

SLOHS EXPRESSIONS

MAY 2024 | TABOO FEATURE | SAN LUIS OBISPO HIGH SCHOOL



Lately, more teenagers are finding themselves wanting children of their own with or without a significant other. Photo Illustration by seniors Asia Jade Hagans and Alma Tinoco Juarez.

Babies Having Babies: Baby Fever is Hitting Hard

OPINION EDITOR ASIA JADE HAGANS

What does teen pregnancy have to do with students at San Luis Obispo High School? A lot. Teen pregnancies have decreased by three percent since 2021 and 75 percent since its peak in 1991, but many teens in 2024 are finding themselves wanting to get pregnant or are.

"I wouldn't have enough fingers to count how many people I know that are pregnant. Maybe it's the fantasy of wanting the perfect family or proving to their trauma they can treat their kids better," said senior Mireya Acuna.

With over one million videos on the topic, many TikTok users post daily videos about their lives as teen parents using captions like "Get my baby ready with me as a 17 year old mom" or "Come with us to school as teen parents."

When people see cute things, like from a TikTok video or Instagram Reel, they want it for themselves. Seeing something cute like a baby or puppy sends off fast brain activity to the orbitofrontal cortex, which is linked to emotion and pleasure.

This is a possible factor in the rise of teen pregnancy, but there are other reasons that should be taken into account when decisions like these are being made.

"It's a life-altering decision, and one that shouldn't be made lightly. I think one of the main hardships for teenagers would be the initial disclosure to those close to them - particularly their parents or caregivers. There would have to be so many mixed feelings; some emotional fears of people being mad or disappointed in them, some physical fears like "Are they going to kick me out?" and "How am I going to afford this?" in addition to the sense of joy and excitement one feels about having a newborn and creating this little life," said Child Development teacher Kristi Burlison.

Feelings surrounding teen pregnancy are often swayed by the stigmatization surrounding the topic as it's highly seen as taboo. People don't know how to react once they find out they are a teen parent; the same

can be said for family members who find out their loved one is expecting.

"It's kind of crazy really [being an uncle] because having an older brother that's only one year older than you have a kid at his age is shocking. You wouldn't think he would be the one to have the kid, I thought it was going to be my older brother but it turned out to be him. It's like a whirlpool of emotions," said sophomore Nehemiah Salinas.

With that being said, how does society not necessarily normalize teen pregnancy, but reduce the stigmatization and fear over it?

SLOHS offers a child development class that should be utilized by expecting parents or family members attending the school because it could help build up support and understanding. Of course, the class isn't limited towards that group of people, anyone can and should take the class if they feel like it.

"Caring for others is one of the greatest things that we as a society can teach young people. I think that caring for small children in particular has become a skill that isn't valued as much as it once was, but I love the fact that the opportunity still exists for so many teenagers at our school. They not only learn about how young children grow, but also learn to interact with them appropriately, to become familiar with age appropriate behaviors, and to be given a basic understanding of ways to empower them to make their own choices and become their own people," said Burlison.

Not only having a support system at school but at home is also important.

"My mom and my dad are buying my brother a lot of stuff to help with the baby. They bought the baby a crib, stroller, carseat, everything like that. They are even letting him use our family truck," said Salinas.

Teen pregnancy isn't just a touchy subject in America, but all over the world. Instead of making the discussion taboo and unjust, society should work towards a future where teens aren't afraid to speak up and get the support they need.

Sources: cdc.gov, ox.ac.uk, hhs.gov

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Is Attending SLOHS Prom Overrated?

REPORTER PHOEBE DRAZSNZAK

San Luis Obispo High School prom is happening on May 11 at Cavalli Estates from 6 to 11 pm. This dance is meant to be a fun chance to dress up and hang out with friends. But does prom live up to the hype? Is it a night of dancing, food, and photos, or could it be a waste of time and effort?

“Prom is worth the anxieties because it makes it more exciting, but I don’t think prom is worth the money. I would be willing to pay \$20, but \$50 is way too much,” said senior Faith Hartford.

According to ASB, this year’s prom tickets will be 60 dollars with a guest pass, \$55 without ASB, and \$50 with. This combined with attire, dinner, transportation and other costs can add up to an expensive night. Some students don’t feel like they want to spend that much on one night.

“I’d spend \$30 max on prom because it’s essentially the same as Homecoming and Winter Formal, just with a more notable title and the same mid music. There’s way better things to spend \$55 on,” said junior Jay McClure

Prom is an event that is created for students who have friends or a partner who they want to go with. It’s a teenage experience, so spending time and money on it is important to some students.

“I think prom is a strong school tradition, because it helps people connect and it’s something fun to do for upperclassmen. I personally don’t have anxieties, but I’m sure people do,” said junior Logan Laxamana.

ASB is promising that this year’s prom will be a night to remember and have some fun new features.

“Although we had to raise prices for prom tickets this year, compared to other schools our tickets are on the cheaper side. Other schools are charging anywhere from \$190-\$500 for two tickets. This year we have also created opportunities for students to attend the dance cost free through an application..” said junior class officer Eliana Garcia.

Prom can be a chance to create memories and just have a good time. It can also come with its fair share of pressures, but ultimately choosing to attend or not is a personal decision.

For the Tigers attending, have fun at prom this year!

It’s Okay to Be Cliché!



Cliques can provide community. Photo courtesy of senior Cassiopeia Mamaradlo.

REPORTER CASSIOPEIA MAMARADLO

We’ve all rolled our eyes at the exaggerated Cin high school teen dramas, but just how true are these stereotypes at San Luis Obispo High School? Let’s explore some of SLOHS’ most prevalent cliques and clichés!

The most familiar cliques depicted in American high school media include the popular jocks, the nerdy intellectuals, the eccentric band kids, and the overachievers. These stereotypes are quite present in their own way, but the reality of clichés at SLOHS is more nuanced.

“There’s a lot of granola kids that wear Birkenstocks, suede [Chelsea boots], that tend to be more of the nature oriented type that go on hikes... which is natural because we live in a really pretty area,” said junior Damaso Moctezuma.

Sustainable attire like Birkenstocks, Patagonia gear, Chelsea boots, and Hydroflasks are frequent at SLOHS, mirroring the school’s proximity to nature and love for eco-conscious products and outdoor adventures.

“Cliches and cliques describe one group of kids with a similar attribute gravitating towards one another... like the theater kids, bands kids, ag[riculture] kids, sports kids, but a lot overlap [at SLOHS],” said senior Emily Sincoff.

In reality, cliques aren’t necessarily a negative thing. In fact, they’re quite helpful when it comes to finding people who share a common interest or hobby. Even so, it’s always a great idea to step out of one’s comfort zone to expand one’s horizon of connections, skills, and experiences.

“For my first three years here, I always thought theater was an [exclusive] thing, but this year I joined as a why not, and they’re super welcoming,” said senior Abhishek Biju Pillai.

In essence, clichés at SLOHS go beyond the one-dimensional portrayals seen in the media. Affected by school location and different personalities, the clichés and cliques at SLOHS vary in niche ways and often overlap due to unique shared experiences.

Don’t be intimidated by clichés of certain groups of people, because on the other side of a group that’s stereotyped could be a friendly community that has a lot to offer!

Skibidi Toilet? Ohio Rizz? What is Brain Rot?

REPORTER ANGEL TEPEPA GARCIA

Skibidi Toilet, Kai Cenat, Livvy Dunne Rizzing Up Baby Gronk. These are some of the few significant things that make up the “Brain-Rot” Renaissance. These words may sound like nonsense that a monkey using a typewriter might’ve come up with, but it’s this nonsense that has been allowed to bloom and flourish on social media apps like Tiktok. A culture has evolved in both the world and San Luis Obispo High School that allows students to absorb this kind of entertainment, even if it seems pointless.

