @snairne Won't Follow You Back on Instagram

PEOPLE & CULTURE EDITOR ADDI WOODS

San Luis Obispo High School students like to follow or try to find their teachers on Instagram. Some teachers don't allow students to follow their accounts while some may have active public accounts.

What guidelines do teachers have to follow when it comes to their students on Instagram? Are they allowed to let their students follow them and can they follow them back? Are they allowed to follow back their students once they graduate? *Expressions* set out to find the answers to these pressing questions.

"I think it's cool for them to follow each other! It's a great way for students to know their teachers have lives outside of school. Instagram is a great way of knowing the more personal side of teachers. I do think that there are of course some boundaries that should not be crossed, such as teachers DMing students but following each other is perfectly acceptable," said SLOHS alumni Owen Spargo.

English teacher Scott Nairne told *Expressions* that teachers are not allowed to message or interact with students in any way that isn't monitored by the school. For instance, teachers can communicate with students about school-related topics over school email, but they aren't allowed to text or direct-message them at all.

"My policy is that my Instagram is open to the public, so if a student wants to follow me, that's completely fine. I don't follow students ever. If a student graduates and asks me to follow them, I will follow a graduate or someone that doesn't go to school here. I don't really follow teachers because I don't really want to know what other teachers are doing on Instagram," said Nairne.

So teachers aren't supposed to follow students back until they graduate. Spargo told *Expressions* that a few of his teachers followed him back once he graduated.

"I think when used responsibly, social media, especially Instagram is a great way to get a lot of students to see what's happening around campus," said digital media teacher Zachary Roper.

On Roper's Instagram, @snackary_ropor, he shares what his digital media classes are doing and things that are going on around campus.

Instagram can be a great way for students to see what their teachers are up to outside of school but certain guidelines must be followed in order for Instagram to remain a fun, safe place.

Don't be too bummed if @snairne doesn't follow you back on Instagram, he's not allowed to. But look forward to a follow back once you graduate because that is allowed.

What Do SLOHS Students Think the Meaning of Life Is?

REPORTER JOSIAH MCCARLEY

For some students at San Luis Obispo High School, the question of life's meaning plagues them daily. While for others it is a question they have never thought to ask. *Expressions* interviewed four students at SLOHS to get their take on the meaning of life.

Expressions: What do you think the meaning of life is?

Senior Josh Ellis: I'd say the meaning of life is what people make it or just people that have goals and it's them actually acting on those goals and trying their best.

Senior Liam Streeter: Just be at peace with yourself.

Junior Abby Russell: There's no meaning to life. I don't know. I work all the time, I go to school, and I go to the gym. I don't have any free time.

Sophomore Rafa Dinunzio: I think the meaning of life is what we think it is. There may be some objective meaning, but I think for the time being it is just what you strive for. It could also be things that religious texts say, or it could just be something as simple as survival. I'm saying you gotta find your own meaning.

Expressions: How does your understanding of the meaning of life impact your actions and life?

Ellis: I try to see life with a very positive outlook and make the goals that I set for myself attainable and reasonable.

Streeter: It allows me to know that if I do something, it will be positive.

Russell: I think it makes me better at managing my time, especially at school. Other than that it doesn't really impact my life.

Dinunzio: My actions are impacted by this by making me question many things. That sort of is what impacts my life as well.

Expressions: What drives you to work hard and do well?

Ellis: My friends and those close to me.

Streeter: Learning in the process of working.

Russell: There isn't really one. I guess there's going to the gym and going to work and getting money.

Dinunzio: Wanting to go where I want to go in life; to have options I probably couldn't have if I didn't work for better ones.

Each student has their own different and unique perspective on what the meaning of life is to them and how that impacts their life.

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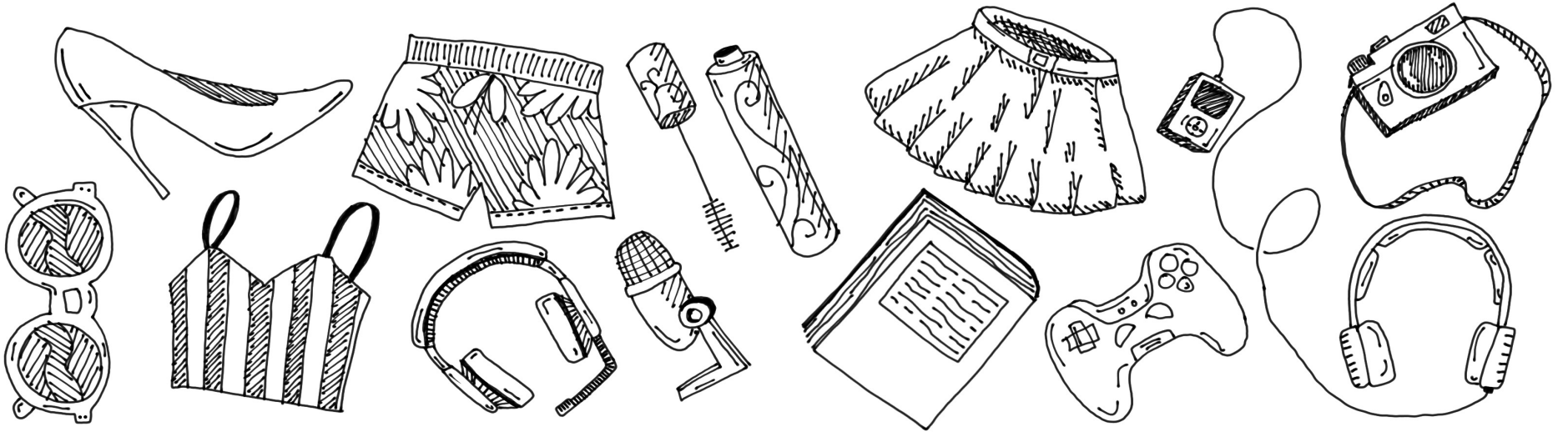
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Stop Hating on Girls: Casual Misogyny is NOT Cute



Girls just wanna have fun! Graphic courtesy of opinion co-editor Owen Blackwell.

REPORTER AVERY MACHAMER

Teenage girls at San Luis Obispo High School often feel ridiculed for their interests.

You play video games? You're a try-hard "gamer girl."

You wear eyeliner and black clothing? You're weird and emo.

You like Taylor Swift? You're unoriginal and basic.

Social media has illustrated how common casual misogyny is within our society.

Scrutinizing girls for being even remotely interested in something creates a looming fear of constant judgment and low self-esteem.

The culture of misogyny is ingrained in our society, and social media has made it even more of a trend. The overgeneralization that women aren't funny, they are trying too hard, and that they are simply seeking attention from men is becoming increasingly prominent on social media, especially on TikTok. Derogatory comments and certain sayings like, "the 'F' in women stands for funny" shows how casual misogyny is becoming normalized on social media. With the increase in popularity of social media, even young children are being exposed to hateful content.

"I've definitely experienced some judgment coming from people because I like a specific thing. It's not a great feeling," said freshman Ella Bates.

Another example of casual misogyny being so normalized in the media is in the popular sit-com "Friends." An episode called "The One Where Freddie Won't Go" pokes fun at women empowerment books and their validity. This displays how feminism, anti-misogyny, and women empowerment is simply a joke to people in the media. While the specific episode aired in 1996, the TV show is still very popular, showing how issues like this are still prevalent today.

Labels, negative comments, and scrutinizing remarks are leading teenage girls to develop internalized misogyny; how can this be changed? Terms like "girly-girl" and "tomboy" are common ways that society places girls into sub-categories and judges them simply for the way they dress. Getting rid of the labels pushed upon girls at young ages is just one step to reduce the ingrained misogyny within society.

There is no specific way to stop misogyny with the snap of a finger, but it's important to teach people that the jokes they deem as funny are more harmful than they think. Let teenage girls have interests.

