

# SLOHS EXPRESSIONS

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Illustration courtesy of Design Editor Owen Blackwell.

## A Students' Guide to Sustainability in the Modern World

Arts & Entertainment Editor Olivia Cusick

Students at San Luis Obispo High School have a trash problem. Not only do students struggle to take care of their garbage, but many students also refuse to make subtle changes that can positively affect the environment.

Making changes and sacrifices isn't an easy decision. A more sustainable lifestyle means sacrificing some time, money, and just general convenience that a less environmentally conscious world has. But these changes are essential, and the contribution of every student can make a difference.

"Students should think about how much trash they produce in their daily life. If you are frequenting coffee shops a lot, maybe just bring a reusable cup, [When you make more sustainable choices], you feel more connected to the earth, because the trash is what's hurting it. You can go extreme and just aim for zero waste, but if you cut down a little and be a little more thoughtful, you'll feel better," said senior and member of the SLOHS Environmental Club Mutalé Malama.

San Luis Obispo is a (mostly) walkable city. For most errands and daily tasks, the trip is possible on foot. Biking is significantly easier to cross town, as well as faster. Riding and biking, when possible, can greatly improve environmental conditions, as well as save a solid amount of money on gasoline. For students who commute, carpooling and public transportation continue to be more sustainable, and reduce the number of cars in the SLOHS parking lot.

San Luis Obispo County has several places where students can drop off old clothes. Local thrift store Fred and Betty's is a popular thrifting location, as a nonprofit that supports San Luis Obispo Classical Academy. Nonprofit organization Goodwill has several donation centers and shops throughout SLO County.

By thrifting, students can revitalize clothing that

would otherwise be excess waste. In the United States alone, over 34 billion pounds of clothing are trashed yearly. Students can find unique pieces of clothing, and discover new brands of clothing they would never have known about.

The online obsession with microtrends and dirt-cheap clothing is harming these thrift stores.

When a new TikTok trend takes over, thousands of people flock to cheap, inhumane clothing. Stores like Shein and Forever 21 are fantastic examples of this. The price tag is captivating, but the cheap fabric, and inhumane labor (mostly children who are extremely underpaid and overworked) make the social cost much more expensive than the dollar cost. These articles of clothing are not made to last, creating unnecessary carbon emissions, as well as an overabundance of waste, just adding to the landfills.

America is a capitalist society. An economic problem arises once everyone in this society has an item that is built to last. Things that are built to last are wonderful: for the consumer. For the producer, that means a customer won't return for several years, if at all.

Planned obsolescence solves this problem by purposefully making their products fail after a certain period of time. There is a reason Apple products get slower and crash more often when a new product comes out. By buying products that actually last, consumers can prevent unnecessary emissions and waste. Avoiding planned obsolescence is not a simple task, but by researching companies and brands before making purchases, consumers can save money and prevent waste.

Correctly disposing of trash and recycling is essential for positive environmental growth. The phrase "Wish Cycling" describes people who recycle anything they can, which in theory is a kind act, but ultimately creates contamination with actual recyclable

materials, causing extra labor for each material to be recycled.

In SLO County, any food scraps can be placed in green waste. Essentially, anything that is produced to be eaten, not plastic, paper, or liquids. This includes eggshells, bones, and trimmed fat.

Glass bottles, metal cans, clean aluminum foil, plastic bottles, and any clean paper or cardboard products are okay to be recycled. Coffee cups, bubble wrap, plastic utensils and straws, snack wrappers, and any product that has food scraps on it must be trashed.

Certain materials should never be thrown into the general trash. This includes batteries, medicine, prescription drugs, and electronic cigarettes. These should all be placed in a sealed bag and brought to a hazardous waste disposal location. Safely disposing of hazardous waste can save lives.

Students wishing to make a positive change in the world around them can start in a simple place: picking up their trash and cleaning up messes around the school.

The janitorial team at SLOHS will appreciate it, and the school will look even better.

"It would make my job easier [if students picked up after themselves], but more importantly it would make me happy," said day custodian Daniel Navarrette.

In today's world, most of the pollution comes from multibillion-dollar industries, which can be extremely disheartening to people who want to make a positive change in the world around them. By making small changes, students, staff, and people around the world can make significant changes.

Sources: [constellation.com](http://constellation.com), [cdph.ca.gov](http://cdph.ca.gov), [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com), [bu.edu](http://bu.edu), [slocounty.ca.gov](http://slocounty.ca.gov), [portal.ct.gov](http://portal.ct.gov), [slocity.org](http://slocity.org), [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

#### PEOPLE & CULTURE (2 & 3)

Missing Out on Elective Opportunities  
Freshmen Prefer Water More Than Tea  
Students Using Study Skills Time Wisely?  
Being Raised by Immigrant Parents  
Heard of the "We Belong Award?"

#### OPINION (4 & 5)

Stop Naming a Valedictorian  
Easy A's of the Journalism Department  
The Waiting Game

#### FEATURE (6 & 7)

Investigation into Downpours  
Environmental Club Profile  
Plants Native to SLO  
Conservation and Adventure In Hunting

#### HEALTH & SPORTS (8 & 9)

Softball's Junior Varsity is Nowhere to Be Found  
The Stunt Team is Killing It!  
Be Mindful of Food Allergies  
My Experience With Ballet Changed My Life

#### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT (10 & 11)

Audibles Monopoly on Audiobooks is Killing the Industry  
Glamorizing Horrific Crimes Needs to End  
Are Videogames Old or Are Students Growing up?

#### BACKPAGE (12)

Cameras on Campus

## Students are Missing Out On These Elective Opportunities

Reporter Brielle Machado

San Luis Obispo High School possesses a constantly shifting elective landscape. Familiar classes such as Culinary 1, Art 1, and Ceramics 1 dominate freshmen schedules. However, these electives merely scratch the surface of what our school has to offer. There are many new and lesser known opportunities available for students.

"I think one that we'd really like people to know about is the new Fashion and Interior Design pathway," said chair of the SLOHS Career Technical Education Department Zach Roper.

Fashion and Interior Design teacher Leone Avery has updated the courses to be completely unique from their old form.

"I have been working on modernizing the pathways. We're doing things with Photoshop now. We're also learning InDesign and other Adobe programs. For the interior design part, [students] are doing 3D modeling with SketchUp. They're also learning how to render [designs] and make it look like a beautiful photograph. We're doing a lot more technology," said Avery.

While students may have been aware of this pathway, many lack understanding of what it really entails. The pathway branches off to focus on either the interior design or fashion aspect, before reconvening for the capstone class.

"What you do [in the capstone] is you create

your own small business [for] any product... you do the cost and marketing, you do advertisements through Instagram and Tik Tok videos, you learn what you would have to pay to start this business... and then we also make the real products," said Avery.

Two years ago, the capstone class only had five participants. Numbers have been steadily increasing since then, but still remain small.

If fashion or interior design appear interesting, following the CTE pathway will provide students with unique classes that incorporate technology along with hands-on, real world skills.

Another new option at SLOHS is the ceramics internship. One or two students who have completed Ceramics III or higher can join beginner level ceramics classes as an aide to Tawnee Houle, the ceramics teacher.

"For the internship... I focused on my techniques as more of a professional artist... to be able to commission pieces. I also helped out around the studio learning how to maintain a professional studio... This was showing me if I wanted to eventually be a ceramic artist as a career, what it would be like to do the background stuff like loading the kiln, pugging clay, [and] filling glazes. I also was able to help students if they had questions," said senior Katelyn Goldsmith.

This comprehensive ceramics opportunity remains relatively unheard of. To follow a similar route, students can take AP Studio 3D, offered every other year.

"Because of COVID-19, no one really knew [AP 3D] was even an option... I think publicizing that opportunity [is important] because [it's] an AP arts class. No one really thinks of that. And it was an awesome way to break up my other AP classes with an arts element while the class was [still] very rigorous, but just in a different way," said Goldsmith.

Students who are hoping to pursue these options must complete a series of prerequisite classes. Narrowing electives down to one CTE pathway can be conducive to unlocking these lesser-known opportunities.

"We want new students to try everything, figure out what they like, what they're good at. Then your next step is usually two trimesters where you're concentrating on getting really good at those skills... The capstone classes are really where we get into almost like entry-level job work," said Roper.

SLOHS' wonderful electives provide creative outlets as well as real-world experience, and many students aren't even aware of what's out there. Don't miss out!

## SLOHS Freshmen Students Prefer Water More Than Tea

Reporter Lina Arnold

Brewed tea, iced tea and water: what do San Luis Obispo High School freshmen think about it? Is tea a preference that is more common than water?

Tea is made of herbs, leaves, stems, and many fruits, making tea a very healthy drink for one's wellness. Tea is a drink that often will be prepared very differently because people have different tastes and preferences for it. SLOHS freshmen students were given a poll on what their opinion was on tea.

Many freshmen who were given the poll chose water over brewed tea or iced tea. This makes sense because it is very hard to adjust to drinking tea from a tea bag. Tea is very helpful for your wellness, so boba milk tea can be a good starting tea to drink because it is sweet.