“The first time I came into contact with brain rot was around the end of last year, I only use it ironically with friends, because, well it’s hilarious.” said senior Abhishek Pillai.

Brain Rot consists of memes that use language and concepts that have never been seen before on the internet. Of course, waves of stupid and pointless memes come and go, similar to the Vine humor that dominated the early 2010s.

“I hate [brain rot], I think it negatively influences our generation, and my little cousin only talks about it, it annoys the hell out of me” said senior Miles Calandro.

Brain Rot and TikTok, have allowed for the English language to be configured and revolutionized in the new era with words like: “Rizz,” “Gyatt,” “Sigma,” and “Looksmaxxing” to make an everyday conversation on SLOHS campus a bit more interesting.

“It’s just mindless memes that people find somewhat funny because of how stupid it is.” said Pillai.

Like many things in human culture, words are a form of art and it’s through communication that we can better express ourselves through the words. So rather than chatting up that significant other, “Rizz” up that person instead; Or whenever you believe that someone is improving on their skincare and wellbeing, call them a “LooksMaxxer” and ask yourself, do they “Mog” Me?

When it comes to mindless memes, current era Brain-rot stands on top. Likewise to the ladder of memes, there is a certain specific kind of meme trend that lays at the bottom with the other trashy memes. Trends like Skibidi Toilet and Twitch Stream clips can make this bottom-tier entertainment one of the more influential pieces of art within the online community.

Sources: TikTok.com, SBSnews.com

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Working in Childcare is A Great Option For SLOHS Students

REPORTER RUBY BLACKBURN

It's not easy to find interesting jobs as a teen. Many San Luis Obispo High School students will be working in the retail and food industry over the summer, but what alternatives are available?

In San Luis Obispo there's a lot of job opportunities that include working with young kids, in job positions such as a camp counselor, a teacher's aide in summer schools, and many babysitting jobs. Jobs like these are very eventful and non repetitive.

Expressions interviewed a former teacher's aide at summer school to find out more about her experience working in childcare..

Expressions: Where did you work over this past summer?

Sophomore Darla Sebastian Martinez: I worked at Hawthorne Elementary as a teachers aide.

Expressions: What's an overview of the tasks you did at your job?

Sebastian Martinez: I was put in an English class so I would do things such as helping the students read, write, and color. The other class I was in was Culinary, I would prepare the ingredients for the students to cook as well as the utensils.

Expressions: What was your favorite part of working as a teacher aide?

Sebastian Martinez: My favorite part of working as a teachers aide was the experience I gained from it. I learned how to connect better with younger students as well as adults. I had a really fun time.

Expressions: What was the hardest part of your job?

Sebastian Martinez: The hardest part of my job was trying to learn how to communicate with the students that had trouble listening. Other than that it's pretty easy, you just have to be pretty outgoing and social.

Expressions: How do you think this job has prepared you for the rest of your job career?

Sebastian Martinez: Since I'm planning on going into the medical field, this job helped me get experience in communicating with many people of all ages. In my future career I'm going to have to deal with difficult patients, especially children and I will have to have the skills to get through to them as well as communicate with them thoroughly.

Expressions: Do you think working in child care is a good first job?

Sebastian Martinez: I think it's a good first job since it's pretty easy with a few hardships. It may be difficult for people that have trouble socializing because you have to talk to a lot of people. But it gives you a sense of what it's like to work with a bunch of people.

Expressions: Would you recommend SLOHS students to work in a childcare position?

Sebastian Martinez: I would definitely recommend other students to work in a childcare job because no matter what career path you're going into it gives you a lot of experience on how to overcome problems. You learn a lot of new strategies on how to communicate with different people.

Working in a childcare job position is a great alternative for people not interested in the food or retail industry.

Go out there and get a job that aligns with your interests Tigers!

An Inside Look At SLOHS' Student/ Admin Family Life



Having family at SLOHS can help keep people connected.
Photo courtesy of freshmen Hollis Dickinson.

REPORTER SANTIAGO BALTODANO

There is a long list of students whose parents also attended San Luis Obispo High School, but a much more exclusive group of Tigers have parents who work alongside them at SLOHS. These students get the privilege of occasionally running into their parents on campus and exchanging a quick greeting, but what else happens when your parents work at your school?

To find out more about these special relationships, *Expressions* interviewed Principal Rollin Dickinson, his son, freshmen Hollis Dickinson, and SLOHS Librarian Nikole Dowler, who has two sons who attend SLOHS. Both families offer insight to what their unique campus life is like.

Expressions: How often do you run into each other at school?

Principal Rollin Dickinson: Hollis and I drive to school together four days a week. If it's a lucky day, I will see Hollis a couple times and say a quick, happy, hello.

Freshman Hollis Dickinson: We run into each other two or three times during the school day. I see him at school events all the time too.

Librarian Nikole Dowler: I have two boys at the high school: freshman Cassius Dowler and senior Jaydn Dowler. We run into each other daily. Cassius will come in to study or hang out at lunch. Jaydn is a library aide.

Expressions: What is the dynamic like on campus when you run into each other?

R. Dickinson: Sometimes I still get surprised to see my son here at SLOHS, and it's a great little moment of marvel and luck.

H. Dickinson: I'm usually walking to class so I say a quick hi. It's very friendly though and a nice part of my day.

Dowler: I'm always happy to see both of them. I think they like knowing where I'm at if they need anything.

Expressions: Do you find that there are advantages of both being at SLOHS?

R. Dickinson: Ironically perhaps, being principal here makes me a very laid back parent because I know how great my son's teachers are and what a special environment we create here alongside our outstanding students.

H. Dickinson: I definitely know more staff members because of it. I think I had met all of the admin before I was at SLOHS. I also think that sometimes substitute teachers or students I don't know very well are automatically a little nicer to me.

Dowler: Absolutely. I feel so grateful to see both my boys at school every day. I didn't always work in schools and often wondered how their day was going.

Expressions: Do you find that there are disadvantages of both being at SLOHS?

R. Dickinson: I want to make sure Hollis has his own experience here, and it's important that he feels free to be himself and to navigate the social experience, the academic experience, and the emotional ups and downs of being alive without a parent being around too much.

H. Dickinson: Pretty much everyone knows that I am "the principal's son" and people talk about it a lot. My friends like to give me some friendly teasing whenever I see my dad.

Dowler: Not really. I enjoy seeing them and asking about what they ate for lunch, if a certain test was challenging, or if they're having a good day. The small but important things.

Expressions: Overall, does having family at SLOHS affect your day that much at all?

R. Dickinson: We have a lot of staff members who have their kids go to SLOHS, and we are privileged to have that happen and to be part of such a positive, interconnected community.

H. Dickinson: It doesn't affect me at all 99 percent of the time. On the off chance that it did affect me, it would probably be in a way that benefits me so I'm not complaining.

Dowler: It has a huge impact on my day. I consider myself the luckiest librarian in San Luis Obispo.

Overall, it seems clear that having a family member work at or attend SLOHS brings rare benefits that help bring families, and the school, together.

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SLOHS Students Should Go On More Foreign Exchanges



Group of exchange students' passports with their plane tickets. Photo courtesy of junior Mara de Blas Villarán.

REPORTER MARA DE BLAS VILLARÁN

Between San Luis Obispo High School students, the opportunity to go on exchange programs remains underexplored. Whether they're being constrained by comfort zones, lack of motivation, or limited access to resources, many people don't consider the truly transformative experiences waiting for them beyond their daily routines.

Foreign exchange programs provide students with opportunities to immerse themselves in a different culture and lan-

guage. However, there seems to be a significant gap between the large number of students in Europe engaging in these and the surprisingly small number of American students doing the same thing. This is easily visible at SLOHS, where there's a tremendous disparity in incoming and outgoing exchange students, as the latter shine for their absence.