Teen Relationships are a Learning Experience

OPINION CO-EDITOR JANE CULBREATH

Romance is in the air at San Luis Obispo High School... for some. Plenty of students have lighthearted crushes and get flustered talking to them in class, but fewer actually get into relationships.

Whether out of fear of heartbreak or, let's face it, a lack of game, relationships aren't for everyone; however, relationships in high school are highly beneficial in improving communication skills, learning about oneself, and creating a mold for future relationships.

Teenage relationships are a way to learn how to communicate and cooperate with a partner on a smaller playing field. There are no looming expectations of a proposal at age 16, so both members of the relationship can grow together.

"I was told not to date anyone in high school, but I find joy in it, and I find holistic pleasure, which is important. It almost makes more out of life in a way. I think the highs are higher, and the lows are lower," said senior Leo Zimmerman, who is in a long-term relationship.

Being able to share the monumental experiences of high school with a partner is something that some students cherish. For many, partnership is akin to close friendship.

Additionally, high school relationships give the opportunity to improve communication skills, which is important not only for improving romantic relationships, but also for platonic and familial relationships.

"I learned how to be a better person and deal with [issues] by communicating," said senior Brooklyn Powers.

Many people discourage relationships in high school because "you're just going to break up anyways!" This, however, is exactly why dating in high school is important. Entering a relationship with no expectations of staying together forever creates an environment where teens can simultaneously learn about how they respond to issues in relationships and have fun.

"I think everyone can learn something from someone else, and I think people should just embrace the time that they spend together and learn from it," said Zimmerman.

Teen relationships often do come to an end, and heartbreak hurts. However, heartbreak is a major stepping stone. The end of a relationship gives way for a new and improved version of oneself and newer standards for a relationship.

"[Heartbreak] was horrible at first, but I feel like I needed to go through that to get where I am now and to be so much happier. As much as it sucked, I had to go through it to grow," said Powers.

There are difficult aspects to high school relationships: having an extra thing to focus on, drama, and the possibility of being mistreated. However, for those willing to play the balancing act, risk getting hurt, and learn important life lessons through experiences, the benefits of a high school relationship outweigh the negatives.

The Trimester System Reigns Supreme

REPORTER AIDEN FIELD

The winter trimester just started at San Luis Obispo High School. For almost all students, there's now something new and different about going to school. There's often talk around campus about reverting to the semester, but there is so much that the current system gets right.

Love it or hate it, the trimester system gets the job done.

"I love how a lot of the classes are just one trimester, but we get to learn a semester's worth of content, so we get to learn at a faster, more vigorous and challenging pace," said senior Emily Pan.

Under the trimester system, the academic term also coincides with the season length of sports. This means that the trimester lasts as long as a sport's season. This lets students have an athletic period, allowing for higher participation in sports. Less people would attend practice and be a part of a school-run sport if students had to complete a full day of learning and proceed to go to practice after school.

"The trimester system affords our student-athletes a unique opportunity to slightly lighten their academic workload during the season of sport, allow more students to join the athletic teams, and reinforce the camaraderie and actual learning that occurs when joining a school team. It is a huge win for everyone concerned," said English teacher and cross-country coach Adam Basch.

This means that students are healthier, smarter, and also winning at sports.

Additionally, the trimester system allows for students to have less classes to worry about. This means that a student isn't working on a ton of assignments at the same time, and they don't have to keep track of as many separate courses. The way that the trimester system works allows students to better comprehend the subjects they are learning.

The major case for reverting back to the semester is that students and teachers hate the tri-yearly schedule change. Adjusting to a new schedule and changing a routine every few months isn't enjoyable. While this is a frustrating aspect of the system, it allows for a broader range of teachers and elective options.

The trimester system also makes college applications and other processes difficult.

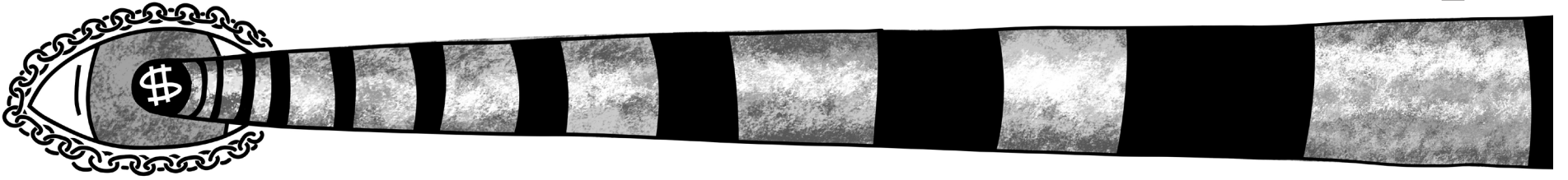
"The trimester system goes by too quickly for students to catch up when absent. It is also very hard for students who transfer here or transfer out of here, since their semesters do not meld into our trimester starting dates. The trimester system does not align with Cuesta College, so taking concurrent enrollment courses can be difficult," said counselor Heather Senecal.

The trimester system does have its downsides, but the athlete schedule, class variety, and fast pace make it worth it.

The trimester system works, and it's time it gets the recognition it deserves.

Source: news.uga.edu

Porn Hurts Student Minds and Relationships



Profit Fuels Lust, Addiction, and Violence. Graphic courtesy of opinion co-editor Owen Blackwell.

OPINION EDITORS JANE CULBREATH & OWEN BLACKWELL

Students at San Luis Obispo High School and across the nation suffer from addiction to pornography. 84.4 percent of high school males and 57 percent of high school females have viewed pornography. Porn viewing causes depression, makes the viewer more likely to carry out sexual violence in real life, and can have extreme detriments to future relationships.

Pornography has a purpose: to entertain. For those who have not yet experienced sex, it may serve as a source of sexual education that misconstrues the realities of sex and provides unrealistic expectations.

"I think pornography definitely gives teenagers a convoluted idea of what the act of sex really is. What people often forget about the adult film industry is that, just like TV shows and movies, these are paid actors and actresses... We cannot always compare what we watch to our own real life personal experiences and situations," said health teacher Dan Monroe.

Not only does porn depict sex unrealistically, it also perpetuates violence in sex. Violent sex acts, especially towards women, are some of the most common on websites with adult content. When people are exposed to this level of sexual violence at such a young age, sometimes even before puberty, it sets a standard for violence, as well as a tolerance for violence in their own sexual encounters.

Research shows that women are almost always the targets of violence or aggression in porn—about 97 percent of the time. This is a major factor in the normalization and perpetuation of violence against women.

Additionally, porn websites create a platform to take advantage of victims. Victims of sexual assault, rape, and sex trafficking may be posted unconsensually, allowing websites such as Pornhub to profit off of sex cri-

mes.

According to an analysis of over 130,000 porn titles, "teen" is the most common word used in porn titles, while 69 percent of Pornhub viewership is over the age of 24. Though many of these videos do not actually contain minors, it is often impossible to distinguish a younger teen from an 18 year old, and sexual crimes can fall through the cracks.

Porn addiction can also take a toll on one's mental health. According to a 2017 study, people who use porn as a self-soothing technique tend to have some of the lowest reports of emotional and mental wellbeing.

"Porn makes men in our society weak, and it left me weak, depressed, and lonely," said an anonymous senior male.

Reliance on porn for sexual satisfaction can create sexual dysfunction, and pornography consumption has been shown to negatively impact adolescents' self-esteem and mental health.

"The porn and sex industry will always target teens and youth... For students who are addicted to porn, don't be afraid to tell the people you are close with that you need help," said the anonymous male.

Students who are watching porn should evaluate why they are consuming it and how it is affecting them. Porn has many negative effects on viewers as well as those being taken advantage of in non-consensual porn videos.

Students should refrain from watching it and take steps to reduce their consumption. If students are fighting a porn addiction, they should know that they are not alone, and there are outlets for recovery.