Many teas can help remove kidney stones and help improve your physical health. Tea has also been linked to calming people from an anxious state because of its very soothing properties.

Arizona tea was not a type of tea on the poll because it is sweetened and caffeinated. Other types of tea can help students know that there aren't only two options to drink.

According to Penn Medicine, numerous studies have shown that teas have been able to ward off inflammation and diseases.

Tea is truly a powerful and helpful drink, making it very beneficial for SLOHS students. Exploring all types of teas can help someone find what they enjoy.

Sources: [nature.com](http://nature.com), [pennmedicine.org](http://pennmedicine.org)

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# Why Aren't Students Using Their Study Skills Time Wisely?

Reporter Jordenn Gearhart

Study Skills is a class offered at San Luis Obispo High School that gives students the time and support they need to be successful in their classes. Most seem to agree that it's an important class to have available.

"Study Skills gives students extra time to catch up on work or do things before your next class. And if you have a busy life after school, it gives you the time that you need to do work," said sophomore Bailey Schafer.

Despite the time students are given to turn in missing assignments and get started on late work, many choose not to and instead spend the period doing less productive things.

The two most obvious reasons for this are that students have friends in the class and also have their phones on them.

"Some students may be more interested in

using their phones or being social rather than doing work," said Study Skills teacher Steven Crow.

It's not difficult to understand this. Talking with friends and doing whatever on a pocket computer is often more appealing than working on a Biology assignment.

The phone problem would be quite easy to fix, one solution being to have students put their phones in their backpacks or on the teacher's desk at the beginning of the period, and only be able to use it with teacher permission.

As for the friend issue, that's a bit more complicated, considering overly strict rules about talking could be harmful.

"We could be stricter, but that might create an environment that is unwelcoming. We have to find a balance," said Crow.

Another reason for the lack of productivity could be that students aren't motivated to do their assignments.

"Some might not be motivated to work due to feeling defeated based on past grades," said Study Skills teacher Robb Wilwand.

A way to solve this problem would be for teachers to dedicate more time to checking in on specific students who may be struggling.

"More one-on-one time with the teacher to help you with stuff you don't understand (would be helpful)," said Scaffner.

The Study Skills class is important to have available because it gives students who need extra help or time to work the opportunity for that. However, some students choose to use the time for other things that aren't helpful to their academic success.

# Being Raised by Immigrant Parents: What is it Like?

Reporter Dylan Shaouat

Although most San Luis Obispo High School students are born and raised in America by American parents, there are a handful of students blending in with the rest that have had a completely different childhood.

Parents are a crucial part of growing up to become who you are later in life, and some parents raise their children differently than others based on where they came from.

The majority of SLOHS students have grown up with American born parents and they need to know what it was like growing up with immigrant parents.

"My mom and I are originally from the Philippines and we both moved here in 2006. Growing up with an immigrant parent has given me the most crazy but absolutely amazing childhood," said senior Christian Cuevillas, "My mom and I learned how to be Americans together."

Personally, my mom is from the Czech Republic. She grew up in a very different and strict manner, so that is what she imparted on me and

my older sister. I was always taught very precise mannerisms and scolded to always do well in school "or else."

"I remember with my parents it would always be 'Where are you going?' 'Who are you going with?' 'What time are you going to be back?' 'How can I contact you while you're gone?' And it was very different compared to a lot of friends' houses," said senior Diego Freeman-Garcia.

Fast food was also something that my mom had my sister and I stay very far away from. She had a habit of telling us that any type of food that she considered to be junk food, would "give us cancer," and as a kid that was terrifying.

I didn't have my first McDonalds burger until 2022.

"There's a lot of McDonalds and Burger Kings [in Spain] and this is more a family rule, but we didn't like going there, so growing up it was a lot of eating at home. One thing I noticed was that once we moved to the US, what we ate became a lot more mainstream and American," said Freeman-

Garcia.

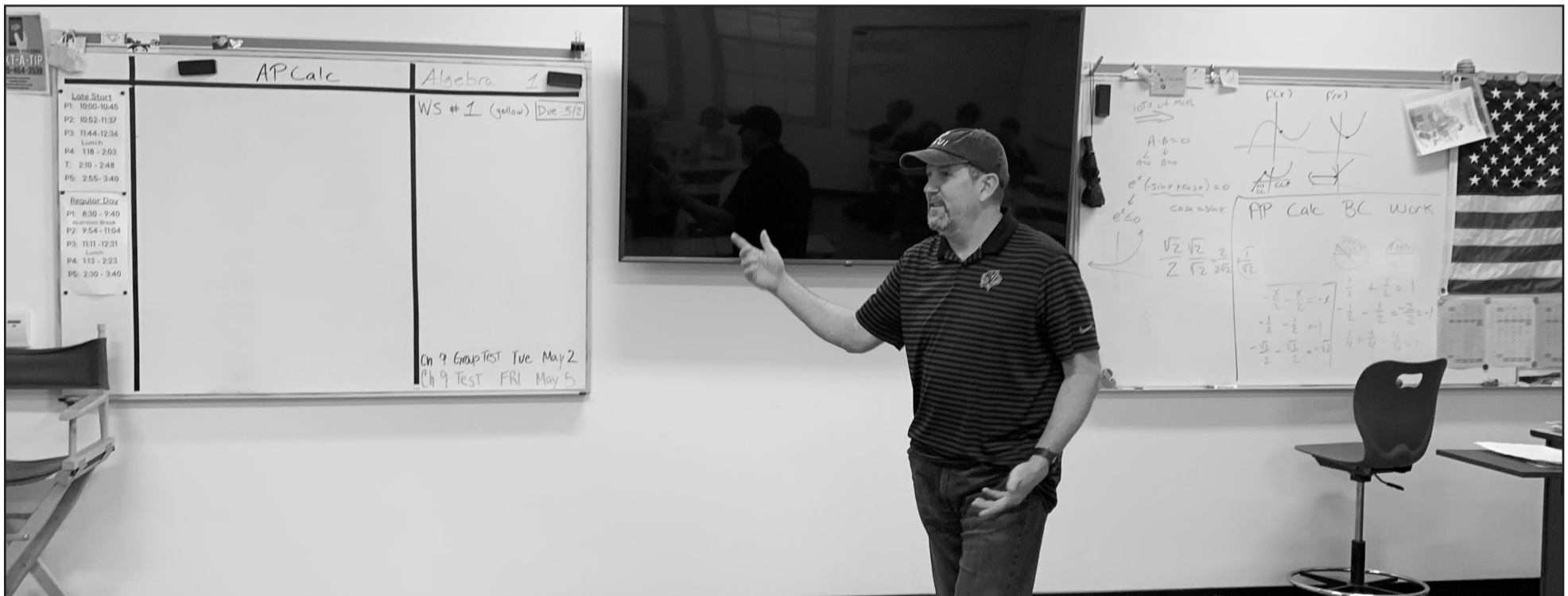
Sadly, a lot of immigrants who come to the United States lose their original cultures and become a lot more Americanized.

Despite that, it has been shown that 56 percent of children of immigrants are bilingual, meaning that their parents have taught them their heritage language as well as them learning English by growing up in the United States.

With English teacher Serena Enzerink however, this was not the case.

"I felt distant from both of my parent's cultures. With the 20th century push for immigrant assimilation, both of my parents' families Americanized themselves quite quickly. Though my dad speaks Dutch and my mom grew up learning Farsi, they did not teach my sister and I any language other than English," said Enzerink.

Americans don't often get a look into the lives of those with experiences in other cultures, and it is very important to understand and never forget where we all came from.



Pay your kindness forward. Photo courtesy of reporter Brielle Machado.

# Have SLOHS Students Heard of the "We Belong Award?"

Reporter Max McGraw

Students at San Luis Obispo High School for the most part are familiar with awards like the Golden Tiger award and the Student of the Month award.

However there is one award which students seem to be unfamiliar with: the "We Belong" award.

"Us teachers have access to a Google sheet that is shared with all of us. There are some amazing stories you can find of people impacting other lives because they are willing to help," said Math teacher Blake Bristol.

The award is in contrast to the other awards offered at school, like the Golden Tiger award (earned from academic achievement) and the Student of the Month award (earned by teachers choosing

a student to acknowledge based on academics, participation, etc).

"My award for March involved Andy Shen who has visual impairment which leaves him with an inherent challenge in an AP Class, and so Ashley (Sirois) partnered up with him at the beginning of this trimester and basically allowed him to be as successful as he could be because of how much she helped him. And so I gave her the award because she really sacrificed a lot of her time in order for Andy to be successful," said Bristol.

Some students always seem to miss out on awards at school, so this award is there to make sure that those who really do go above and beyond for their fellow classmates will be recognized.

"The award is more of an attempt to expand it into more relational interpersonal realms and to acknowledge students who are great to be around," said ASB Teacher Craig Stewart.

Whether or not you receive the award, it's important to understand what this award means to the school.

A community is reinforcing the idea that everyone is here to help along for the ride of high school at large.