"The experience of being an American exchange student in the Netherlands was great. There were some hard times but I met a lot of amazing people, and I learned a

language. Now I'm just more confident in general, I wish I could do it again. And I'm hoping to in college," said senior Jamie Ambrose.

Many students hesitate to participate, contributing to the underrepresentation of SLOHS students daring to leave for a foreign country for a year.

"I know we have a lot of exchange students come here, but I feel like we never really talk about people who leave from America to another country, and I think that should change," said junior Alana Cowan.

Fear of the unknown, parental worry, concerns about academic disruption, and economic struggles contribute to the hesitancy among students to participate in foreign exchange programs. However, there are many resources such as scholarship opportunities or informational sessions that are available closer than ever thanks to social media and technology.

"As a current exchange student from Spain, I definitely think that breaking a stigmatism for parents about traveling is something that SLOHS should do because it would be helpful for this cause, or even just talking about past exchange students and their experiences," said junior Sofia Soto.

SLOHS should work on improving this, still, studying in another country is something that can be achieved from personal

encouragement and a great desire for a new beginning, which means that students can start taking action right now, by researching and scheduling a meeting with their counselor.

Nevertheless, some students are concerned that the education system in other countries, which is unlike anything American students are used to, could negatively impact their road to academic success.

"SLOHS and California in general is a very enriching environment to learn, and if you go out of the States you don't always know if the environment will be conducive to your learning style. It can be beneficial to see different ways of learning, but SLOHS is just already a great place to be in," said freshman Tessa Roos.

Although SLOHS students consider themselves very lucky to have the opportunities they have every day, this does not mean that they should settle. They could become more independent and work experiencing more cultures.

These programs offer unparalleled opportunities for personal growth and cultural enrichment, which, coming from a current exchange student, will genuinely create an improved and unrecognizable version of yourself.

Stay true to yourself and open a new tab. Start jumping into adventure, explore, learn, and don't let fears hold you back.

College Board: A Monopoly Hurting AP Students

WEB EDITOR AIDAN FIELD

San Luis Obispo High School students are high achievers and for many this is expressed in taking rigorous classes, often AP's (Advanced Placement) and studying for tests like the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). All these courses and exams have one thing in common, a check to one singular company.

The College Board was founded in 1900. Its goal at the time was to solve the issue of college admissions becoming increasingly chaotic and confusing. College Board programs eventually grew and more methods were used and experimented to test students. By the 1960s and 1970s College Board's SAT tests were the dominant standardized tests for College Admissions in the United States.

This dominance of College Board has not been met without criticism.

The most obvious of these criticisms stems from the fact that even though College Board is a non-profit organization, they still rely on the sale of products and services, the effects of this are wide ranging.

"Much of the College Board's power is contingent upon students continuing to take the tests that they offer. Therefore, tests are often pushed upon students and schools unnecessarily resulting in students signing up for tests that they cannot afford and schools pouring money and resources into AP classes when the school might benefit from that money and resources being used elsewhere," said AP English teacher Ryan Mammarella.

This fact is simply a product of how a College Board focused education system works.

The sales and services from this non-profit organization also go to College Board's president and CEO, the president making 1.77 million dollars in 2022, and the latter making over 1.82 million. By contrast, typical college presidents make less than a million on the high end.

The College Board has also been criticized for the sale of student data, most recently in February of this year they were fined seven hundred fifty thousand dollars by the New York Attorney General for selling the data of over two hundred thousand New York students.

Additionally, the way that the College Board assesses students has been criticized and much of the governance that occurs within College Board comes from a collegiate perspective, with little input from high school students and teachers.

"Many of the criteria used to determine success on the tests can be seen as arbitrary, such as the time limit imposed on the AP test, or even

exclusionary," said Mammarella.

The College Board still, however, plays an important role in regards to college admissions. They helped to standardize things and overall have made college applications simpler, albeit under one singular roof.

The College Board's work has also introduced college classes to more students.

"[The College Board] helps students learn skills and prepare for what college will be like," said Mammarella.

Whilst these services are a good thing, student's and teachers don't really have a choice, but that isn't to say that there couldn't be alternatives.

"As far as AP classes go, a great alternative would be dual enrollment because the students who pass or fail do not rely on one test at the end of the year," said math teacher Scott Rosenblum.

Dual enrollment also tends to be faster because students don't have to learn how to prepare for one singular test. This means that more students can take these programs and get college credits, but these programs tend to be small.

"There are Cuesta classes or dual enrollment, but they're definitely not as widespread as AP classes. If students want to be in an environment where they're... pushing themselves academically... you have to take AP classes," said senior Christine Seng.

However, schools consistently choose to expand AP programs instead of dual enrollment.

"[In my view] school rankings take into account how many AP courses a school offers, and dual enrollment does not make schools look better," said Rosenblum.

Getting out of this current system is difficult, and in order to make real change it needs significant effort and actual new programs.

The College Board does provide in all good programs and their services do give opportunities for students, but how good is an opportunity when it isn't a choice?

The roots of these issues largely stem from the fact that the College Board, a company, tries to play the role that institutions like the Department of Education should've probably filled in the first place.

Students and educators need to ask themselves if being so heavily invested with one singular company is making students' educations better, and if the services College Board provides, such as standardized testing, are roles that public governmental institutions should provide instead.

Sources: britannica.com, propublica.org, reuters.com

Save Your Money Seniors, Senior Merch Isn't Worth The Dime This Year

CO-FEATURE EDITOR ALMA TINOCO

In years past, seniors at San Luis Obispo High School have had the option to purchase the most killer merch from ASB to commemorate their graduating class. The class of 2024 still has that option—only without a killer design.

This year's senior merch is not something to be remembered.

"I like the design. I feel like it's simple, and you can wear it whenever. It's just a basic t-shirt. I kind of took lead on it, and I commissioned [Luc Chen Abbott] to make us a design and we were happy with it," said senior Maxwell Ranta.

From an ASB perspective, this design represents this year's senior class; from an outside perspective, it doesn't.

"I personally would not have made the design the way it is. I do like the design I made, but it's not something personally that would be in my apparel or style. I feel like it is very universal for any person that could wear it," said designer and senior Luc Chen Abbott.

This year's design features a circular logo labeled "2024 Seniors" in a big golden yellow and black outlined font, an orange-yellow colored sun right above, two clouds, blue sky, green grass, and a beige hill. The hills in the background are stated to be Madonna Mountain, a widely recognizable SLO staple—but what does Madonna Mountain have to do with SLOHS? Campus is located right by a hill—literally called High School Hill.

If a knock-off Moondoggies inspired shirt doesn't represent the senior class, I really don't know what does.

"Everything we get from our school's like all black—all the athletic shirts are black, so we just felt like it'd be nice to give a different color of shirt for people to wear," said Ranta.

To be fair, on its own the design would look great as a sticker or on apparel that isn't sand color beige or the saddest shade of gray. Luckily, the wide variety of options really takes the design a step further.

The class of 2023's senior merch

had an extra fun casually hard out-fit staple, a baseball inspired jersey.

The class of 2024 gets not that, but the exact same design in the same placement with no variety other than a crewneck sweatshirt.

"All of our seniors worked really hard on it, and they took a month to design which design they wanted to do. I feel like [ASB] chose the design not specifically thinking about school colors but the vibe of the class of 2024," said senior Delilah Viayra.

Using multiple ASB sources, it can be summarized that one person was commissioned to actually make the design and then officers looked at multiple choices and chose which one they liked most. What was also brought up through multiple sources was how multiple ASB staff weren't even aware of who the designer was, what the set price was going to be days before it was announced at the senior meeting, and how (and this is "off the record") the design wasn't even everyone's favorite. The collective decision to choose something

that represented the "entire senior class" barely stretched to represent the ASB senior class.

"We kind of got backed up a bit. It took a few months for us to get them ordered and delivered," said Ranta.

The issue with this year's senior merch goes past the design or the variety, but the lack of structure and thought in the process of making things special for this year's graduating class.