Sources: *truthaboutporn.org*, *The British Journal of Criminology*, *Journal of Health Communication*

Be Conscious of Christmas Consumerism

OPINION CO-EDITOR OWEN BLACKWELL

Christmas is a holiday most students at San Luis Obispo High School celebrate. It has become a twisted consumerist shell of its original meaning. The origin of Christmas has nothing to do with buying cute gifts, wearing ugly sweaters, or drinking peppermint mochas, but rather the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Companies spend over 48 billion dollars every year advertising for the holiday season. People in the US year after year purchase over 777 billion dollars of clothes, food, and gifts, to "celebrate" Christmas.

These 48 billion advertising dollars go to influencing students.

"I buy a Christmas sweater every year. I do it because I get into a festive fury," said senior Christian Cuevillas. This festive fury causes so many students to buy things they will use once and then toss.

"I buy stupid things that I think are fun," said Cuevillas. If students look further, they will see that the effect of these products is not fun, but stupid.

The effect of this need for inexpensive goods has led manufacturers to leave the United States and produce their wares in countries with lower environmental regulations. Consumerism has caused America to lose manufacturing capability and jobs, buying things they don't need, harming the environment.

While not entirely an American phenomenon, Christmas consumerism is far less prevalent in other nations.

"My family goes to my grandparent's house and we make a big dinner or lunch. In Spain, we don't have presents at Christmas. We give presents on January 6 for Epiphany, and Christmas is just for having fun with the family," said Spanish sophomore foreign exchange student, Daniela Alcon Cristos.

Christmas should be about compassion, love, and forgiveness, mirroring the origin of the holiday: the birth of Jesus.

"Christmas is about having fun," said freshman Erin Rittger. These core values have been lost in most of the student population of SLOHS.

"It's a Christian holiday, but now it has changed to something that everyone celebrates. It's a good thing we're all celebrating something, but most people are not celebrating the right thing," said Alcon Cristos. While celebrations can be fun and include presents, that is not the true purpose of Christmas.

Students should spend time this winter break showing compassion to those around them, whether that is making a meal for family and friends, spending time volunteering for charitable causes, or forgiving someone they have beef with. Candy canes and Christmas sweaters can't replace loving sacrifice.

Sources: *statista.com*

Truth Behind the Tree. Graphic courtesy of opinion co-editor Owen Blackwell.



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LGBTQ+ Representation Matters

REPORTER CHARLY ELSTON

I'm fifteen years old, and a "Blue's Clues" video on YouTube made me cry. This wasn't because it was sad or upsetting. This was because the video was of an animated LGBTQ+ pride parade. I saw someone like me on the screen, and I knew younger kids would see that and get to grow up seeing LGBTQ+ representation, and this made me so happy. It is a fact that representation in media matters, including to students at San Luis Obispo High School.

I've always known that representation in media is important in the sense that I could explain why. But I didn't fully understand it, and I didn't know I didn't fully understand it until I watched the television show "Heartstopper" in April. "Heartstopper" offers a diverse cast of characters, including a gay character, a bisexual character, a transgender character, an aromantic asexual character, and two lesbian characters. What I was going through was explained so eloquently in the show, and it finally clicked. Someone addressed how I was feeling, and showed me that yes, it's normal. The best way I can describe that feeling is pure, giddy, joy, mixed in with relief. That's what LGBTQ+ representation does. It tells people that it's okay to feel what they feel. It tells them that they're not alone, and there are other people who have gone through the same things.

It's so important to let younger kids see LGBTQ+ characters on television. It makes it easier to accept themselves, and know that others should be respected, no matter the differences. There needs to be more than straight characters, and more than monosexual characters.

Bisexual people reported accepting themselves for their sexuality less than lesbians or gay men did, according to studies.

Within the LGBTQ+ community, there are some people who feel less accepted than others. Some people believe that everyone is either gay or straight, but there are so many more fully valid identities within the LGBTQ+ community, and representation in media can show people this. People within the bi umbrella (including identities such as bisexuality, pansexuality, omnisexuality, polysexuality, and more) need to see that, yes, a bi person in a straight-passing relationship is still bi.

When I was in sixth grade, my teacher told us about a man he was taking a class from. Our teacher told us that the man could be fired for being gay. This moment stuck with me. Knowing this made everything harder for me. I thought if that was true for the gay man, what could it mean for me? I'm not gay, I'm pansexual, though I was still afraid about what could happen to me. Had I seen LGBTQ+ characters in our books, I'd have thought that it would be okay for me to explore my identity. But when I heard about the horrible, discrimination parts, I shut that down. I told myself to stop feeling what I was feeling, and that it wasn't okay to explore. I didn't have access to happy LGBTQ+ stories in school. I had the sad, negative side.

It means so much to me whenever I see LGBTQ+ representation. I love it when I see characters like myself, and I wish all LGBTQ+ people could experience it. Obviously, this does not happen. A glance at the SLOHS English curriculum shows this. No fictional stories with LGBTQ+ characters, let alone happy and uplifting ones. Representation shows people that it's okay to be themselves, and even if things are bad in the moment, someday it can get better.

Every person needs to see themselves in the media they consume, and that moment can be one of the most memorable experiences for a person.

Source: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, depts.ttu.edu

T4T: What is it and Why Does it Exist?

CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF KARL KARSH

Students at San Luis Obispo High School are probably all familiar with what being transgender is. However, students may not be aware of Trans for Trans (T4T), a sexuality where transgender people only date other transgender people.

T4T can be defined in various ways, it all really depends on the person who is using the label.

"Most people who are T4T do not date people who are cisgender, however it varies. Being T4T means a trans person can be sexual and/or romantic to other trans people," said sophomore Vance Waller.

There are many reasons someone would identify as T4T, ranging from safety reasons to it merely being a preference.

"One of the biggest benefits of dating someone who is trans is the security in them knowing

that they love who you really are, also the relatability in it. Someone who is cis wouldn't understand trans issues or life the same way someone that's also trans would. A huge thing is also knowing you'll be safe," said sophomore Sage Meeks.

Having a partner that can both understand you and make you feel comfortable is important. Safety is also usually a major concern for trans people, so knowing that you can be in a secure relationship makes a huge difference in one's dating life.

Not everyone in trans relationships identifies as T4T, along with the fact that one trans person in a relationship could identify as T4T, and the other couldn't.

T4T is a unique sexuality that creates a feeling of security for trans people, and though it isn't widely known, it is highly valued among trans individuals.

Unlabeled Doesn't Mean Unloveable

REPORTER JUNIPER PATRICK-MIERNICKI

For many queer students at San Luis Obispo High School, coming out is a big deal and is portrayed as almost a vital step to claiming one's true identity. However, coming out requires someone to figure out what they are, and this can be a challenge for some teens. Labeling oneself as gay, bisexual, pansexual, or anything at all sometimes doesn't feel right, and in the midst of adolescent confusion, it feels like anything could change at any given moment. Kids should not have to feel this pressure when they are still learning things, and they should be able to love who they love without worrying about what it "makes them."

"I would say I like who I like and it doesn't really matter. I don't know why so many people get so into their sexuality when it's just people you like," said an anonymous sophomore.

Some students share this feeling, and simply don't worry about giving themselves a label for their dating preferences.

Expressions asked students about their coming-out experiences.

"Honestly, I regret coming out. I came out to my parents in middle school and it went okay,

but my mind has changed since then. I don't want to 'come out' again though, I just like who I like and don't put pressure on it. I wouldn't necessarily recommend coming out to other queer kids because it can feel like a responsibility to live up to afterwards," said an anonymous sophomore.

Coming out isn't a perfect, self-liberating experience for everyone, and people shouldn't be shamed for deciding against it. It isn't the end-all-be-all.

"It's really just you telling other people who you like. It doesn't change who you are," said an anonymous senior.