"I was so appreciative of winning this award, It really meant a lot to me and my family. I think everyone should try and win the award because it's a way to remain positive and be kind to others," said senior Ashley Sirois.

# A Guide to the Easy A's of the Journalism Department

News Editor Lauren Weyel

San Luis Obispo High School offers two paths through the world of journalism: Newspaper and Yearbook. I took both classes: this is why I believe Yearbook is easier than Newspaper.

The sheer volume of work required by Newspaper is much larger. Reporters have to regularly write web articles (that no one reads) every few weeks, on top of multiple articles for the two print issues each trimester. Granted, it is only a fraction of what would be required in an English class, but let's be honest, most students who sign up for SLOHS journalism classes are looking for an easy A and will be a little surprised by the volume of work in Newspaper. The workload in Yearbook is much lighter.

"We usually start with a debrief of what we need to get done that day, then we go out and do our own things," said senior yearbook editor Allison Cadena. "All the reporters get their content, and editors edit everything that gets in."

The lighter workload is evident in the pace of the classes. Since Yearbook focuses on more permanent journalistic endeavors, there is more time allotted for perfecting work, which often means slow days of staring at the blinking cursor on the page. The fast pace of SLOHS *Expressions* makes it more of a sprint compared to the cross country sport of yearbook, with less time to dilly dally.

"I think the pacing is relatively fair. Reporters typically have to write a lot more than editors do, but it balances out with what the editors do, like looking over reporter's work and editing pages," said Newspaper feature editor Alma Tinoco.

The content of the classes also vary, as Yearbook has more of an emphasis on pictures, while Newspaper is clearly more writing focused. Graphic design is a concept Newspaper students have yet to grasp if *slohsexpressions.com* is any indication. While this may be a selling point for Newspaper to the graphic design-adverse journalists, Yearbook's even balance between design and writing provides stu-

dents with a more well rounded journalism experience

"I think that if we focused more on the graphic design aspect, then the writing would suffer because you can't teach a graphic design class and a newspaper class at the same time. Even in real newspapers, there are people that are specifically hired to do the graphics. We just didn't have that, and now it's my job," said design editor and back page editor Owen Blackwell.

However, in Newspaper's defense, what they lack in graphic design they make up for in writing quality. Yearbook writing is more decorative than anything else, since most people just want to look at the pictures, while for Newspaper, the writing is the main attraction.

Additionally, all Yearbook writing is done in past tense, which can feel awkward and strict compared to Newspaper's writing style. These grammatical rules end up being a great way for Yearbook students to fill time some days, working for hours to make sure their writing is all uniform. Newspaper grammar, however, is more lenient so students have more freedom of expression and can work with bigger ideas, especially on opinion pieces.

"The writing can be kind of boring. We do try to have some fun stuff in there, but it's not easy to do. It will be either super corny or super straightforward," said Yearbook editor Amarah Gutierrez.

Ultimately, the most important part of all journalism classes is who is in them. If either class is full of freeloading subpar writers, it will not be as enjoyable or rewarding as if they are full of students who actually care about producing high quality work. A small newspaper class of hardworking writers will be much more entertaining and fun than a large Yearbook class with students who don't care about putting quality work on their pages.

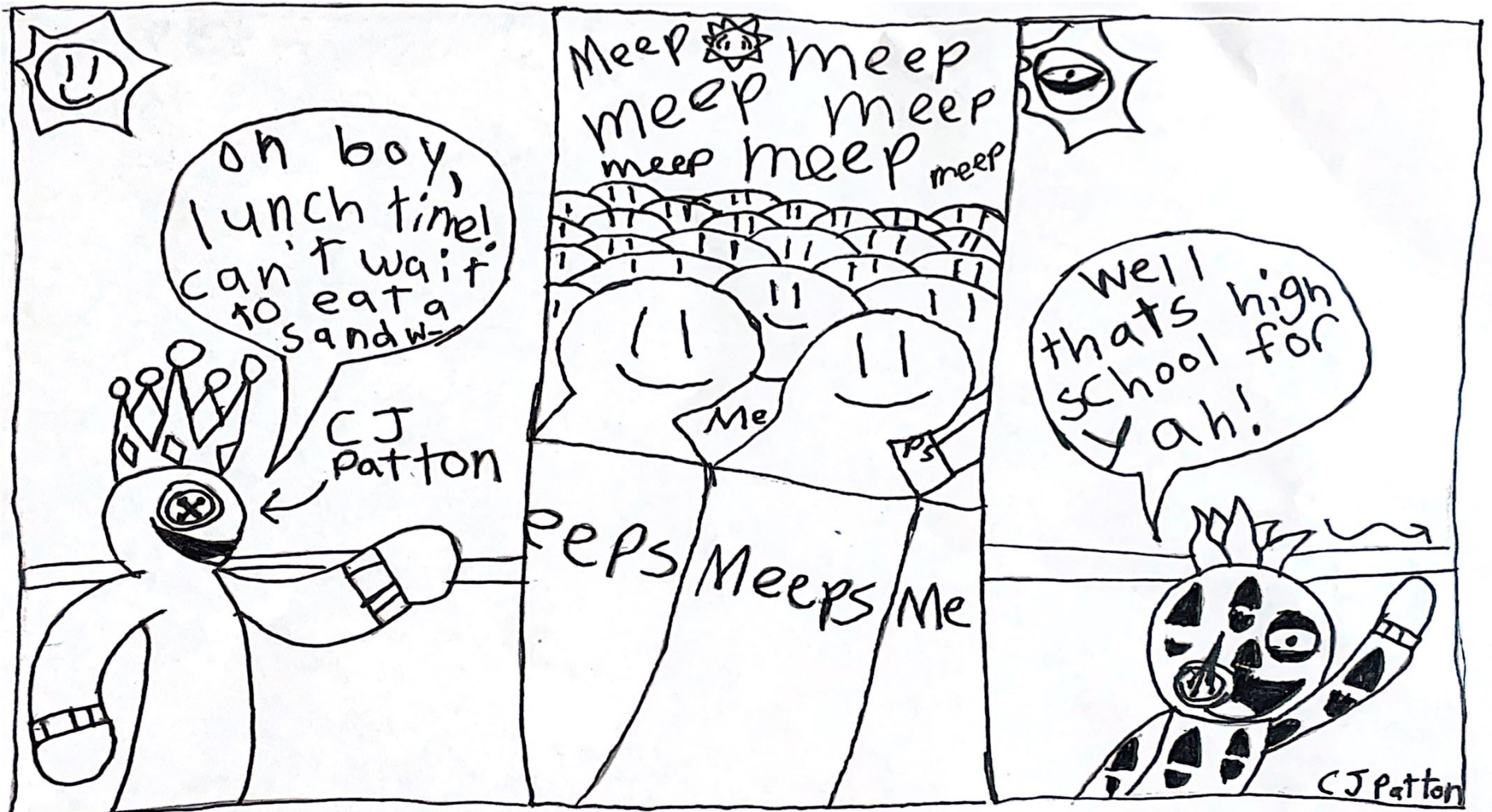
So if you're looking for an easy A in a SLOHS journalism class, you better be willing to put in good work, or at least turn your assignments in on time to make the lives of your editors easier.

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## "The Waiting Game:" A Comic by CJ Patton

Comic courtesy of reporter CJ Patton.



# Class Rank Does Not Determine Worth: Why Schools Should Stop Naming a Valedictorian

Opinion Editor Jane Culbreath

Academic pressure is at an all time high. Students are expected to get good grades, take rigorous courses, stack up activities, leadership positions and community service, become valedictorian, and get into a prestigious college. For students at San Luis Obispo High School, class rank can be accessed on Aeries, showing where students' grade point average places them among their classmates. This number can cause competition, especially leading up to senior year when the top student is named valedictorian.

What counselors don't tell students is that it's all a game. The road to success is not truly about merit, but rather about playing the correct cards. Students at SLOHS feel this academic pressure, and the ambition arms race to the top of the class is negatively affecting students' mental health and their approach to education.

"I personally hate our class rank system, because I don't think it is an accurate measure of one's academic achievement. It is kind of just a measure of who can do the system right, who can take the most AP classes, and who can take the most summer classes. It is not really a measure of who has the best leadership qualities or who is the most academically talented. It is just a matter of who took what classes," said senior Jenny Michel.

Advanced Placement and honors classes give students a "GPA boost," so those who take the most APs and perform the best will have a higher cumulative GPA. There are many intellectual students who choose not to take these classes and instead take electives or sports who then fall lower in their class rank. For this reason, it is important to remember that class rank should not be interpreted as a measure of intelligence. Rather, it is a measure of class selection and hard work.

"I think there's so many ways for students to game the system when it comes to their grades and to take honors classes that will boost their GPAs instead of taking an elective that they really enjoy and could be really enriching. So while I think does show some measure of dedication and some measure of intellect, I think there are also students who are not close to the top of the ranking who are also very intellectual and just haven't applied it in the same way or haven't learned to game the system in the same way as the students who end up being closer to the top," said English teacher Sholeh Prochello.