To end this critical analysis on a positive note, in all honesty the design does serve its universal purpose. While this design might not be everyone's cup of tea it can serve as inspiration for next year's graduating class to create something better.

There are plenty of other things to commemorate this final year for seniors, and while this design might be part of it for some, it's disappointing to know it may have missed the impact for many.

Source: slohs.slcsud.org

The Crazy Phenomenon of Veganism at SLOHS



This is dal on rice, one of the vegan options that is available to students during lunch. Photo courtesy of freshman Santiago Baltodano

REPORTER SANTIAGO BALTODANO

Veganism, the practice of not eating or using any animal products, has become a trend with many Americans in the 21st century. But at what point do we stop buying into it? Schools such as San Luis Obispo High School have been buying into the idea of veganism. They are now altering their cafeteria food to be suitable for vegans.

This change, however, is useless for the vast majority of the school.

"I haven't had any experience with veganism, and I don't intend to. I probably couldn't survive without meat," said freshman Isaac Burgess.

Only three percent of Americans are actually vegan, and most of these people are between 30-50 years old. So why do we still cater to vegans at SLOHS if there is such a small amount of them at the school?

"We're adding multiple vegan items to the menu everyday without taking into account people with other dietary restrictions," said freshman Logan Yazzie.

Although it makes sense to allow students to continue being vegan at lunch, we can't discount the swaths of students with dietary or religious restrictions to certain food items. What about students who are allergic to beans, nuts, or other staple vegan foods? Now, imagine these students can't eat certain items on the menu due to their religion. Just like that, these students will leave school without lunch.

"Food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affects six percent of adults and eight percent of children. That's one in 13 children, or about two students per classroom," said AskUSDA.

With such a large number of students with real allergies, shouldn't resources be more spent

worrying about their issues than the preferences of a smaller number of students?

Some students at SLOHS have had good experiences with vegan food. After all, the goal of supporting veganism is to provide a welcoming and equitable environment for all students. But with such a small percentage of vegans at school, it's not a problem worth dealing with when there are larger issues to tackle.

"If you don't like meat I understand that, but I see no good reason to do this much with veganism," said Burgess.

There are still many students with genuine restrictions that go unnoticed. This should be prioritized instead.

It's best that we hop off the veganism bandwagon, or at least treat every student at SLOHS with the same support.

Sources: usda.gov, forbes.com

Disclaimer: Official Student Publications

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Teen Suicide Rates Are Skyrocketing; What is SLOHS Doing to Aid Student Mental Health?



Many students who struggle with mental health issues feel isolated under their own cloud of darkness. Photo courtesy of Arts and Entertainment editor Vyolet Burrus.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR VYOLET BURRUS

The teen mental health crisis has worsened recently, and San Luis Obispo High School has been affected just as many high schools across the country. As more and more teens are dealing with depression and anxiety, both SLOHS and the country need to address the declining quality of mental health.

"I've noticed a lot of my peers stressed and struggling. I think a lot of it has to do both with the workload expected of us at school and the pressure instilled in us to get into college...the only way we'll succeed is through working ourselves until we can't find joy in anything," said sophomore Charly Elston.

In the last decade, the national suicide rate has gone up sixty percent, being the second leading cause of death in adolescents, and the number of self-harm incidents rose by fifty percent. Nationally, fifty thousand people on average commit suicide yearly, meaning that statistically someone commits suicide every eleven minutes.

Out of these fifty thousand people, just under seven thousand people are teenagers. Further concerning, 1.7 million teenagers attempt suicide and even more seriously consider it.

"[When I was thinking about suicide] I felt completely hopeless. I didn't believe in God anymore; I didn't believe in people anymore. I just wanted it to be done. I was in a really, really dark headspace. I was going through the motions, but I just hated all of it and I felt like there was no other way out," said an anonymous student.

Moreover, minorities struggle with mental illness or commit suicide at a higher rate than those not, making certain groups more at risk and more in need of prevention programs. For example, 22 percent of teens who identified as LGBTQ+ committed suicide in 2021, due to preexisting mental illnesses, emotional abuse, and physical bullying.

While thousands of teenagers are committing suicide, even more are engaging in self-harm, with twenty percent of adolescents using this as a way of alleviating emotional distress and reducing emotional numbness.

"Sometimes [self-harm] feels like the only way I can get my feelings out and sometimes I feel like I deserve it. I'm really lucky in that I have friends and family who want to help me and I always know I can confide in. For people struggling, know that there are people out there who want to help you, who care about you, and in no way feel like you are burdening them, all you need to do is find them," said an anonymous student.

Other teenagers may suffer from eating disorders, with 75 percent of adolescents being unhappy with their bodies, and many being bullied for how they look. Teen girls are the most likely to develop eating disorders, due to the social pressure to look a certain way.

"Everyone's kind of dealt with that, I'm still struggling. I'm just trying

to see it more like body neutrality. It doesn't really matter how your body looks, it's just what it does for you. As long as you're living a good life, who cares [about how you look?]" said the first anonymous student.

Adolescence is a period of great change where many teenagers feel pressured by school, social expectations, and the future, leading many to struggle with anxiety and/or depression. Students may be depressed if they have trouble eating, sleeping, socializing, or if they consistently cannot make it through the day feeling "okay."

When students are faced with loss or are constantly bullied, they may become isolated or struggle with negative emotions, potentially causing mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression which may worsen over time, leading to self-harm or suicidal ideation.

"I felt so alone. I felt like there wasn't anything else I could do, and I felt that there wasn't any other way, but there is always another way," said the first anonymous student.

To properly support students struggling with mental health, SLOHS has implemented many policies in recent years. This year the Wellness Center was implemented and socioemotional learning counselor Austin Miller was hired to support students. The school has also added many psychologists to aid students, and with schoolwide surveys, administration has been able to grasp a better understanding of student mental health.

"School-wide, we focus on building relationships, and we value connectedness...They help us see, hear, understand each other, and develop that tenderness with each other that allows us to be authentic and get help or provide help when someone needs it," said principal Rollin Dickinson.

Suicide and mental health needs to be talked about in families and at school in order to spread awareness about the subject and ensure that students can find help if needed. More and more resources are being created to remove any barriers stopping people from seeking treatment, and it's important that we reduce the feeling of isolation.

Teenagers must understand that it is normal to experience anxiety or depression, it is normal to be struggling with mental health, that they are not alone, and that there are people who will help them get through it.

"People care about [you]. There are resources for [you] to turn to, it's not the end of the world. Just because you're at your lowest doesn't mean it's gonna be like that forever," said another anonymous sophomore.

If students are struggling with mental health it is vital that they seek help, even if it's not professional, simply talking with a friend or another trusted individual will greatly help.

Sources: yalemedicine.org, auditor.ca.gov, cdc.gov, uhhospitals.org, anad.org, latimes.com, afsp.org

LGBTQ+ Education is Lacking: Education is Needed in Schools



One of the many pride flags one can see hung up in classrooms, yet without education to give meaning to its presence. Photo courtesy of sophomore Charly Elston.

FEATURE CO-EDITOR CHARLY ELSTON

Students at San Luis Obispo High School have a large variety of classes to select from. From Latin to auto shop, SLOHS has a multitude of selections, catering to every possible type of person. However, amidst this vast amount of education waiting to be learned, LGBTQ+ education continues to maintain its elusive status.

“Queer education is important and needs to be heard more. I think people misinterpret a lot on what it is before doing research on [reality]. There should be more people to teach the community [about it] and how it impacts those in the queer community,” said sophomore Divanna Anderson.

All around the world, LGBTQ+ people are being attacked and even killed for their identities. Twenty-one states have “negative” gender identity policies, in contrast to only sixteen states with “high” gender identity tallies.

“High” gender tallies result from policies that directly help the trans community, which can range from bills that legalize gender-affirming services to bills that defend transgender people from discrimination.