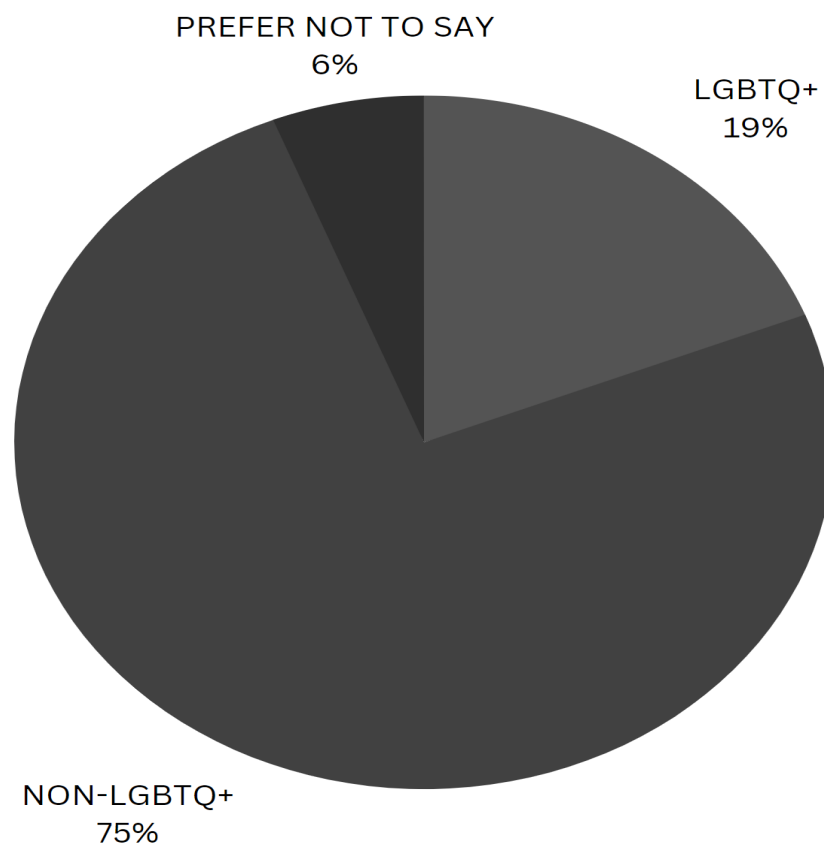
Some students don't think labeling themselves is even necessary. If the spectrum of gender is limitless, shouldn't sexuality be as well?

On the other hand, many people like the comfort of having a label.

"I tell people I'm bi. It gets the point across that I like multiple genders and I'm comfortable with it," said an anonymous junior.

Express yourselves Tigers, and remember that labels can both liberate and constrict. There's nothing wrong with being unsure, and nothing wrong with never formally coming out. Let's throw out the old narrative, labels don't equal queerness.

How do SLOHS Students Identify?



A slice from the 2021 YouthTruth SLOHS pie. Graph courtesy of feature editor Alma Tinoco.

Lesbian Films: Rated MA for Male Audiences

REPORTER LAUREN WEYEL

Lesbians do not exist to impress straight men. Unfortunately, men often objectify women who love women (WLW), exemplified in “Seinfeld” when George and Jerry discussed catfights: “Men think if women are grabbing and clawing at each other there’s a chance they might somehow kiss.”

WLW in the context of men is also seen in Katy Perry’s “I Kissed a Girl”: “I kissed a girl just to try it / I hope my boyfriend don’t mind it.”

Why do so many movies and TV shows portray lesbians as overtly sexual for the benefit of straight men?

“People kind of overlook the fact that it’s a genuine romantic relationship where two people are in love with each other,” said senior Savanna Henderson. “If you have a public TikTok account and you are a lesbian and you’re with your partner, there’s often a lot of comments on your TikTok livestreams like asking you guys to kiss.”

Only five out of the 25 best lesbian films featured by “Harper’s Bazaar” have a rating PG-13 or under, meaning younger lesbians only have 20

percent of the “best” movies to watch and look up to. The other eighty percent is more likely to include extreme sexual scenes which serve mainly to interest male audiences.

“How do you get guys to a ballet movie? ... the answer is a lesbian scene,” said actress Natalie Portman when discussing the sexual lesbian scene in her 2010 film “Black Swan.”

PG-13 movies can also be susceptible to harmful stereotypes or have sexualized role models which younger lesbians should not be looking up to. “Everything Sucks,” the 2018 Netflix one-season wonder, had good high school lesbian representation but fell victim to the ‘homophobe suppressing their own LGBTQ+ feelings’ stereotype.

Fortunately, the media is moving in the right direction. Shows like “Heartstopper” display young lesbians learning more about themselves without the unnecessary sex scenes. Media made by LGBTQ+ people, for LGBTQ+ people is more beneficial for the community and for allies who want to genuinely learn more about the experiences of lesbians.

Source: harpersbazaar.com, latimes.com

We’ve All Heard That “Band Kids Are Gay” - But is it True?

REPORTER LAUREN WEYEL

We’ve all heard the stereotype: “band kids are gay.” Many San Luis Obispo High School students and even band kids themselves secretly (or not-so-secretly) believe this stereotype to be true, but how true is it?

“Is [the stereotype] fair? No, because no stereotypes are fair. But is it true? Maybe,” said sophomore flute player Alex Lowe.

According to the 2021 SLOHS YouthTruth survey, 23 percent of the SLOHS student body identifies as LGBTQ+, and according to a poll run by *Expressions* 41.1 percent of band members identify as LGBTQ+. This makes band kids 18.1 percent “more gay” than the rest of the student population. While this is a moderately large percentage, it’s not extravagant, as 48.2 percent of band defines themselves as straight and/or cisgender.

The stereotype that all band kids are gay is not fully accurate. However, this is clear evidence that

members of the LGBTQ+ community flock to the music and arts programs.

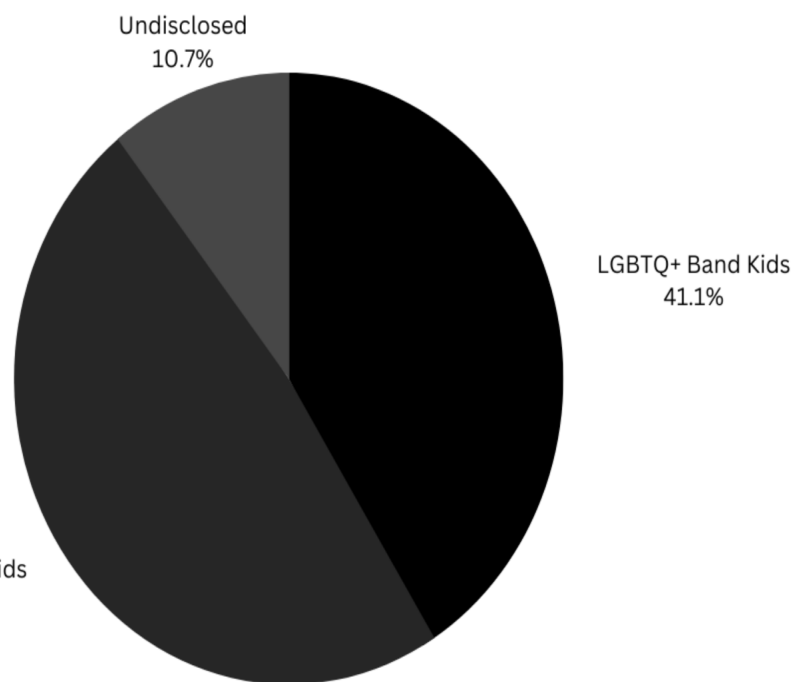
“I feel like LGBTQ students tend to be more expressive, which is why they’re usually well represented in band, theater, and arts programs,” said an anonymous freshman flute player.

What sets the band apart is its willingness to share with those around them. Music creates a safe space for people to discover themselves with friends around them.

“I feel so much safer discussing my identity in band. They support me in every way. The band kids are such a good family,” said junior color guard member Angel Mata Gaspar.