Even those at the top of the class can hardly be distinguished by their GPA. Many of the students in the top ten percent of the senior class have probably taken many of the same AP classes, and their GPAs are probably very similar.

"Even the top thirty students are probably taking about the same AP classes, and everyone is equally qualified. It's not like there's one thing that really sets apart the valedictorian from everyone else. I just think it is kind of stupid, because everyone's competing, and it doesn't even matter," said Michel.

When students view their education as a warzone, it detracts from the true value in high school. These four years are made to foster learning and growth through relationships, activities, and education. The priority should be to

become a well rounded, educated individual, not to rise to the top and be named number one. The class rank system and the valedictorian title only perpetuate the idea that academic achievement is everything, and one's value is determined heavily by grades.

"I feel like it doesn't even matter that much like where you go to college, and I just put all this unnecessary stress and pressure on myself to do well for an arbitrary goal. I feel like one thing I regret is working too hard and focusing too much on school instead of enjoying other things," said Michel.

High school provides tons of opportunities to grow as an individual, and the unnecessary competition surrounding GPA and college admittance can cause students to miss out on personal growth and, most importantly, fun. A GPA does not account for the time spent developing one's style, passion, relationships, confidence, hobbies, and creativity. It is merely a number, and the emphasis on GPA can misguide many students from pursuing a more holistic self.

The pressure of academics continues to affect students even in college. Prestigious and selective colleges tend to have the highest rates of depression and anxiety, with University of Pennsylvania, University of California Los Angeles, Carnegie Mellon University, Emory University, and John Hopkins University being the top five colleges with the most depressed student bodies.

"I'm in my seventh or eighth year of teaching now, and every year I see more students dealing with anxiety and depression, and I think a lot of that can be triggered by academic pressure and the idea of having to be perfect and not failing. If you fail you go down the slippery slope thinking that means 'I'm not gonna go to college, and if I don't go to college I'm not going to get a good job, and then I won't be able to help my family.' One little mistake now becomes this huge obstacle. I don't think that our current school system allows the flexibility for students to really experience failure in a healthy way," said Prochello.

**"I think some competition is healthy, but when you try to degrade other people, it becomes unhealthy."**

Furthermore, colleges are becoming increasingly competitive, adding to the stress of high school. While most schools are not actually becoming more selective, most schools are receiving a lot more applicants and cannot meet the demands of students.

"I really want to get into a good college, and it's really stressful because I'm really worried about my grades. Ever since thinking about college, I don't like coming to school as much, because I know every paper and test will affect my GPA," said freshman Yasmine Iqbal.

Seniors are not the only ones affected by academic stress and fears about college. Starting as young as middle school, students are hyper focused on their future and ability to get into presti-

gious colleges.

Regardless, many argue that some pressure is necessary to motivate students to succeed.

"Honestly, I think [academic pressure] has only affected me in a good way, because I don't really let it get to my head as much. I think it just pushed me. It was a little stressful sometimes, but I think it pushed me beyond what I thought I could do. Otherwise, I don't think I would have tried if I didn't have that pressure on me," said senior Erin Chae.

Yet, the priorities of school systems should lie in the well-being of their students. Is academic success worth the degradation of students' mental health? Is it worth pitting students against each other and creating animosity and hostility? Is it worth teaching the lesson that one's worth is reliant on academic achievement? When competition be-

comes ugly and toxic, it sets students back emotionally and mentally.

"I think some competition is healthy, but when you try to degrade other people, it becomes unhealthy. I would say [competition] definitely pushes people to try harder in school academically, but I also think there's a lot of pressure to do more outside of school, and that can take away from the school community," said senior Jackson Fleming.

Despite this, it is still important to recognize the effort that high performing students put into their education. Many schools have done away with the valedictorian title in recent years, but still choose to recognize the top ten percent or so of students and have a student-voted speaker at graduation. This allows for academic recognition, as well as a speaker that students can have a voice in.

"I'm personally opposed to [naming a valedictorian] because it is not necessarily a measure of who deserves it the most, it is just who did the system right. So I think [the speaker] should be somebody that's voted on who people want to speak at graduation, not who made their class schedule so that they can be number one," said Michel.

Additionally, it is important to fairly choose a valedictorian. For those who transferred to SLOHS midway through their high school years, other AP and honors classes may have been available, making it possible for their GPA to be higher. Because of this, some believe transfer students should have a separate ranking.

"I think there should be a difference between transfer students that come in and students that have been in the system for a long time. Part of why [my class rank is] so high is because I was able to take honors classes early on in my high school before I transferred. That definitely bumps you up. So, yes, it is good that the top ten are recognized, but I think there should be a distinction between transfer students," said Fleming.

The current system for ranking students at San Luis Obispo High School maintains a culture that values academic achievement over personal growth. The first step to encouraging healthy self esteem and healthy relationships with school is discontinuing the class rank system and valedictorian title.

Source: [humansofuniversity.com](http://humansofuniversity.com)

## Disclaimer: Official Student Publications

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Flooding of downtown SLO due to San Luis Obispo Creek.. Photo courtesy of San Luis Obispo County.

## An Investigation into Downpours in SLO

Reporter Brielle Machado

Intense rainstorms inundated San Luis Obispo High School and other locations across California early this year in January through March. Many students had never experienced anything like the floods, damages, and school closures caused by this drastic weather.

“There’s never really been a storm that big that’s caused like flooding or anything... in the time that I’ve lived here, not in the time that I’ve been alive,” said senior Eleanor Mann.

Pervasive road closures occurred throughout San Luis Obispo county, accompanied by the shutdown of many businesses. Numerous creeks running through SLO overflowed and contributed to much of the flooding.

“There are two creeks in SLO that converge behind my house. It’s the San Luis creek and the Brizzolarra creek. They converge behind my house into one large creek. Because of that and the backup and the amount of rainwater, it caused those to flood into our front yard,” said Mann. “I had to evacuate.”

This storm was unusually heavy for typical SLO weather, and many students wondered

where it came from.

“What [experts have] speculated is the cause [is] the atmospheric rivers. Those just started circulating around locally, and that’s increased the amount of water in the air and the precipitation levels,” said junior and AP Environmental Science student Alina Ashby.

An atmospheric river is essentially a river in the air. These long and thin regions of the sky carry high levels of water vapor from tropical areas and dump them in cooler climates.

The last time SLO experienced storms of this intensity was in 1995. As a result, residents and wildlife alike have grown accustomed to a lack of rainfall.

“A lot of the land got way more water than it usually would, areas were greener. Laguna Lake overflowed as well,” said Mann.

The flooding of Laguna Lake was not only detrimental to nearby communities, but also to the inhabitants of the lake itself.

“Now that there’s a huge increase in the water level, all the animals have to adapt to the change in the pH levels,” said Ashby.

Climate change is becoming an increasing issue and its impacts grow daily. Is global warming to blame for the abnormal SLO weather this year?

“I definitely do think that [climate change has] all added up to causing these huge events like the huge rainstorms and weather changes,” said Ashby.

Other sources are not so quick to link the rainfall exclusively to climate change. Experts say that while global warming has the potential to exacerbate storms, especially as it worsens in the future, it probably had little to no effect on recent weather. California’s natural drought to heavy rain cycle, which follows a trend of massive downpours every decade or so, provides a better explanation for the storms.

Extreme rain in SLO will likely not reappear for a long while, so SLOHS students can expect the typical sunshine for the time being. Enjoy it, Californians!

Sources: *latimes.com*, *ksby.com*, *skijinks.gov*

## A Profile on SLOHS’ Environmental Club

Feature Editor Alma Tinoco

San Luis Obispo High School’s Environmental Club is a group of students and volunteers that are committed to raising awareness about environmental issues. This club seeks to generate environmental change within SLOHS and the community. Expressions interviewed members of the Environmental Club to see how they’ve worked to make a change.

**Expressions:** What made you join the environmental club?

**Senior Griffin Sawyer:** I was inspired by our fearless leader May Ritter’s passion and determination to educate and clean up our campus!

**Senior Jennifer Michel:** I chose to join the Environmental Club because I’m a firm believer that climate change is a pressing matter that needs to be addressed. Not only do I love nature, but I want to work to protect it and the Environmental Club is an avenue to do that.

**Junior Emma Jantos:** I took AP environmental science and it got me really interested in how we make change for our earth and so I wanted to get involved with the club to see what I could do.

**Expressions:** What’s your goal in the club?

**Sawyer:** My goal in the club is to create an inviting and fun community for anyone on our cam-

pus to learn more about how they can help our environment!

**Michel:** My goal in the club is to help the planet in any way I can, whether it be through picking up trash, planting trees, or spreading awareness.

**Jantos:** To spread awareness about everyone’s impact on earth and make information easily accessible to everyone. There are so many important facts that could change people’s perspectives on life.

**Expressions:** How have you helped out around campus and the community?

**Sawyer:** On campus I’ve helped organize trash pickups and club meetings, and I’ve represented the club at community environmental events as well as helping lead tree plantings!