“Negative” gender identity policies are policies that directly harm the transgender community, such as bills that limit gender-affirming therapy, or bathroom bills that prevent trans students from using the restroom that matches their gender identity.

Despite this, it is still a question about whether or not LGBTQ+ texts are appropriate for schools.

“A lot of queer identities aren’t revolved around sex or even sexuality, because you can be transgender, you can be asexual or anywhere on the [asexual] spectrum which is either about your gender or about your lack of interest in sex, and identities such as like lesbian, gay, bisexual aren’t just about the sex,” said junior Julian Johnson.

LGBTQ+ education has been limited and deemed “inappropriate”, largely because it has been labeled as “sexual.” This label unfairly places an unearned stereotype on the community and harms queer people, leaving uneducated people to spread misinformation without the education to correct it.

“[Outsiders to the community] know that gay people exist, but they have no idea about the history or how to respect people who are gay,” said GSA club president and junior Vance Waller.

Various attacks on the community have occurred in recent years. There was the shooting at Club Q in Colorado in November 2022, and a more recent attack of non-binary student Nex Benedict in Oklahoma, in which the student was attacked in the girls’ bathroom after being bullied for their identity. Despite this, the attackers were not charged. These both leave the queer community grieving and angry.

“[The attacks against the community] make a lot of people really scared to come out and try to find their own community,” said Waller.

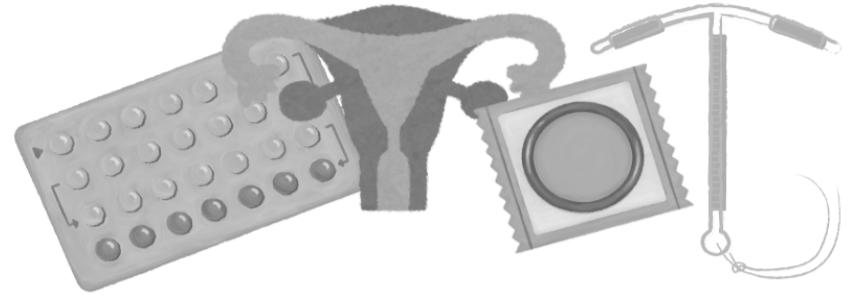
Even if LGBTQ+ people are mentioned in schools, people in the queer community often feel reduced to a label. LGBTQ+ issues are mentioned in freshman health classes, however it is minimal acknowledgment and should extend beyond ninth grade. These issues can be deeply explored in English and writing classes, as books allow people to see other groups’ struggles through a different lens. Actions such as reading LGBTQ+ literature can greatly reduce the ostracization many queer people experience, and hearing queer voices can express ideas and feelings that often don’t have a welcome place in schools.

“A thing that’s important to LGBTQ+ people is intersectionality, and the fact that you’re more than just your singular identity. You don’t need to define yourself as one thing,” said Johnson.

Despite the hate, prejudice, attacks, and lack of education, the LGBTQ+ community remains strong in pushing for better representation and treatment. Pride is, and has always been, about protesting for equality.

Sources: lgbtmap.org, nytimes.com

An Uncomfortable Pill To Swallow: The Subject Of Birth Control



Stay protected. Graphic courtesy of senior Alma Tinoco.

FEATURE CO-EDITOR ALMA TINOCO

Students at San Luis Obispo High School are sexually active. While this statement is not applicable to each and every single student, an estimated 55 percent of high school students in the country have been reported to be doing the deed by their eighteenth birthday. The existence of intercourse among teenage students is in no way a shocking thing—from sex being the punchline of jokes shared amongst all ages to the subject of inappropriate gestures exchanged between companions. Sex is a humorous and glorified subject until the down and dirty becomes the down and educated, intricate, and in-depth. When it comes to talking about b-i-r-t-h-c-o-n-t-r-o-l, then sex isn’t funny anymore.

It’s taboo. It’s political. Controversial. It’s straight up uncomfortable. “I am afraid to say anything, because I feel like in this current political situation, if I say the wrong thing, or even if I have good intentions, that I would be accused of promoting my own views. So I’m afraid to talk about many things with my students,” said Fashion and Interior Design teacher Leone Avery.

The subject of birth control expands past just the pill. Birth control refers to any level of contraceptive, from condoms to an IUD— even emergency contraceptives like the morning after pill. Condoms are the most frequent form of contraception. They come in all colors and sizes, like balloons, but only more serious. Anything past the idea of condoms often sparks issues socially, as the subject of those born female taking control of their own body and sexuality becomes a call for controversy.

“I feel like people are awkward about it. Because it’s kind of an awkward thing. I feel like there’s a lot of stigma about people who do take birth control because I feel like people view it as ‘Oh, if they’re taking birth control, then they must be getting around,’ sort of thing when it can be for a bunch of different reasons. I know a lot of people take birth control so they don’t get their period,” said senior Sophia Mueller.

The stigma behind birth control lies in politics, in the fear of letting women explore their own body. The U.S has seen the repetition of issues in the matter of reproductive rights, specifically with abortion bans and the constant conflict with Roe V. Wade. It is the fragile state of reproductive rights which makes the education of contraception all the more important.

To receive proper understanding of contraception such as birth control, implants, or other pregnancy prevention methods, a conversation has to be opened up among parents, teens, and even teachers. It’s an uncomfortable pill to swallow, but the subject of birth control needs to be talked about not only to increase its accessibility, but to destigmatize a topic so taboo in our current day.

“I think that when I was starting to talk to my parents about it, it was kind of uncomfortable. I’m lucky to be in a household that’s pretty cool with that sort of stuff, so it wasn’t that bad. I think the more awkward part was talking to people at the clinics that I went to to get it,” said senior Molly Himelblau.

The accessibility of birth control can be an obstacle for many teens, as it forces everyone involved in the process to acknowledge the fact that teenagers are having sexual intercourse. It’s an uncomfortable fact to accept, making it an all the more uncomfortable process to access contraceptives. The issue with purchasing contraceptives can stem from an awkward interaction with a cashier, being shamed or labeled as promiscuous, or the horrid interaction of having to admit that certain activities are happening to one’s parents.

Despite its uncomfortable conversation topic, sex is a natural thing that has to be acknowledged to open the doors for safer sex.

Recently, the FDA has approved a daily non prescription oral contraceptive called Opill. This means that birth control can be found at some pharmacies and purchased without a prescription. Opill is a progestin-only contraceptive, meaning that it is just as effective as anything prescribed by a healthcare provider. This a huge step for contraceptive accessibility, but it shouldn’t be a swerve to talking about contraceptive use for everyone.

The accessibility and knowledge of birth control and its uses is an important factor to open up conversations and make its prompt more comfortable for everyone. No one should have to be uncomfortable in the process of keeping their bodies protected.

Sources: cdc.gov, fda.gov

Whatcha Lookin at Willis?: Women Feeling Self-Conscious in SLOHS' Weight Room

HEALTH & SPORTS CO-EDITOR TEA FISCHER

Guys don't just make women feel self-conscious in public gyms, but also in the San Luis Obispo High School's lifting class. Although this may seem insignificant to most, it is actually a big issue.

The SLOHS weight room class is a great opportunity to work out, not only is it free, but it is a great place that has a wide variety of exercises. It contains everything a public gym has, but unfortunately it is slowly copying the disadvantages that follow.

In the strength classes here at SLOHS I was told, "I don't want to lift with people who can only lift four pounds."

This is a prime example why women feel self-conscious about lifting around guys.

"When I do go to the weight room the boys will stare [at me] and watch me. I feel like this should not be happening. Considering I am a woman, and I have my own human rights," said freshman Elisha Kelley.

Girls don't have the same level of testosterone as most guys. Not to mention they are not naturally built to lift as much as guys.

This doesn't mean women should feel as if they can't lift. Nor should they feel like they are unable to because of the possible fear that a guy might say something negative towards them.