From 3 a.m. bus rides to fantastic field show performances, band members learn to lean on each other and build trust that translates into greater openness and honesty, allowing students to learn about themselves in a safe and caring space.

Source: youthtruthsurvey.org



Ensemble of people. Graph courtesy of page editor Izzy Nino de Rivera.

Do LGBTQ+ Students at SLOHS Feel Safe?

REPORTER ADAM BOLIVAR-STONE

It’s no surprise that in America a minority group must fight if they want to reach respect and at San Luis Obispo High School, the LGBTQ+ community is doing just that. Unfortunately, that fight comes with much discrimination and prejudice all of which is unnecessary hostility.

Given that SLOHS is a progressive area, how much do our LGBTQ+ students have to worry about their ability to maintain basic decency and freedom?

One of the main responsibilities of any high school should be to ensure a space where all students amount to the same secure level of safety and security. For LGBTQ+ students a place integrated with the rest of the world may be impossible at the moment.

In a survey conducted by *Expressions* to two classes, half of the freshman LGBTQ+ students interviewed felt safe on campus. However, all interviewed LGBTQ+ juniors felt at least somewhat safe at SLOHS. Important to note that many of the answers were not a definite ‘yes.’ Instead, words like generally, mostly, and somewhat were abundant in the responses.

“Generally, I feel pretty safe. There’s definitely groups of people here where it’s not that safe for me to be around. But I don’t feel like people would hurt me even if they had extremely bad ideas,” said an anonymous junior.

We can conclude that some LGBTQ+ students feel relatively safe at SLOHS, but this does not mean they are not susceptible to experiencing forms of abuse.

Junior Aubrey O’Leary, who “for the most part” feels safe at SLOHS shares how she has undergone mistreatment here.

“Last year, I had a gay pride sticker torn off my car, ripped upped, and then placed on top of my car,” said O’Leary.

Even students who haven’t personally experienced abuse are aware of the abuse their peers receive and that pain resonates with the community.

“I haven’t experienced any abuse but I’ve heard many insults thrown towards the general community at SLOHS,” said an anonymous freshman.

The community has a wide range of sexual orientations and identities and this unfortunately leads to some identities at a higher risk of experiencing abuse.

“Transgender students and students who use the pronouns they/them I would say are at a higher risk of being physically or verbally abused,” said an anonymous freshman.

Through times of hardship our LGBTQ+ students have found ways to seek enjoyment on campus. Along with general activities, SLOHS also provides programs meant for LGBTQ+ unification like the GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance) club.

With each new year, *Expressions* hopes that the living environment for our current and future LGBTQ+ students improves both on and off campus.

Being Queer in Sports: How the Athletes Feel

REPORTER VVOLET BURRUS

San Luis Obispo High School is a diverse place, with 19 percent of the student body identifying as LGBTQ+ according to the annual youth truth survey. Many of these students are also in athletics or do extracurricular sports. *Expressions* interviewed several athletes on campus to hear their opinions on the treatment of queer athletes and what the school can do.

Expressions: Does being queer effects ones time in sports at SLOHS?

Sophomore Talia Ramezani: Being openly LGBTQ+ is a lot safer than, say, ten years ago, but that does not mean homophobia is not a thing. Respect is pushed very hard in athletics, but homophobia in sports is absolutely a real problem.

Sophomore Annika Miltner: Definitely. It's easy to get judged for being queer by a straight/cis population, and issues relating to gender play a huge role in extremely gender-separated sports.

Girl's basketball coach and teacher Daniel Monroe: Yes, until we start promoting and advertising differently I think this will be an issue. Currently, I think inclusion is severely lacking in our country.

Expressions: Are LGBTQ+ athletes discriminated against at SLOHS?

Ramezani: Experience varies from person to person, although homophobia is still there. Passive-aggressive homophobia is a thing, like, "You're queer? Don't fall in love with me." "You like girls? That's kinda hot." Stuff like this is so gross and disgusting. It's sad to see stuff like this come from your own fellow athletes.

Miltner: As an athlete, you are forced into a gender binary in order to

play your sport. Certain expectations [are put on you] of what to wear and how to act, perpetuated by being in a group environment, often making people feel uncomfortable or discriminated against.

Monroe: I have not personally seen this, so it is hard for me to answer.

Expressions: Is there ways the school could better accommodate queer students in athletics?

Ramezani: There's only so much the school can do. People won't change unless they want to.

Miltner: The strict binary of sports in general poses a huge issue. The addition of intramural sports, or accommodations to our current sports programs for those who feel singled out, would definitely benefit our queer student body.

Monroe: I can't speak for our school, but I can speak for myself personally and the girls basketball program. I want good people in our program, regardless of anything else. If we do a better job promoting that as coaches we may begin to see students become more comfortable and show an interest in playing sports.

Queer athletes exist at this school, and although our athletics program enforces respect and acceptance, this doesn't mean everyone is welcomed. Our sports have a strict gender binary in which students must choose from, and this just isn't realistic. Though queer people have existed forever, society's growing tolerance means there's no excuses. Athletics at SLOHS and across the globe must change.

Source: youthtruthsurvey.org



Cross Country boys team is racing. Photo courtesy of freshman Carly Meeks.

SLOHS Cross Country has the Pedal to the Metal

REPORTER ATTICUS DRAKE

San Luis Obispo High School's cross country team is a force to be reckoned with this year. In recent seasons the team has had multiple athletes commit to Division 1 schools across the country.

Cross Country coach Adam Basch attributes some of this success to the overall atmosphere and community the team has built.

"The team atmosphere is fairly tight-knit. Both the boys and the girls teams have their own traditions and rituals that make the team cohesive," said Basch.

Runners agree with this as well.

"The team atmosphere is great. The team does a good job of keeping everyone on track by encouraging everyone to do better everyday. There's a spot or role everyone on the team fills which makes the environment very inclusive. Our team is a good community by still enjoying the sport but having that change [to] being ready to race when it's time to go" said Cross Country runner and sophomore Conor Mason.

A cohesive team is a common theme between the runners.

"[The team atmosphere] is pretty good. We spend a lot of time together so you kind of have to be happy and on good terms," said sophomore and cross country runner Regan James. James elaborated on this, saying that everyone "waits for the last person to finish and cheers them on."

This sense of community and common cause has been shown to be a leading cause of successful seasons for all sports teams.

In addition to community, personal routines are a big deal to many athletes in a variety of sports like cross country. While for some it can go as far as being superstition, for others it can be as simple as making sure they are properly hydrated.

"My personal routine going into a race is to make sure I drink a lot of water the night before and have some food a while before the race. About an hour before the race time we do a warmup together as a team," said senior and cross country runner Lane Keeling.

As the runners are nearing the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) competition and the end of their season, the community is strengthening and hopes are high. Wish our runners luck as they try and win what Basch is calling their "championship season".

Vaping in the Bathroom: Do Non-Vapers Care?

REPORTER KENNEDY BELTRAM

It's no secret that San Luis Obispo High School bathrooms have become a hotspot for vaping. Many students have experienced a herd of blazed teens, leaving the big stall all smelling of different chemical flavors. If stalls are taken up for minutes at a time only as a place for vaping, students are left wasting time waiting in line or in some cases, late to class.

Senior Jared Treichler is seeing the vaping issue from the angle of scent. He doesn't particularly care about the vaping itself, more the smell it leaves in the restroom.

"Why are there toilets in the vape room? It's their lungs they're destroying but I think bathrooms should smell like bathrooms," said Treichler.

High-school-aged teenagers are 16 times more likely to vape than adults aged 25 to 34. This is because of peer pressure and the specific advertising that is marketed towards kids. If you simplify what a vape is known as among kids, it's a portable stick that tastes like candy, feels good, and makes you look cool. If students have the impression that a vape is all that, it makes sense why so many are using it.