**Michel:** I’ve participated in trash pickup, made posters demonstrating what is recyclable and what is not, and listened to a myriad of guest speakers.

**Jantos:** We have organized tree plantings throughout the year within the community and do trash cleanups on campus. It’s not just about the community service, but how we want to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and stop trash from reaching the ocean, respectively.

**Expressions:** What previous events has the

environmental club done which went well?

**Sawyer:** Our tree planting sessions tend to go very well and have added not only to the natural beauty of our city, but aided in our city’s effort to plant thousands of new trees!

**Michel:** I would definitely say trash pickups are successful!

**Jantos:** We have had many guest speakers come to teach us about different things, and have made posters about what you can and cannot recycle. I see those posters all the time!

**Expressions:** What plans do you have for the club moving forward?

**Sawyer:** We have recently elected six great new officers that will carry on the club’s legacy!

**Michel:** I’m graduating, but I hope the club continues to take initiatives to tell students what they can do to help the cause of mitigating climate change.

**Jantos:** This year we hope to wrap the club up strong with a guest speaker from Cal Poly to teach about composting. Next year there will be more things in store and if you want to find out, join the club!

Any Tigers interested in making an environmental difference should consider looking into Environmental Club!

# SLO Down and Smell the Flowers: Exploring Plants Native to the SLO Area

Feature Editor Alma Tinoco

Long periods of rain have done wonders for the plant life in San Luis Obispo county, but what thriving greens around the city are native to SLO? SLO county is popular for several reasons, including its hikeable areas and trails which have been covered in greenery after heavy rains. Students at San Luis Obispo High School have encountered plants around the city, but how many common appearances are native plants?

Native plants are those that have been local to an area, occurring naturally in the environment over time. In SLO county, there are approximately 387 species native to the area. This includes greenery like trees, shrubbery, grasses, vines, and flowers.

"I've seen a lot of hummingbird sage and monkey flowers recently. There's a lot of plants around," said freshman Che Brocco.

Recently, common sights are the California poppy which can be found almost anywhere in the city following recent rains. Similarly, flowers have adorned the Carrizo Plain in a super bloom with the previously welcomed rain. Flowers found on the plain include yellow California goldfields, coastal tidytips, purple owl's clover, and several other native organisms.

"I keep seeing yellow flowers. All the time," said senior Rachelle Cardenas.

To find local plants, one does not need to stray far off of campus either. Threadleaf ragwort, a common yellow flower, can be found around campus in areas like the side of the front gate for example. Sourgrass, also known as sour clover, is an edible yellow-flowered plant which can be found around the outskirts of campus like the parking lot and towards the adult school. On the practice field the maiden clover can be found, a plant which many SLOHS students have no doubt encountered and messed around with at some point.

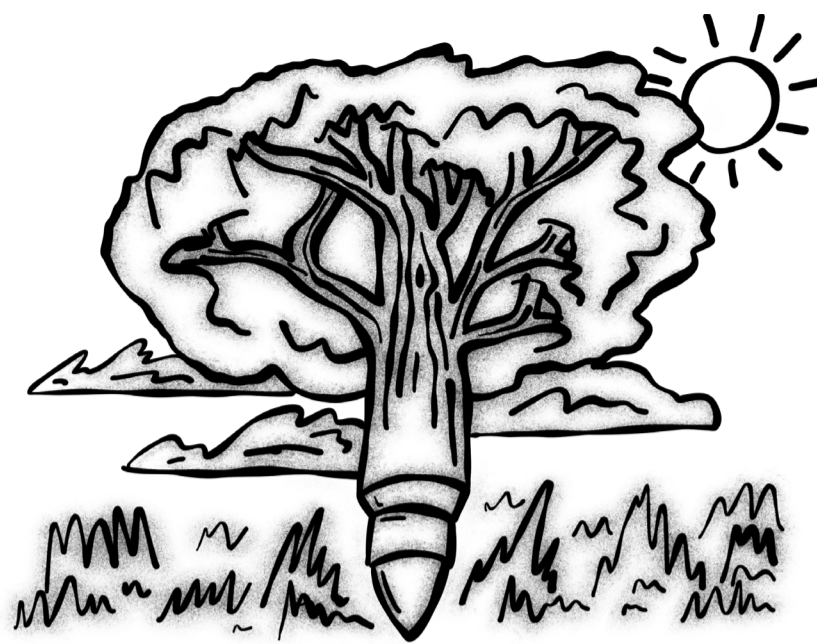
Plant life is abundant around SLOHS, but what makes these greens grow? The climate in SLO is aidful to its native plant life, as many organisms in the area do not require an excess of nutrients. Several common plant species require a good amount of sun, which is plentiful a majority of the year. Another aspect of thriving plant life in SLO is the amount of moisture, which is not extremely detrimental when missing to some species in the area. SLO's ever-changing climate provides an adequate environment for plants that don't need a plentiful supply.

SLO is home to several native species, and these species are part of everyday life. Whether it be on the sidewalk or in landscaping, natural life is everywhere.

Sources: [calpoly.edu](http://calpoly.edu), [nfw.org](http://nfw.org), [calscape.org](http://calscape.org)



Common plants for the common day. Collage courtesy of Feature Editor Alma Tinoco.



Ammunition on a mission. Illustration courtesy of Design Editor Owen Blackwell.

## Wildlife Conservation and Outdoor Adventure Come Together In Hunting

Design Editor Owen Blackwell

Hunters have done more to help wildlife and protect nature than any other group in the United States. Several students at San Luis Obispo High School are avid hunters. During different times of the year, they track, kill, and harvest their own food from wild animals. These students see hunting as a way to connect with nature and embrace a sustainable lifestyle.

"Hunting has made me respect nature and what it provides us. I love seeing the sunrise every morning. Being able to see where your food comes from is really cool," said senior Nicholas Agalos.

For many student hunters, hunting is not just about the thrill of the chase. These students honor the responsibility that comes with taking the life of an animal.

"It definitely influences your perspective on animal cruelty and slaughterhouses. It's more ethical to hunt because you're actually working for what you're eating. It's not just a simple process of going and shooting an animal and having it on your table that night. It takes a lot on energy and time," said senior Garrett Hall.

Even students who are opposed to eating meat believe that hunting your own food is better than going and getting meat at the store.

"Hunting for eating is actually a way more sustainable way to feed yourself than buying animal products that are produced from industrial agriculture," said senior Emily Niebuhr.

While poaching and trophy hunting are extremely damaging, responsible hunting is a valuable and effective part of nature conservation.

"We are careful to hunt responsibly. There are limits to when you can hunt certain animals and how many, so they can repopulate. The Forest Service also uses the money from deer tags and taxes on ammunition to be put back into the forest," said Agalos.

In the early 1900s, several species of wildlife were declining. Because of this, Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson (P-R) Act in 1937. It is an excise tax of 10-11 percent on the sale of firearms and ammunition. This tax funds wildlife conservation in the United States. Now known as Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, it has raised an average of 81.4 million dollars a year.

For reference, the international non-profit 1% for the Planet is a similar program that encourages businesses to donate one percent of their annual sales to environmental causes. Started by Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard in 2002, it has raised an average of 20.7 million a year. Through excise taxes, hunters contribute almost four times as much to environmental protection than many leading outdoor brands combined.

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program provides grants to fish and wildlife agencies in US states to fund projects that aim to restore, conserve, manage, and improve the habitats of wild birds and mammals. Because of this act, several species have come back from the brink of extinction, including white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, and wood ducks.

Still, there can be a negative stigma towards students who use firearms to hunt.

"Some people think hunting is all bad because we are using weapons to kill animals. They just don't have enough education on the topic," said junior Silas Buchanan.

Students who are interested in hunting can get started by just going to a local range learning to shoot.

"Bird hunting is a good way to get into it, you can go learn how to hunt birds with a shotgun by going and shooting trap at a range," said Buchanan.

The San Luis Obispo Sportsmen's Association Range has a skeet/trap range that provides instruction and loaner guns to those without their own.

Hunting is a great way for students to live sustainably and have fun in nature.

Sources: *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wildlife Ecology and Management*



The Varsity team celebrating their win at home. Photo courtesy of softball mother Sybil Haley.

## Softball's Junior Varsity Team is Nowhere to Be Found

Reporter Brielle Machado

Athletes at San Luis Obispo High School feel honored when they make varsity, which contains higher-caliber players that compete at a higher level than junior varsity. But what is it like when the only team available is varsity, and players are guaranteed a spot? The short answer: not good.

SLOHS softball hasn't had a JV team since before COVID-19 shutdowns, which stunts the effectiveness of the department.

"It's horrible. I can't develop players because they don't get in games and get game experience," said softball head coach Pete Emmel.

A myriad of factors contribute to the absence of a JV team, including lack of coaching staff and players.

"I don't think softball is broadcasted enough throughout the school," said junior and softball player Teagan Haley.

Interested girls are unable to find information on the program, such as dates and times for pre-season workouts or tryouts. This results in low turnout rates and insufficient numbers for two teams.

"This year I came up probably three or four short of being able to split [into varsity and JV]," said Emmel.