"There are some people in [the weight room] that make it an unfair place to be as some people go in and discriminate against others, depending on their body type or how strong they are. It makes it an uncomfortable environment for people. I believe that the gym is equal and you should have equal opportunities for everyone inside the gym," said senior Matthew Higareda.

The weight room at SLOHS has a really competitive atmosphere. Where people are constantly trying to better themselves. Which is all well and good, until athletes feel like they are looked down upon because they don't lift as much as the person next to them.

I felt this way when I was squatting in the weight room. A coach didn't believe that I was capable enough to squat three hundred pounds. He would tell me that I can't do it, while also getting people to make sure I don't fail.



I always feel like somebody's watching me. Graphic courtesy of senior Téa Fischer.

Guys would come up to us and ask, "oh you guys need spotters," or "you need to do this differently." Whereas, we knew what we were doing, but they act like you don't know what you're doing," said sophomore Rylee Shurson.

Guys have a tendency to feel like they dominate in the weight room by showing off their weight numbers, and making some girls feel bad about theirs.

This should not be happening.

"I don't think that [women] should feel that way. I think we should promote a more positive,

inclusive weight room where they shouldn't have to feel self-conscious when they're working out," said senior Nakoa Roldan.

SLOHS is a school that tries to spread encouragement, while also making students feel welcome by allowing them to feel like they can co-exist with one another. The fact that the weight room doesn't share that same aspect is misleading.

Let's make the weight room a positive place.

Source: lseclarion.com

Spring Football Training: The Pressure is On



Football players in first period weight training class "dead" after a workout with coach Kennedy Meaney. Photo courtesy of the SLOHS Football Instagram page.

REPORTER LUCA PETTERSON

The San Luis Obispo High School Football program runs a tight ship, and part of the commitment to being a part of the team is a first period football weight lifting class during the third trimester. Unfortunately this commitment is conflicting with some athletes' spring sports schedule.

Although intense, weights can be managed as part of your day to day life, however, some athletes are juggling both weights and a spring sport.

With up to nearly four hours of practice, athletes definitely have a big workload. How do they manage their time?

"When I did it we did a pretty good job of limiting our morning training and working more with the track group in weights, we prioritize our spring sports over football but we maintained an equilibrium," said senior Track and Football athlete Troy Warrecker.

Some athletes are able to exercise self control and discipline in the weight room in order to keep themselves in top competition shape.

However, others have not been able to manage their time as effectively.

"Honestly it is a little too much sometimes, because Monday is the best, you just came back from the weekend and it's fine and you can do weight training and then go do track, but after a while it gets so tiring," said sophomore Track and Football athlete Jacob Garcia.

During the spring sports season, it is important for athletes who have any kind of secondary training to make sure their time is spent effectively so that their strength peaks during the important parts of the season, and that they don't overtrain or become exhausted.

Football head coach Patrick Johnston relies on communication with coaches in order to properly manage a student athlete's regimen so that they may scale back or press forward in the football weight room.

"We've had a lot of success with it and student athletes have seen a lot of substantial gains in the last ten years with this arrangement and this situation that we have, it is always beneficial for athletes to have access to weights while they are in season," said Johnston.

Managing a spring sport along with additional weight training can be difficult, but with proper communication and a combined effort from all of our SLOHS coaches, many problems arising from overtraining can be avoided; just trust in the process.

In the words of coach Johnston, "it's just a matter of making sure that the coaches are properly communicating and looking after what's best for their student."

The Endless Battle: Skiers Vs. Snowboarders

REPORTER MILES BLACKWELL



VS



The debate rages on. Graphic courtesy of senior Tea Fischer.

Here at San Luis Obispo High School, there have always been conflicts between skiers and snowboarders, and no one can figure out which is best. Both sides think theirs is the best, but is there an answer to this question?

"I've probably said that skiing sucks upwards of a bajillion times," said senior Jackson Meyer.

Most people don't know that there is a general attitude of skiers, that snowboarders are always sitting in the middle of the runs, getting in everyone's way.

"On a scale of one to ten on how annoyed I get with snowboarders, it's probably a seven usually, but the park rats or the ones that just sit down in the run get me pretty frustrated. For them, it's definitely an eight and a half or nine," said sophomore Kelton Fernandes.

While skiers can sometimes get annoyed with the carefree and playful attitude of snowboarders, the latter is just out for a good time.

"I really don't get angry at skiers on the mountain, I just like to have fun with my friends,

and I'm generally a respectful person, and so are my friends," said senior Silas Buchanan.

It is often said that skiers are more cutthroat than other athletes. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing. This competitiveness can drive skiers to push themselves to be their best and achieve great things. Ultimately, it is up to each skier to decide whether they want to embrace this cutthroat mentality or not.

"I love parks. Rails jumps and boxes are so sick. And I can do a backflip. Honestly, I like the trees and rock drops way more than parks. My first backflip was off a rock," said Fernandes.

While skiers may sometimes find the playful attitude of snowboarders annoying, it's important to remember that snowboarders are just out there to enjoy themselves on the slopes.

Skiers need to remember that snowboarders have a different style and approach to the sport, but at the same time, snowboarders need to be more respectful and try their hardest to not get in other people's way.

Go get on those slopes, Tigers!

Football Is the Hardest Sport to Prepare For

REPORTER OLIVER NEMETZ

With football practice starting up once again at San Luis Obispo High School, athletes need to start preparing for the season. However, this will be no easy feat. Preparing for a football season is harder than preparing for any other sport, and they've already started.

"I play Football, Basketball, and Track. The hardest sport to prepare for is probably football," said junior Jace Gomes.

Gomes has been playing quarterback for SLOHS ever since he was a freshman. Preparing to play quarterback is one of the hardest things to do in sports.

"I play Football and Baseball. Football is a lot more work than baseball because you need to start a lot sooner," said sophomore Andrew de la Motte.

Training for Football begins right when the third trimester starts with weightlifting, but there's more work than just that.

"There's a lot of weights, and a lot of footwork drills later on. You also have to prepare for all the quick decisions you gotta make," said de la Motte.

De la Motte is a slot receiver, so not only does he need to be strong, but

he also needs to be quick. The slot receiver calls for a lot of blocking, as well as running routes.

Part of playing football is learning how to prepare and lock in for your next game.

"Usually the day before the game I do a lot of stretching. The morning of the game I make sure to eat a good breakfast," said freshman Grady Garrison.

Garrison also plays Basketball and Golf but said neither is harder to prepare for than football.

"Being able to win games and make big plays is worth all the hard work," said Gomes.

Overall, the football season requires a lot of dedication and hard work from its athletes.

From weightlifting to footwork drills, and from blocking to running routes, the training never stops.

Yet, for those who love the sport, it is all worth it in the end.

As the SLOHS Football team gears up for another season, *Expressions* wish them all the best and hope to see them succeed on the field.

Tigers, make sure to fill the stands in the fall!



SLO NightWriters Writing Contest

Golden Quill Writing Contest Opens May 1st

Judges: NYT bestselling author Tod Goldberg, award-winning author Anne Janzer, and former San Luis Obispo County poet laureate Marguerite Costigan.

Categories: Fiction, Creative Nonfiction (including Memoir), and Poetry

Prizes: \$1,200 in prizes and publication in the premier issue of SLO NightWriters' new literary journal.

2024 Theme: Memories

Open May 1st to June 30th.

Visit slonightwriters.org/golden-quill for contest rules.



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The Guide to Pretentiously Explaining Squares: Why You Should Take AP Art History Next Year

REPORTER CASSIOPEIA MAMARADLO

Among the numerous AP courses offered at San Luis Obispo High School, AP Art History stands out as a class with exceptional benefits.

It offers a relaxed, yet enriching atmosphere that delves into the vital historical contexts of art that shape societies, architecture, and religion.