Some would say being offered a vape is a right of passage. Although it's been normalized, one major downside to vaping in the bathrooms is the fire alarms going off. Last year so many fire alarms went off due to vaping it eventually led to the closing of multiple restrooms on campus which has caused major inconveniences for students.

"The drug is super accessible. Smoking went down over time when everyone was using cigarettes. But now that it's vape, it tastes good, it's fun, and you don't smell after. It's way more accessible to kids than ever before," said biology teacher Trenton Rubio.

In a 2022 poll about vaping at SLOHS, 48 percent said they don't mind vaping, as long as the stalls aren't hogged. 19 percent of students said they don't care when students vape in the bathroom and 24 percent said they hate it.

Students have mixed opinions on restroom drug usage. Overall, it seems that SLOHS students don't care if it doesn't cause an inconvenience.

Source: singlecare.com

The Girls Golf Team is a Hit! Here's Why.



Varsity golf team co-captain and junior Siena Boscaro is putting the ball into the hole. Photo courtesy of varsity golfer and freshman Sofia Pierson.

REPORTER CHARLY ELSTON

San Luis Obispo High School offers many sports, all of which perform exceptionally well. One of these is the girls golf team. *Expressions* interviewed three athletes on the team to find out what they're doing right now in the world of golf.

Expressions: Why did you pick golf as your sport?

Varsity golf team co-captain and junior Siena Boscaro: I played soccer for ten years, and I have horrible running stamina so I was like 'okay, golf, you don't have to run' and I tried it a few times and I just fell in love with it.

Varsity golf athlete and freshman Sofia Pierson: I want to go professional and I've been doing it for, a really long time since I was like very little, because that's how you become great. I started a

bunch of sports very young so I could see what I wanted to do most, and I really started to golf because I quit my other sports and I felt like I had more of a future in that because I had been playing for so long. There are people who could have ability, but because they started so late it's harder for them to go anywhere with their passion so starting young and being put in a lot of tournaments will really help you get better.

Varsity golf athlete and junior Ainsley Stephens: I've been playing golf since before high school and I just wanted to do it because it seemed really chill.

Expressions: What is your favorite part of being on the golf team?

Boscaro: We definitely have a lot of fun at practice and everything, but I love the van rides with everybody and I think it's just a good time with a ton of girls who are all passionate about the same thing.

Pierson: Meeting new people and, of course, I love playing golf.

Stephens: I like hanging out with my teammates and stuff since we don't get to do that during the matches, and I like practicing with them, and just having fun, and the team dinners.

Expressions: What skills do you use in golf?

Boscaro: You definitely need a lot of arm strength, that's a really important skill, and it's important to have a lot of flexibility in your hips to move through the ball properly so that you hit it with as much impact as possible and so it goes the farthest and you have the least amount of hits.

Pierson: You have got to be able to walk for six hours straight so you do

have to exercise, but it's very big on mental game so it's very important to have a strong mental game because without it you won't be able to succeed.

Stephens: Calmness, perseverance, the right mindset, you can't really have anger issues.

Expressions: How is the team doing right now?

Boscaro: We're doing really really good right now we just had league finals and we qualified for division one [California Interscholastic Federation] as a team for the second year in a row which is like the first two times SLO has done it in forever, so it's been really awesome and we're excited for CIF.

Pierson: We're doing pretty good. We came in second overall to [Arroyo Grande].

Stephens: It's good. It's sad because we're at the end of the season; we're all pretty close.

Expressions: Do you see yourself having a future in golf?

Boscaro: I definitely love being on the golf team, and I'm looking at playing in college as of right now, probably at [Division] II or [Division] III school, and just for fun because it's definitely something I love.

Pierson: Yes, definitely, I want to become a professional golfer, and go to a Division I school for golf.

Stephens: I don't know if I would go and play golf in college. [It's] pretty easy to get scholarships to [Division] II or [Division] III schools.

The girls golf team is certainly another impressive sports team at SLOHS, and definitely deserve respect for their amazing work. Go cheer on the fellow Tigers!

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2022 Was a Year Full of Disappointment in Film



Hollywood Trash. Photo courtesy of reporter Aidan Field.

REPORTER AIDAN FIELD

Students at San Luis Obispo High School love movies, but this year has led to some major disappointments in the theater. This year had many anticipated movies, yet many were rated poorly and failed to get students in the theaters. Students have been connecting more with shows and movies on streaming services. More and more, it seems that the living room T.V. is the only constant in entertainment in a world full of delays and drama.

This year it's estimated that streaming services have made around 34 billion dollars. All these subscription-based services are getting more popular as we are all losing enthusiasm to go to the theaters after months of being let down.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe, or MCU, has disappointed many fans.

Marvel's streak of letting audiences down started last year when they announced that two of their highly anticipated movies were going to be delayed. "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" was originally going to be released on March 25, but instead it was pushed to early May. Even with the delays "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" still let down moviegoers.

"I honestly wasn't a fan of the new 'Doctor Strange' or 'Thor: Love and Thunder,'" said senior Gavin Wren.

"Thor: Love and Thunder," the fourth addition to the Thor series was pushed back even further, from May 6 to July 8.

It makes audiences wonder what they were doing with the extra time, given the fact that the bad CGI present in "Thor 4" became a quick joke in the online community. Viewers poked fun at the fact that a

movie with a two hundred fifty million dollar budget had a scene in which a floating two-dimensional head spoke to the main characters.

"I think [the MCU] has had a major dip recently. I mean, we're just coming out of COVID-19, and...they've just got a lot of stuff going on right now. I can see them spinning it back around and I'm sure they're gonna get back on their feet," said senior and avid moviegoer Mark Rourke.

The Marvel movie "Morbius" also upset critics and fans, scoring 15 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Outside of the MCU, other movies failed. The psychological thriller "Don't Worry Darling" was going to be one of this year's most significant movies. The movie's exclusive lineup, which consisted of actors, Florence Pugh and Harry Styles, made "Don't Worry Darling" highly anticipated, but its surrounding drama involving the director and Styles clouded the movie's already dismal content. It was criticized for being seemingly incomplete and for Styles' substandard acting. It scored 37 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Another poorly rated but less popular movie, "Amsterdam," had a pristine lineup of stars including actors and stars, Taylor Swift and Christian Bale. It scored even lower on Rotten Tomatoes, getting 34 percent. "Amsterdam" was criticized for its over-active plot and confusing narrative.

"I was really disappointed by

'Amsterdam,' which just came out recently," said Rourke.

These movies all failed despite large budgets and massive production sizes. However, recently it seems that the price of production doesn't match the quality of a movie.

"Everything Everywhere All At Once" received a near-perfect score on Rotten Tomatoes and with only a 25 million dollar budget. Its unanticipated success meant it was only released in a fraction of theaters that "Thor: Love and Thunder" had despite only scoring 64 percent on rotten tomatoes.

It's important to note that some people had positive experiences with other movies.

"My favorite that I've seen probably [this year] so far was 'The Batman', that was the new one, it was really good," said Wren.

Streaming services have become prevalent in modern society. Every single addition to the MCU added to streaming platforms in the form of TV shows was rated highly by critics.

Other TV shows like "Stranger Things" and "Never Have I Ever" were catered specifically towards teenagers and high school students.

As streaming services are getting more popular with teens, SLOHS students might find themselves binge-watching the latest release instead of going down to the local movie theaters.

Source: cnet.com, rottentomatoes.com, variety.com, the-direct.com

Country Music Has Become Shaped by Negative Stereotypes

REPORTER VIOLET BURRUS

Even though country music originated from conservative folk music, the music today has taken on a new meaning. Students at San Luis Obispo High School have strong opinions about country music and those who like the genre tend to be seen in a negative light, due to some songs' portrayal of women.

Even though some country music can be sexist, it doesn't mean that all country music is. Country music started with artists like Hank Williams who wrote songs about love and loneliness, and Johnny Cash, who wrote about his moral tribulations and struggles. Today, artists have primarily focused on the consumption of alcohol, their material possessions, and the acclaimed worth of women.