As a result, people who have never touched a softball in their life are lumped in with those with a decade of experience. This is detrimental for everyone.

"Our coaches help us a lot, but I think the one-on-one aspect would be better [with a JV team] because some girls are really ahead and some girls are just learning," said sophomore and softball player Mia Parker.

Newer and older players both require one-on-one experience, but for different reasons.

"The more experienced players...don't get the individual 'let's take it to a next level' detailed instruction," said Emmel.

The younger players don't receive enough attention to learn fundamentals and build a strong softball foundation.

The environment of a varsity practice also suffers without a JV team.

"JV is to develop, varsity is to win," said Emmel.

Varsity practices are much more serious and fast paced than JV. Players focus on their performance as a team rather than purely skill work.

"A lot of girls don't have the intensity for varsity. [The lack of intensity] kind of brings down other players as well," said Haley.

Explaining basic aspects of the game consumes

a substantial amount of time, which is expected on JV but redundant for varsity. What's more, large numbers slow down drills and players do not receive as many repetitions of important skills.

However, only having a varsity team does have certain benefits. Everyone within the program is more tightly bonded because there is no separation between teams, which improves team chemistry.

"I think [being on varsity as a first year player] you definitely have to step up more and have the mindset of a varsity player, you have to be willing to put out as a varsity player would. I would prefer to be on varsity my first year because there's just so much learning involved," said Parker.

Softball athletes are negatively impacted from the lack of a JV team. Newer players would benefit more by gaining experience in club or recreational teams before being thrown onto a team at the varsity level. Fortunately, progress has been made on spreading word of the program to incoming high schoolers and future seasons are expected to return to the two team standard.

Before athletes feel down about only making JV, remember that the alternative of having no JV is substantially worse.

## The Stunt Team is Killing It!

Reporter Taryn Weller

San Luis Obispo High School's stunt team is back in season and they've gone undefeated, even beating the previously undefeated team at Paso Robles High School. They are league champions, and they just competed at sectionals.

These fierce Tigers have shown their perseverance and determination by winning these meets. Their hard work is paying off!

"Everybody is super positive towards each other and is uplifting. everybody can put their differences aside and just like be a team and come together and be like a family," said sophomore Zoe Kelleher.

Stunt is a great experience for new students coming to SLOHS, and everyone is so supportive.

"Stunt is a highly competitive sport and it's also a lot of work and effort. It's super rewarding when you win, and you don't really need a whole lot of experience to join," said sophomore Grace Clearly.

SLOHS stunt has lately been on a winning streak. They haven't lost, and they even beat their biggest competitors!

The stunt team has really been showing their hard work out on the mats, and they have definitely improved a lot from last year.

Stunt has quarters just like other sports, but the quarters are divided into different types of stunting.

"The first quarter has partner stunts. The second quarter is pyramids, and the third quarter is jumps and tumbling. The fourth quarter [is where you put everything together to] make one big, long routine. We work on all of our routines one by one, making sure that they're perfect for our games," said Kelleher.

This stunt team is working hard and trying to make it to state. They have already qualified for CIF and they're really excited.

"This season we're doing really well in pushing ourselves to be stronger. We are cleaner than we've ever been, I think we actually have a really good chance [at winning]," said Clearly.

These fierce Tigers have done great this year, Expressions wishes them best of luck in all their competitions!

## Be Mindful of Food Allergies

Reporter Fiona Spurlock

At San Luis Obispo High School, it's very common for a student to be allergic to specific foods. Some of the most commonly seen allergies being dairy, wheat, and peanuts. While allergic reactions vary by person, there's no mistaking the impact an allergy has on someone's social life and health.

"People stopped inviting me to places because they know they have to deal with my Celiac's disease. They don't even bother trying to make an exception in the first place. In the end, I just eat beforehand and go to the restaurant where people are going," said sophomore Aria Olsen.

Being unable to eat a certain food can make someone seem like a burden, making them over-compensate just to be able to show up to a gathering.

"[Allergies are] so annoying. I hate [them] because I have to check every single label all the time, and if I'm not careful, it's a trip to the ER," said freshman Zoe Fuji.

15 percent of students possess food allergies, and eighty allergies are in the school nurse's system, mea-

ning that great precaution must be taken.

Eating out can pose difficulties because many restaurants assume that cooking with allergy-friendly ingredients is enough to satisfy the special needs of those with allergies, but that's far from true.

"Cross contamination has happened so many times that when I travel I will bring a cooler of my own food," said Olsen.

Those with allergies also have to pay more for safe food products. Every time someone with an allergy needs a specialty food item, the price is always marked up a significant amount from the normal product.

For a majority of allergy-friendly dishes, the price markup is anywhere between fifty and two-hundred percent higher. These price markups are understandable as it costs more for food to be produced with food restrictions in mind, but it can be irritating for shoppers to pay more for an allergy that they can't control.

People don't choose to be born with allergies, but students can choose to be mindful of how they treat those with allergies.



# My Experience With Ballet Changed My Life in Every Way



My favorite thing to do outside of class was force my friends to take photos of me posing. Photo courtesy of Arts & Entertainment Editor Olivia Cusick.

## Arts & Entertainment Editor Olivia Cusick

In reflecting on my past experiences, I want to make it very clear that the problems I experienced within the dance community were not because of the people involved. The people whom I danced with, some of whom are students at San Luis Obispo High School, were children.

All of the teachers who guided me through the years are wonderful people, and I am so incredibly grateful for the work they committed to teaching me. That being said, life happens, and sometimes people do and say things they regret. I have more than my fair share of that.

When I was six years old, I saw my big sister perform her studio's yearly production. I fell in love with dance and started taking Hip-Hop lessons. My mom didn't love it. An uncoordinated six-year-old dancing fake hip-hop was not nearly as impressive as I believed it. I dropped the class

the day after the performance, but the obsession with dance didn't go away, and my mom decided to take me to take jazz classes at the same studio my sister was at. Ten years later, I took my last class.

The problems with ballet are so intrinsic in the art form that it is almost impossible to separate the beautiful art from its' traumatic parts. The "ballet body" is slowly merging away from the stick-thin, long legs, and starting to become more inclusive.

I have never been skinny. In the ballet uniforms of black leotards and tights, I would look around the room and constantly feel inadequate with my body. My abdominal muscles would never show, despite ten-year-old me waking up every morning doing at least a hundred sit-ups.

Every time I sign into my childhood email account, the first thing Google automatically recommended was my favorite search back then: "How to get abs faster."

I was never quite as coordinated. I officially started taking ballet after a year of jazz. I was put in classes for kids a few years younger than me, which makes sense, because by eight years old most ballet dancers have several years of experience. It took me about five years to somewhat catch up, though I continued to be the worst in most of my classes. After one of my performances, I heard a mother refer to me as a "clunky elephant just running around."

That both broke my heart and forced me to try harder. By eighth grade, I was taking over twenty hours of dance a week. I spent six days, sometimes seven a week at the studio. I worked myself to the breaking point.

I told myself every night that climbing into my mom's car and breaking into tears was normal. That was just because I was hard on myself, that those tears were a good thing. I did the same thing almost every day for over six months.

The 2022 psychological horror film "The Menu" perfectly captures how I now feel about the months of my life I spent breaking down, forcing myself to continue to try. During the climax of the film, the main character Margo turns to Chef

Slowik and states, "You cook with obsession, not love."

Dance became my life. It became every aspect of it, and I couldn't imagine a world without it. My room was decorated with pointe shoes, a ballet barre my father built for me, and dried roses (most of which sit next to my bed, even to this day) from my very first community production. When I was eleven, I broke my elbow, and my first thought was that I wouldn't be able to do my next show, which was about a month from then. I was a kid, but I wasn't enjoying my life. My entire life was based on a hobby that I wasn't planning to continue after high school.

COVID-19 changed everything, for so many people, and as dance classes turned into Zoom classes, I began to dread turning on my computer. My WiFi didn't love the constant Zoom lectures, and would occasionally freeze out of nowhere. I began to enjoy the quiet. On days when I didn't go to class, I didn't feel like I was missing anything; and more, I began to feel happier. I enjoyed the time I spent with myself. The obsession and passion slowly drained, and I felt like just a regular teenager. It felt good.

Dance is one of the most incredible art forms. Revolutionary choreographer Bob Fosse famously said, "The time to sing is when your emotional level is too high to just speak anymore, and the time to dance is when your emotions are just too strong to only sing about how you feel." Using nothing more than the dancer's body to create the most emotional and impactful story is beautiful, and has created so much good in the world.

Dance both hurt and helped me in so many ways. But more than anything, the impacts of those ten years of my life will forever be part of me. I stopped being just a dancer, performer, or student, and I became myself. I stopped defining my life by the things I love. You can be a band kid, or a dancer, or whatever. But first things first, you are you.

Sources: *IMDB.com*



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The king of the audiobook industry. Photo illustration courtesy of reporter Fiona Spurlock.