The class is perfect for students assembling portfolios for AP Art classes, seeking a stress-free history option, who want to explore the world of art, or are just eager to join the field trip to California art museums.

“[AP Art History] is honestly more interactive from all the previous ones where you just sit and take notes. Art History does that but also has a lot of drawing components like the art cards and the field trip,” said senior Kaylee Edwards.

As an AP Art History student, the exam merely requires test takers to memorize 250 artworks within ten months to tackle multiple-choice questions concerning attribution.

Unlike traditional history courses, there are no Document-Based Questions. Rather, essay prompts focus on the comparative analysis of art pieces across various periods and styles, to assess the student’s

comprehension and attribution skills.

“You can take [AP Art History] whenever without having to do art classes... I learn so much history about the U.S and different cultures from around the world,” said senior Alexis Palmaymesa.

Art history extends its influence across various facets of life, from personal expression, political and social commentary, and environmental architecture.

The curriculum introduces students to a variety of new cultures and the values they hold through their art, like Renaissance Greece with beauty and humanism.

“I like the way that art influences our history and how it can change that way that we think. For example, political comics and cartoons that acted as art pieces and propaganda,” said sophomore Charly Elston.

Opting for the AP class is truly advisable if one is seeking a grade boost, a deeper understanding of art to integrate with future studies, or the opportunity to forge new friendships and create lasting memories during the class or at the future art museums they’ll be visiting.

Tigers, make sure to talk to the counselors or sign up for the class if interested!



The AP Art History students had lots of fun on their trip. Photo courtesy of senior Cassiopeia Mamaradlo.



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TikTok is Negatively Affecting SLOHS Teens

REPORTER RUBY BLACKBURN

TikTok takes over a large amount of San Luis Obispo students’ lives in today’s society; it’s affecting student mental health and the way that they consume media.

The platform can be a fun and entertaining way to explore during free time and catch up with friends.

“TikTok has a positive effect on my life, there’s a lot of funny and entertaining videos to watch. I really enjoy the platform,” says sophomore Yolotzin Camarena.

While it can keep students entertained, there’s also a negative aspect to the app.

“Social media has a negative impact on my life because it distracts me from getting schoolwork done. When I delete social media I feel a lot more collected,” said an anonymous student.

Everyone is guilty of continuously scrolling through social media instead of doing more productive things, or getting done the things that need to be done.

TikTok affects teens’ attention span because they’re so used to short video clips, affecting the ability to focus and remember things.

“The short, video-based format of the app encourages users to consume content in small bites, which can train the brain to expect and prefer shorter bursts of stimulation,” wrote journalist Anur Sijercic.

The app contains a wide variety of videos, some to inform and some to entertain. These videos have affected the way that we consume media.

“TikTok has affected the way [we consume media], a lot of us believe everything we see that isn’t true. Some people also self diagnose themselves with mental illnesses they don’t have because of a short video they watched, and start becoming delusional,” said Camarena.

Social media websites have allowed many people to become very trusting of everything they see. It’s easy to see a video or comment and instantly trust what it’s saying as a fact, without looking into it any further.

But with so much content on TikTok there’s inevitably going to be false information.

This platform has also taken a toll on the way that teens perceive themselves and their overall mental health. Many people are very quick to see others videos of their lives and compare themselves and their own lives to that.

Posts on TikTok and other social media platforms usually provide a glorified version of people’s lives. People don’t want to post the negative, only the positive.

There’s nothing wrong with having things in moderation, but when it starts to negatively impact the lives of teens is when a change in habits needs to occur.

Source: medium.com

Should We Separate the Music From the Artist?

REPORTER ANGEL TEPEPA GARCIA

In recent months, rapper Sean “Diddy” Combs, more commonly known as “P. Diddy,” has recently been subject to many civil suits accusing him of sexual misconduct and assault. This is just another instance of an artist who has recently come under controversy for things that they have done or said throughout their career, and many San Luis Obispo High School students are in turmoil over the acceptance of their music and the personality along with it.

Rapper Kanye West is a more notable hip-hop figure whose greatest albums such as, “My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy” and “The Life of Pablo” have put him in high regard as one of the most influential modern day artists.

However, due to his recent anti-semitic remarks that have overshadowed his artistic abilities, listeners are brought back to the big issue they have when listening to music.

“I listen to most controversial artists and I don’t think that means I support what they did. It doesn’t really affect my listening experience because I just enjoy listening to the music,” said junior Milo Nemetz.

These artists make it difficult for the average person to follow them and love them for who they are esp-

cially if they’ve been convicted for being terrible human beings, oftentimes leading the music community to disagreements and a large scale divide between people who can still listen to music by controversial artists and those who can’t separate the two.

“I would still listen because I feel like you can separate who a person is from what music or art they make,” said senior Marissa Dube.

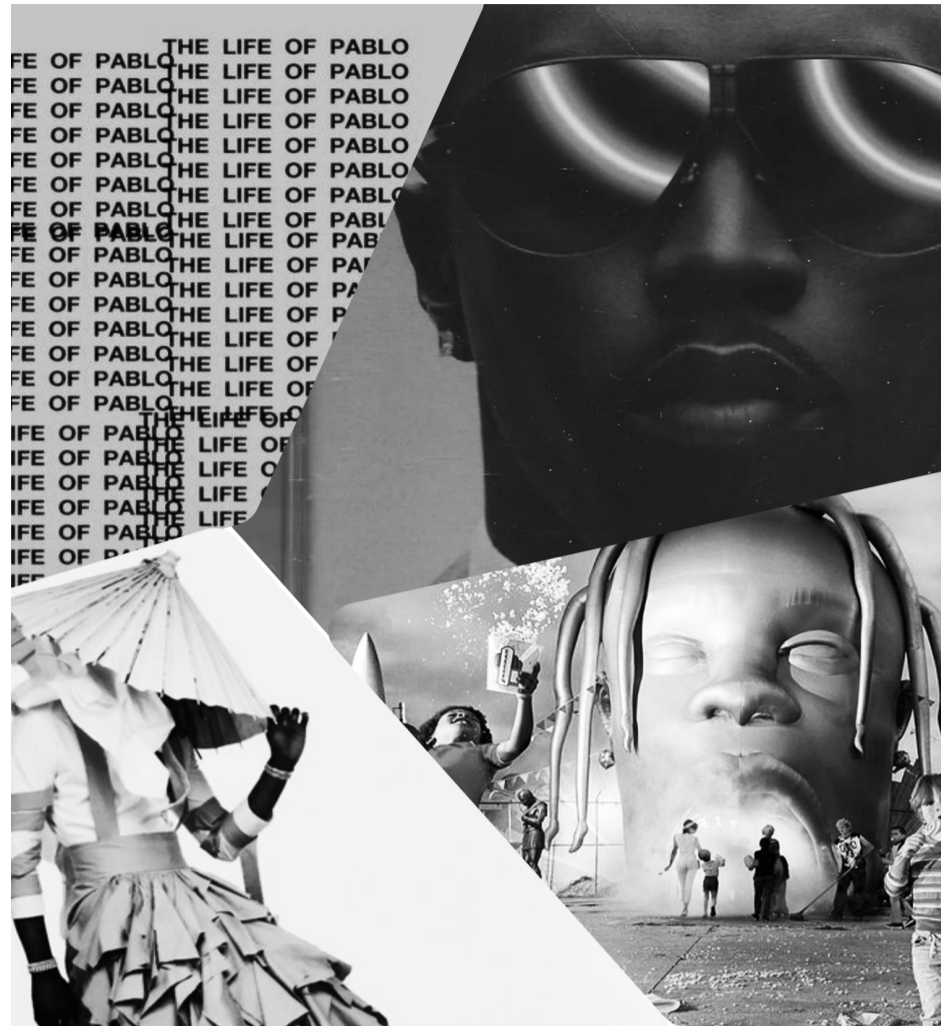
The history of an artist’s past will be a continuous issue for fans across the world to grapple with, where a constant war about morality, accountability and power dynamics inside the music industry will be attached to their identity forever.