"People don't really listen to country music, because so much of it is just inundated with all these [modern] artists. It's just sort of caused the entire genre as a whole to go down," said freshman Mateus Iscold.

Students at SLOHS appreciate the genre itself, but its negative connotations have made the genre less popular due to the problems associated with it. When people think of country music they think of southern men disrespecting women, but country music is more complicated than that.

"I don't think there's any stereotypes about people listening to country music. I can't think of a stereotype for country music, [it's something anyone] would listen to," said sophomore

Nolan Evers.

However, some people dispute this.

Country music originated in the South, stemming from folk music, which is generally more rural or traditional, and associated with family values. The genre was often mixed with blues music in the 1930s, but today it's mixed with the pop genre. The conservative aspects of country music have changed over time, instead developing into offensive, possessive depictions of women.

"I don't really like it. It's kind of boring. It also has misogynist vibes? I don't know. Current country music is very, 'I got my truck, and my woman, and my beer, and that's all I need.' So I feel like, at this point, country music is no longer [traditional]," said freshman Phoebe Demarest.

The problem with the modernized genre is that it's causing a lot of good country artists to be stereotyped. Country music isn't all bad, but certain artists have negatively affected the genre's success.

"A lot of country [music] right now is really just pop artists singing incessantly. But actual country [music] is really a story. It's a lot more than just generic southern music. [It's so] much more than just, 'I have a truck and wear cowboy boots,'" said Iscold.

Country music's true meaning has been lost within its modernization, and it has strayed from its original purpose.

Source: sc.edu, psmag.com

Drill Music Does Not Cause Violence

REPORTER SEFTON STRICKLAND

Drill music is an ultra-violent subgenre of hip-hop that came out of gang territories in the United States in the early 2000s. Artists popular among San Luis Obispo High School students, including Chief Keef, Pop Smoke, and King Von, have contributed to the success of Drill.

This music is so controversial because of how violent the lyrics are. Yashua Hamilton, known as G Nuk, is an up-and-coming drill artist from O Block, a Chicago neighborhood known for its gang violence. Hamilton shares his experiences partaking in gang violence on his hit song "Spinn". "He gon keep on dissin' till we leave him stuck. Put his body in the trunk then we take him to the dump," said Hamilton.

"If I'm in a bad mood, violent music is definitely going to keep me in a bad mood, but it's really just about the person," said senior Finn Steel.

Many organizations have spoken out against gangs and drill music, claiming that it encourages needless violence. "You have drill artists singing about stabbing people to death in the middle of a knife crime epidemic," said controversial influencer Andrew Tate.

Similarly, the journalist organization Fox News published an article entitled "Rap and drill music is part of America's racial problem."

The truth is that violent media and entertainment do not cause

real violence. A 2019 study published by Royal Society Open Science exposed some participants to extremely vulgar and aggressive death metal music and other participants to extremely happy and calm music. The scientists then measured their attraction to violent images and art. They found that there was no correlation between the participant's preference for music and their attraction to the violent images. They concluded that the fans' enjoyment of violent music trumped any negative associations arising from its themes. This means that violent media doesn't affect the audience's actions, and doesn't cause them to commit acts of violence.

Hip-hop and drill isn't the start of gang violence. It's a symptom of it. Shootings were happening on O Block long before drill arose. The actual cause of drill is racism. Drill comes from neighborhoods that were redlined and segregated. Gangs in America were started because black people were/are so discriminated against. The extreme discrimination against minorities has caused this culture and this art.

Drill shouldn't be banned. Drill should be listened to, supporting those who have been discriminated against since America's founding.

Students at SLOHS can support black artists by listening to drill music.

Source: youtube.com, foxnews.com, bbc.com

Meet Noelle Eben: The Brains Behind SLOHS Theater



Incredible productions from the San Luis Obispo Performing Arts Company! Photo courtesy of reporter Avery Machamer.

REPORTER AVERY MACHAMER

Right when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, San Luis Obispo High School had to cancel the spring musical about a month before production was scheduled. During the 2020-2021 school year, the SLOHS Performing Arts Company practiced their productions with Zoom rehearsals and performed via screen recordings.

When SLOHS opened its doors to in-person learning last year, the theater company started live productions in the new theater. The fall play, "Clue", and the spring musical, "The Wizard of Oz", caused the Performing Arts Company to face overwhelming success and popularity among the student body.

Expressions interviewed the head of the SLOHS Performing Arts Company, Noelle Eben, to gain insight regarding the growth of the theater program and its success.

Expressions: How do you choose which shows will be put on? Is the decision process difficult?

Noelle Eben: The process is definitely very difficult and it takes lots of time to consider what is right for us. I take lots of things into consideration like what would be a good fit for our students, how we can grow our program, and who our audience is. I think about talents and abilities, how many roles there are, what the choreography is like, and even stuff regarding the gender breakdown of shows.

Expressions: What is the process of preparing to put on a play or musical performance?

Eben: It's a really fun process. In a play, we start with blocking rehearsals while in a musical we start with learning the biggest musical number. In a play, we really focus on what the purpose of a scene is and what is the meaning of what you are saying. Part two of rehearsals is when we start getting into runs, which are full runs of the show and putting everything together. Tech week is when we add all of the technical parts on top of what we have already done.

Expressions: How has the program benefited from the new theater?

Eben: I think we have benefited in a lot of ways. I think our theater is definitely enhancing our abilities of what we can do. It's been really nice to have a space for rehearsals; it's been super beneficial.

Expressions: How has COVID-19 affected the theater program's growth over the past few years?

Eben: When COVID-19 happened, it shut one of our shows down completely and all of my theater classes went completely online. I was only able to teach one theater class when we did online learning, and now I teach four a year. Theater had all of the wrong things for COVID-19: lots of people in a small space and projecting. It was not a great combination and it took a long time to rebuild and come back from that.

Be sure to support the SLOHS Performing Arts Company and Noelle Eben's hard work by attending the spring musical "Mamma Mia!" this March.

Izzy's Bookstore Front: "The Idiot"

PAGE EDITOR IZZY NINO DE RIVERA

Any warnings?: This is a pretty safe book, just long. There wasn't anything outstanding or that was a prominent theme in the book, except toxic relationships? I wouldn't even go as far as to call it toxic - more of a comedy of errors with communication on both ends.

"The Idiot" is the witty, hilarious, semi-autobiographical story of the daughter of Turkish immigrants, Selin. A first-year student at Harvard in 1995, she discovers e-mail and begins corresponding with one of her Russian classmates, Ivan, and eventually falls for him. In the same Russian class, she also befriends the charismatic Svetlana, who becomes her best friend.

Selin seems to be in constant pursuit of the answer to the old-as-time question of "Why is everything confusing?" In her naive attempts at trying to discover what love truly means and the meaning of the world around her, she begins to discover herself in ways that wouldn't have been possible without Ivan. She travels to the Hungarian countryside, at Ivan's suggestion since he was going back home to Budapest, and comes to grips with what she wants her relationship to look like with him and what she wants for herself.

The book is a reminder of first love. The confusion, exhilaration, and miscommunication of it all hit close to home. First love is hard. Anyone who's truly been in love can express that.

In this scary resemblance, I had time to reflect on my love life. Like Selin, my love life has been a lot of things, but it's never been boring. There were so many parts to Selin I adored, and she was painfully relatable. This book felt like an extension of myself, scooped out of the deepest thoughts of my brain.

What I admire about the book is that her entire personality doesn't revolve around Ivan, as other readers have described this book to have. I think the discovery of her personality wouldn't have been possible if she hadn't corresponded with Ivan or followed him to Hungary. The characters were human - which also entails ambiguity. They

all had their flaws, but they also had some flame to them that even made me like Ivan, as questionable as he was.