## Audible's Monopoly on Audiobooks is Killing the Industry

Reporter Fiona Spurlock

Audiobooks are just one of the many ways students at San Luis Obispo High School read. Of the many different services used to listen to audiobooks, Audible is by far the most popular. Audible spearheaded the audio revolution, making audiobooks accessible at a reasonable price; but the benefits for the consumers doesn't translate to the independent authors trying to start a career.

Audible offers inexcusably low deals to the lesser-known authors, not paying them anywhere near a livable wage whilst Amazon, a company worth over a trillion dollars, pockets the profits.

Audible pays independent authors forty percent of the profits from their books. That is nearly half of the seventy percent industry standard for digital products and even less than the fifty percent standard for physical copies of the same books. Audiobooks only need to be recorded once, while printed books take time and money to make each book. Selling a physical book costs much more. Things like a warehouse costs, employee costs, and paying for the storefront are some of the many fees, and yet physical stores can afford to pay ten percent more. What's worse, that already unlivable forty percent drops to 25 percent if the author refuses to be exclusive with Audible, furthering Audible's monopoly.

"As for listening platforms I'm aware of, it's mostly just Audible," said freshman Lorelei Leinhos.

Despite Audible clearly making more than enough money to be profitable, Audible pays their authors based on the net sales, not how many books are listened to. With Audible's no-questions-asked return policy, authors end up getting a little over half of the money they deserve. It costs authors and narrators thousands out of pocket just to produce the audiobooks and Audible doesn't invest a cent.

"I buy all my books through [Amazon] because of the speed and easy access to it, which I do feel a bit guilty about because it does hurt the small-bookstore owner," said English teacher Lynnly Sainsbury.

Many students are unaware that Audible is part of the Amazon conglomerate. Like all tech giants, Amazon's growth strategy was to buy out potential rivals and simultaneously sell products below cost to prevent new companies from springing up faster than Amazon could buy them out.

A company as large as Amazon can afford to have malicious practices and no one leaves because of the convenience that's being offered. It's well known that Amazon mistreats warehouse workers, and that mistreatment extends to the authors and narrators that have nowhere else to turn due to the monopoly Audible holds upon Audiobooks.

Another shameful way Audible managed to hold its monopoly for so long is by the use of Digital Rights Management (DRM) on ebooks and audiobooks. In short, DRM is a kind of encryption that is marketed to creators and publishers as a way of preventing unauthorized copying, but instead, it simply prevents authorized use. It's quite easy to illegally remove DRM, but the only way to legally remove it is by having it unlocked but only Amazon can unlock it. If an author decides to leave Amazon, only Amazon can give them permission to move their books to a rival platform.

Under Section 1201 of 1998's Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), it is a felony to provide someone with a tool to remove DRM, even if no copyright infringement takes place. The penalty for someone's first offense of violating DMCA 1201 is a five-year prison sentence and a \$500,000 fine.

"It's as if every book you bought at Walmart could

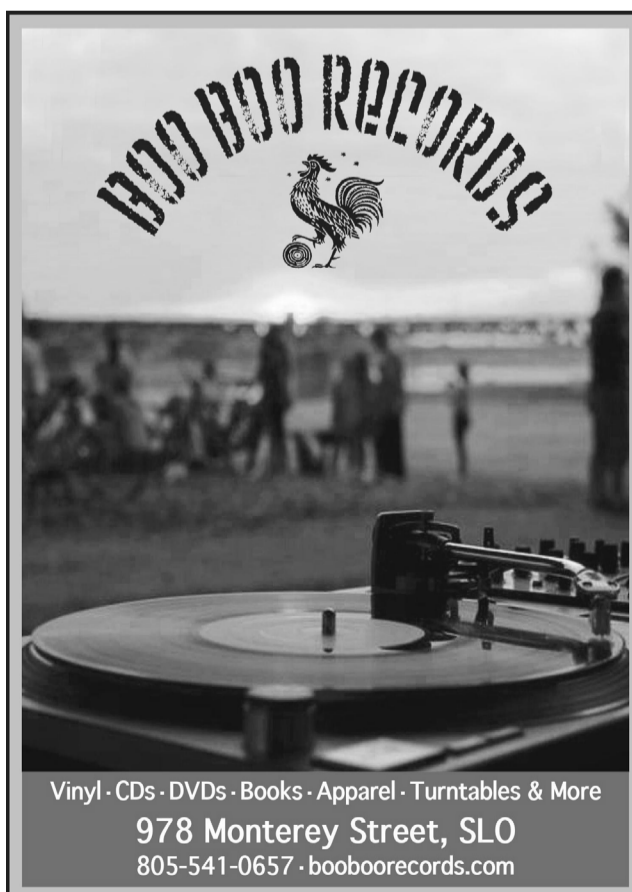
only be stored on a Walmart bookcase, to be read in a Walmart chair, under a Walmart lightbulb, and if the author of the book gave you a tool to let you use someone else's shelves, chair or bulb, Walmart could send that author to prison for five years, for letting them transfer the book they wrote, whose copyright they hold," wrote concerned author, Cory Doctorow.

That analogy sounds outrageous because it is. Audible is being absurd with these rules. Authors are being abused. Audible isn't hiding anything. Audible is outwardly one of the most corrupt companies out there, but no one can oppose them because of how strong Audible's monopoly is. Companies like Spotify are trying hard to break Audible's monopoly on audiobooks before it gets even more impenetrable, but hopes of their success are grim without the support of larger authors.

The most popular books right now tend to be from authors who have already created several other mainstream books. It's difficult for a new author to make it big; independent authors can't survive in today's book market and Audible is one of the companies largely at fault. Audible feels the need to abuse its authority towards independent authors, destroying them financially before their stories reach the market.

Sources: [brandonsanderson.com](http://brandonsanderson.com), [audiblegate.com](http://audiblegate.com), [selfpublishingadvice.org](http://selfpublishingadvice.org), [yalelawjournal.org](http://yalelawjournal.org), [pluralistic.net](http://pluralistic.net), [susanmaywriter.net](http://susanmaywriter.net), [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

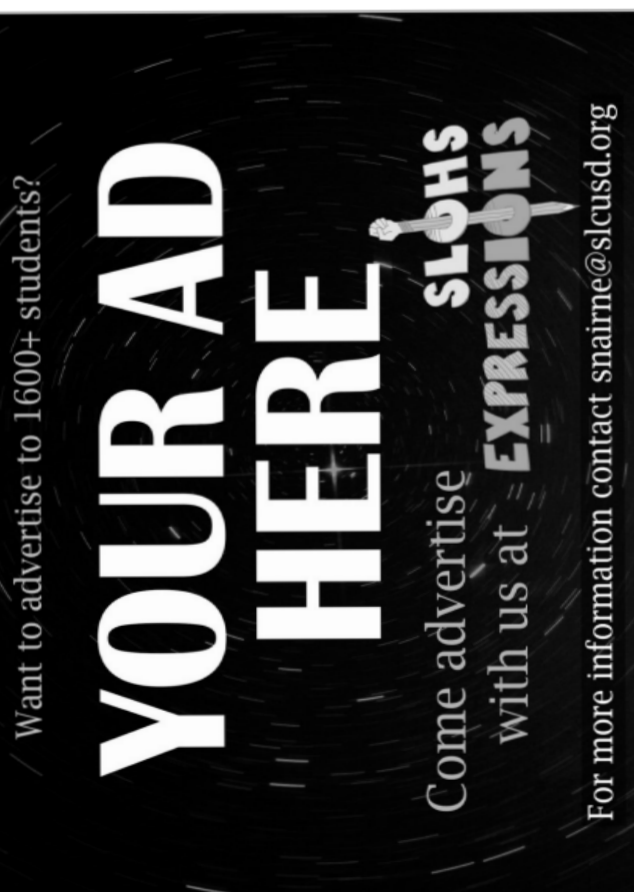
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It's time to switch the focus from the offenders to the victims. Photo illustration courtesy of Health & Sports Editor Vyolet Burrus.

# The Glamorization of Horrific Crimes Must End

Health & Sports Editor Vyolet Burrus

True crime is rising in popularity across the world, and students at San Luis Obispo High School cannot get enough of it. Whether they're consuming it through documentaries, podcasts, TV shows, news articles, or books, true crime has become a wide-spreading

phenomenon. Many see true crime as an innocent means of entertainment, but it can also be very harmful, as it glamorizes certain aspects of crime, glorifies criminals, and desensitizes students to crime. "It's just interesting to see

how it plays out. It's also fun trying to solve it before they get to it or tell you how it ended," said freshmen Abby Wren.

True crime can be great for those who want to learn more about cases and stories, and it can help bring awareness to victims or even solve cold cases. However, more often than not, true crime publicizes the criminals seeking infamy, and can feed their narcissism all while overlooking the victim's suffering.

In these cases, criminals and killers become household names for their cruel acts, and the victims can become overshadowed by the details of the case. Killers like Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, Richard Ramirez, and John Wayne Gacy are all remembered for their brutal acts, but the victims and their families are rarely acknowledged after restitution.