For a few days, I got to be absorbed in Selin's life and saw even more similarities to my own. She has difficulty fitting in anywhere - even in Turkey, where her family is from. She's also, as the back of the book jokes, "doomed" to become a writer. Observing my navel, I've also been realizing while applying to colleges, I, too, am doomed to become a writer.

The fact that this isn't your traditional narrative makes it all the more exciting. It's the perfect cross between realism and absurdism - while often being rooted in the real world, things happen for seemingly absurd reasons and sometimes, have random or no explanation behind them, leaving us to philosophize and assume crazy conclusions drawn out of air.

Although the setting is Harvard, the clever narration of this story often pokes fun at the "intellectuals" at Harvard and about academia in general. If you don't understand the references to media throughout the book, don't worry, it won't destroy your comprehension of the plot. With a reference to Dostoyevsky as the namesake of the book, my very basic level of knowledge of Russian literature still allowed me to love "The Idiot" dearly.

As much second-hand embarrassment as I got from the book, I loved this blossoming writer with her sharp knife humor and her "idiotic" pursuit of love. This book is just as much about love as it is about academia, our emotions, the absurdity of the world around us, college, becoming an adult, and idealizing someone we could hardly ever begin to know. To say it was relatable is merely an understatement.

"The Idiot" was one of the most delightful books I've read, and it feels like a breath of very much-needed fresh air compared to the other heavier things I've read recently. I had a stupid smile on my face after I got finished it.

Source: StoryGraph



Band Instruments for the Central Coast - ron@ccflutes.com



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A New Cafeteria Means a New SLOHS



Students wind through the cafeteria construction. Photo courtesy of freshman Nico Aebischer.

REPORTER NICO AEBISCHER

Due to Measure D, construction including the new cafeteria at San Luis Obispo High School has been under ongoing construction, meaning freshman and sophomores have not been at the school long enough to know what the campus is like without big projects going on. Yet after a year of the cafeteria being worked on, the end is finally in sight.

Once the cafeteria is finished, a lot of things could change for SLOHS students. Not only will there no longer be as much loud construction and foot traffic, students will also have the opportunity to try out new menu items.

"There will be changes to the menu [once the cafeteria opens] and we will have food available that won't be available at LAMS. The rumors are that we will have a pizza oven and a rotisserie chicken oven," said Central Kitchen Supervisor of SLOHS Sarah Rich.

The prospect of more pizza, rotisserie chicken, and other in-house menu options is good news for SLOHS students that get their lunch from the school cafeteria.

Another change that some students have thought might occur at SLOHS once the cafeteria is finished is that SLOHS will no longer allow students off campus during lunch, but this rumor is false.

This means that students will not only hold on to the privilege of getting lunch off campus, but that the school grounds won't be overrun with a sudden increase in students that would have needed to stay on campus had the school not allowed them to leave the school grounds.

"Having a lot more people getting school lunch [would] definitely [have been] chaotic," said Bisheff.

The space that the construction currently inhabits is closed off to students, and so are the views of San Luis Obispo that come with the higher ground the cafeteria takes up, but when it opens up to students, all that will change.

"Compared to the current set up, [the cafeteria] will be amazing. More choice, more space, a great view, and lots of places to sit, and there will still be [space] out front and in the grass if students choose," said Salcido.

As to when the cafeteria will be completed, the time is sooner than some may think.

"The cafeteria is scheduled to be completed in early 2023 and then open for students near the end of the third trimester," said Salcido.

Whether it's the better seating, new views, different food, the ability to keep going off campus, or just the absence of construction, the school cafeteria will have something for everyone.

Surf Club Shares Their Favorite Surf Spots

REPORTER CHE BROCCO

San Luis Obispo High School's Surf Club meets weekly to discuss surfing. They meet every Friday in portable 2, and the club is open to all SLOHS students who are interested in surfing or even just meeting new people.

Expressions interviewed four of the Surf Club members to find out more about their club.

Expressions: Where are the best surf spots in San Luis Obispo County?
Sophomore and vice president of Surf Club Kai Monge: There are a lot of great surf spots around here. Our club goes to Pismo Beach, just because it's a super fun area to hang out. We go surfing all the time. There are not too many people, [and it's] super fun.

Senior and president of Surf Club Coleman Howe: Some of the best spots are in Morro, or sometimes a little North or South of them, but the best spots, those are secret and I can't say.

Freshman Lila Espy: There are a lot of good places, each place has its own personality and mindset you have to be in. The Rock is a classic surf spot, but there can be way too many people there, when Shell Beach has a good swell the waves can be really good.

Freshman Finn Selman: My personal favorite spots around here would probably have to be Morro Rock and like all along there, and then there's The Pit, which is a little bit north from there up the beach. I also really liked Shell Beach.

Expressions: Would you say that surfer stereotypes are accurate?

Monge: Yeah, we're all kind of lazy and laid back.

Howe: I'd say. Not always, but it's definitely a thing. There are definitely some sort of surfer bros that have pretty much fit this stereotype well.

Espy: I mean yes and no, there are certain components that are absolutely blown out of proportion and some components that are right to a

certain extent. Most of the surfers I've met have had the same kind of energy to them, but I don't think it's a stereotype.

Selman: Not really; the whole thing of everybody saying stuff like, "totally rad" that like, never happens, nobody ever says that. It's kind of like the opposite because surfers are really mean but there are definitely a lot of like super laid-back chill people who are some of the nicest people out in the lineup. But a lot of times there are just old people who yell at you and it can get pretty nerve-wracking.

Expressions: How do you feel about the growth of the Surf Club?

Monge: It's been crazy this year. We've got a bunch of new members, a bunch of freshmen, and we love to see the next generation of Surf Club. Everyone is super welcoming and super inclusive.

Howe: I mean, it was difficult because last year the Surf Club was pretty much all seniors and they all graduated. So this year there's been, you know, a lot of new younger members, which is definitely different than before, but it's exciting.

Espy: I think it's great the club is getting bigger, when the seniors leave the juniors will have to take over, and then the sophomores, etc. It's honestly the more the merrier with Surf Club because we need new generations of people who are just looking to meet cool people and go on genuinely rad adventures

Selman: I like it. This is my first year, so I don't really know what it was like last year. But from what I've heard, there's been a lot more people. There are a lot of people showing up to the clubs itself, but to the actual surf sessions, there are only like four or five kids out of the 30 who show up actually go and surf.

Surf Club is a great way to meet laid-back people and they are always welcoming to anyone, so come over to portable two this Friday and you can join them on their Monday morning surf trips.

The Midterm Election Results Are In

REPORTERS LEONARDO DETURRIS & AIDAN FIELD

The 2022 midterm elections have concluded, and many elected positions, including SLCUSD board positions that have oversight over San Luis Obispo High School, have been decided for years to come. Here are some local results

For starters, Erica Stewart is no longer a pro-tempe mayor, and is now the full mayor of SLO.

Stewart handily won her election by winning by more than double digit margins over all of her opponents.

"There's just a lot of things to be solved. And I think [Stewart] can do it, but we just got to see gutsy stuff get done," said senior Mack Garcia.

Lots of students here like Stewart, a result potentially of her visit on campus for a tutorial session.

Moving on from the mayor election, the SLO City Council election produced

two winners, both of whom were endorsed by the SLO County Democratic Party. Emily Francis and Michelle Shoresman are keeping the SLO City Council all female.

"Young Dems had the pleasure of hosting Emily Francis as a guest for one of our meetings this year. It was so refreshing and lovely to see a young woman, who also has the experience of being a teacher, stand for similar values as us," said junior Alida Laursen.

Lastly, there were four seats up for election for SLCUSD trustees positions.

The winners are Marilyn Rodger for district one, Rob Banfield for district two, March Buchman for district four, and Ellen Sheffer for district five. All but Banfield were endorsed by the SLO County Democratic Party.

Progressives had a very strong showing in these local elections, and their policies are going to affect a lot of SLOHS students.