Many podcasts are being produced to bring light to the crimes and let the victims be known. Some 'arm-chair detectives' even solving old cold cases, but still one can only wonder if these podcasts are doing more harm than good. These 'citizen sleuths' can get in the way of police investigations or skew perceptions of the crime, creating false stereotypes. Despite good intentions, the case details often take priority over the victim.

"True crime [is] insensitive to victims and survivors. Unfortunately, the media's ultimate goal is to profit from the emotional suffering of these people. The media knows that the story dramatically affects survivors' and victims' emotional well-being by watching or hearing these harmful scenes or comments," said criminal justice teacher Erik Benitez-Foster.

More and more TV shows, movies, documentaries, and books are being produced in order to understand criminal's actions, but it causes consumers to feel pity for the criminals, and it desensitizes the horrific nature of the crimes.

"Dahmer-Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story" was released on the streaming service Netflix in late 2022, and actor Evan Peters

plays the role of 'one of the most notorious serial killers, Jeffrey Dahmer. Following its release, many fans took to social media platform TikTok posting about Peters's performance, and began to fetishize Dahmer despite him being a mass murderer and engaging in both necrophilia and cannibalism.

Shows like these can retraumatize victims and their families. Seeing people justify an offender's actions or fetishize being a victim can be incredibly insensitive to victims who suffered from related crimes.

Certain criminals like Bundy can be attractive and have a strong charismatic personality. This charm is amplified by attractive actors with large fanbases, like Peters or actor Zac Efron who played Bundy in the documentary "Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile." This causes consumers to ignore the violent acts and fall into the same charisma that the killers used to harm their victims.

Other times, people develop hybristophilia, or the attraction to those who commit violent crimes. It can be especially problematic when one believes that they can fix someone despite their underlying issues.

Shows like "You," "Ratched," "Dexter," and "Hannibal," although not real, portray killers as attractive anti-heroes with unfortunate pasts, turning these criminals into sex symbols and again causing viewers to ignore the true victims.

"Sometimes people like to think of it as just a story or not take it seriously, or people like to romanticize killers. I think that can be very dangerous, [but] as long as it's handled responsibly, and [people aren't] aspiring to be the criminal and they're more just doing it for fun, then it's okay," said Wren.

True crime isn't all bad, but it needs to start shifting the focus from offenders to the victims who've suffered. For those who consume true crime, be aware of the people who have suffered, and stop romanticizing criminals.

Sources: *cbr.com, utcynic.com, qz.com, wired.com*

# Are Videogames Getting Old, or Are Students Just Growing

Reporter Dylan Shaouat

Video games are a crucial part of a child's life, growing up and even currently as well. However many San Luis Obispo High School students haven't been getting the same amount of fun and enjoyment when playing video games anymore. For some, games are no longer a way to escape from reality.

SLOHS students are experiencing a distance from video games and there is a reason why.

"I used to play video games everyday, and now it's like a couple times a month probably," said senior Coleman Howe, "I definitely don't play them as much as I used to."

Ever since I was around five or six years old I played videogames whenever I had the chance and free time to do so. It would be my escape from reality and a way to simply have fun while not caring about anything else around me.

Recently, however, it has felt as though video games aren't as good at helping me escape from the real world as they used to be, and now more than ever. It feels like there are more important things to occupy my time than video games.

"I think that I've just changed to be honest, I fill my schedule with 'real' things now. After COVID-19, I'm able to interact with real humans, and that's been a lot more fun than 'fake' people," said Howe.

COVID-19 played a big part in this video game "conspiracy." During COVID-19, most people were stuck in their own homes, unable to do anything or see

real people, and so a good majority of students turned to video games as a way to connect with their friends.

However, this came with a negative effect as well. Because there was so much free time during COVID-19, many feel as though they have overplayed video games and are burnt out of them to this day.

"I definitely picked up and played a lot more games during COVID-19, but at the same time, you don't want to get addicted and have nothing else to do," said junior Levi Ruth. "For the first solid couple months or so, I wasn't getting out, I wasn't exercising, I wasn't doing anything, and so when I noticed that, I put the controller down."

Once quarantine ended and things went back to normal (for the most part), many people have found it hard to continue playing games after so much time spent with them.

Some people however still find themselves to be playing games such as sophomore Treyce League.

"Video Games are still a pretty good escape for me to just kind of cool off or if I'm burnt out from homework or something. Just to go and play my games, even if I'm with my friends or not, just playing them is nice to get away," said League.

No matter what students think about video games, it has shaped a lot of people into who they are now, and hopefully they will continue to do so for the years to come.

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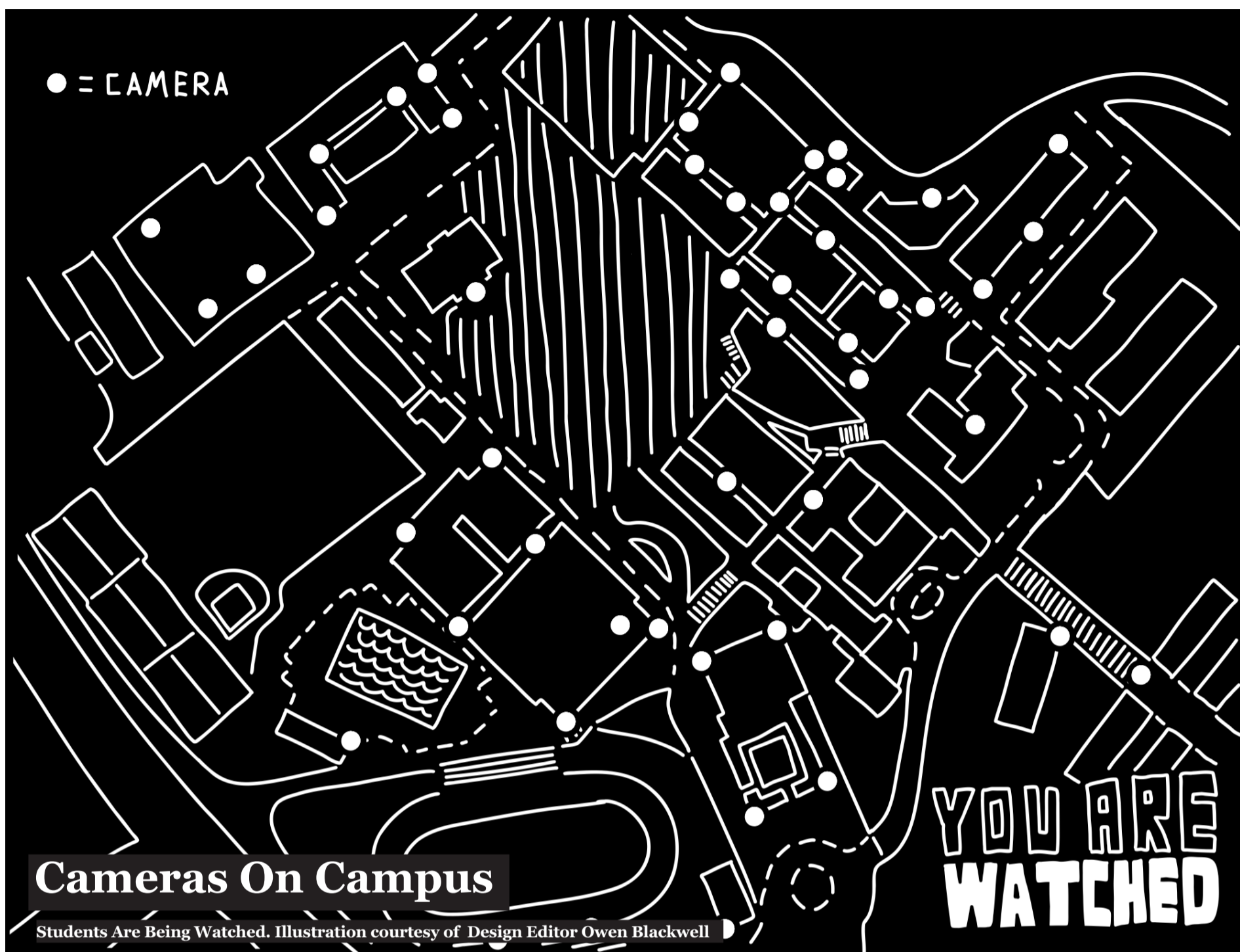
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**News Editor Lauren Weyel**

Students at San Luis Obispo High School are being watched -- for their own safety. Cameras are used to keep the campus safe and hold students accountable for their actions on school property.

"Cameras are used for surveillance in specific areas so that if something were to happen we

can go back and check the footage so we have a clear picture of the details," said assistant principal Bernardo Salcido.

Some areas have many cameras, like along the access road at the back of campus. Some areas are surprisingly bare, like the art courtyard and the woodshop.

"Some cameras are more strategically placed in areas that we feel have more tendency for

problems to happen, and so that's why you'll see some more cameras in those areas. In areas where students aren't congregating as much, it may be not as necessary to have those cameras," said Salcido.

If you're curious about where these cameras are, here's a graphic.

Remember tigers: with great knowledge comes great responsibility.

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