When certain people see their favorite artists under fire for things that they’ve said, it can be a dark time to be a fan of this person who might have made your greatest life experiences with their hits.

As society grapples with the complexities of supporting these artists who have troubled pasts, a divide will persist, leaving many fans to navigate their own moral compass when it comes to consuming music by controversial figures.

What side are you on, Tigers?

Sources: *spotify.com*, *loudwire.com*, *nyt.com*



Many students at SLOHS listen to controversial artists. Collage courtesy of senior Angel Tepepa Garcia.

Hell May Not Be Forever at the “Hazbin Hotel”



Students should check out “Hazbin Hotel!” Collage courtesy of sophomores Charly Elston and Vyolet Burrus.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR VYOLET BURRUS AND FEATURE CO-EDITOR CHARLY ELSTON

There are a plethora of TV shows and movies for San Luis Obispo High School students to entertain themselves but without a doubt, Amazon Prime’s “Hazbin Hotel” is a great choice.

The show follows the daughter of Lucifer, Charlie Morningstar, as she runs a hotel to redeem people who died and went to Hell. At first glance, one could mistake this show for nothing but a bunch of cursing, violence, and sex jokes, however, this surface-level view ignores the deeper themes of morality, redemption, and what makes a person “good.”

“It’s wonderful at explaining why we need to be ready to forgive people because people can try to change and try to grow in spite of their mistakes and in spite of things that they’ve done wrong...There is this easiness to see the world so completely black and white at times that we forget that sometimes people can change and grow,” said sophomore Mateus Iscold.

In addition to the riveting plot and eye-catching character design, the music of “Hazbin Hotel” is phenomenal. Students who like musicals will find a cast of familiar voices, such as Broadway actors Jeremy Jordan of “Newsies,” Alex Brightman of “Beetlejuice,” and Erika Henningsen of “Mean Girls.”

Compelling characters also make this show the entertaining media it is. Characters such as Alastor, an overlord with mysterious motivations, Angel Dust, an adult film star with intriguing backstory, and Vaggie,

Charlie’s girlfriend with a darker past, give the show a feeling of security even if the audience doesn’t know whether the characters are “good” or “bad.”

The shades of gray morality are painted in blur the lines between friend and foe, making the audience question such things in their own lives.

“I really like Adam [the angel]. I know he’s a jerk, he’s the guy we don’t like, but his songs are a bop and I like his character design,” said junior August Jonson.

“Hazbin Hotel” stands out from other shows primarily due to its unforgettable (and annoyingly catchy) music that is perfectly able to capture the characters and their struggles with redemption.

One of the songs, “Loser, Baby,” although peppy and light-hearted, is about two characters connecting with one another through the shared experience of being a loser and celebrating their faults, showing a more vulnerable side to supposedly irredeemable demons. “Hell is Forever” is another song loved by fans as it shows the hypocrisy of angels and demons, with the main angel being much crueler than most demons and singing about his hatred for the sinners.

Another song that quickly became popular with the audience is “Poison” which gives the show even greater depths for its depiction of an abusive relationship. “Poison” shows how lust can become so toxic to the point where it is no longer resistible and one can’t help but succumb to the “poison.”

“The music is well written with most songs being very catchy, annoyingly sometimes, the music is definitely what makes the show the way it is,” said sophomore Roslyn Risner.

“Hazbin Hotel” promotes themes of redemption and humanity. The premise surrounds sinners pushing themselves in ways they never have before in hopes of earning their place in Heaven, despite the angels telling them it has never and will never happen. Charlie persists through this, insisting that sinners are capable of improving themselves, even after they’ve died.

“The themes in ‘Hazbin Hotel’ are very dark at times, but the show deals with them in such a way that recognizes that nobody is beyond redeeming until they tell themselves they are. The message is very hopeful, considering the show is set in Hell,” said Risner.

Additionally, feelings and processing feelings are large parts of the show. Each character has their own personality and internal struggles that they may not be able to share, yet they continue to garner support from those close to them.

“One of the big ideas in this show is being able to accept that things suck or things hurt or whatever struggle you’re going through. Allowing yourself to feel those feelings and talking about it with others who might relate like that’s a really good lesson,” said Jonson.

“Hazbin Hotel” is a well-animated, humorous depiction of redemption when one is at their lowest, and if students enjoy musicals they will love the show.

“It’s freaking awesome! It’s funny, it’s artistically genius, the music is so good and it’s a good show. Ten out of ten,” said Jonson.

Whether it’s for the fantastic music or the complex characters, “Hazbin Hotel” is definitely worth a watch!

This is the Definitely a Factual, True Horoscope

CO-FEATURE EDITOR CHARLY ELSTON AND REPORTER BOB MEYERS

Tigers, it is the last day of the rest of your life. Er- first. First day. First day of- yeah, the first day of the rest of your life. Sorry. Anyway, the future is bright on the horizon... for some of you. It is time for San Luis Obispo High School students to look to some faraway burning balls of fire to uncover intimate information about their personal life.

Aquarius: January 20–February 18

Aquarius, the recent eclipse will bring change to you. You may suddenly be feeling the urge to begin tap dancing. Should you feel this urge, give into it, you never know what joy it may bring. Avoid speaking the names of teachers with six letter names, for it will summon unprompted essays.

Pisces: February 19–March 20

Pisces, your sign is a fish. When I think of fish, I think of a fishing trip I embarked upon with my father when I was young. I remember one; the fish grew legs and ran around me in circles, shouting my name, I never stopped the madness. Pisces, this reminds me of you. You are that fish. Pisces, this is your time of year to embrace your inner anthropomorphic fish. Feel the fish, be the fish. I see that dissections are out of favor for you, Pisces at this time.

Aries: March 21–April 19

I had a dream recently that featured every teacher whose name starts with an A. The Aratas, Avery, even Aaron. In this dream, they juggled oranges, tossing them about, in a complete chaos. The orange color spread, making the entire dreamscape orange. I believe the "A" names refer to you, Aries, because they all began chanting "Aries" at me. It would be wise for Aries to avoid the color orange, for it will clearly create chaos in your life.

Taurus: April 20–May 20

On my last trip to the grocery store, I spotted a bull, buying groceries just as the rest of us, and yet, people stopped and stared. Why? Is bull not equal to man, do bulls not get the same amount of respect that we ourselves demand? I wonder this still, hoping that the bull fed his family adequately, and that the tiles on the grocery store floor will eventually be repaired. You may ask, Taurus, how this relates to you. It doesn't, I just wanted to tell the story. You will figure out the deeper meaning.

Gemini: May 21–June 21

Gemini, I recommend you seek out opportunities this month, they will come from the most unexpected places. For instance, I once met a man in an airport who offered me a CD. I accepted it, thinking it was a simple sample from the man's discography. I was wrong, Gemini. The CD began scratching in the CD player, causing it to catch fire and spread to my homework. This was an opportunity. I realized the universe was trying to tell me to give up on math. Thus, I've rejected all math and refused to do it, to the dismay of my teacher. But no teacher can teach me as the universe does.

Cancer: June 22–July 22

Cancer, as you walk past the chemistry classrooms this week, stop. Stop and think. Breathe. Breathe in all the smells around you. Science and chemistry is key to your path moving forward. I strongly recommend clown school for you. You are drawn to danger and the dangers that accompany humor. Follow your heart here, go against society, and be the clown you know you are inside.

Leo: July 23–August 22

Leo, last night. I had a vision. There was a lion, and I saw them being attacked by a giant fish! Or was it a crab? Uh...hmmm. Visions are sometimes tricky like this. Just watch out for water signs, they'll probably murder you or something.

Virgo: August 23–September 22

Virgos are logical and smart, so I see mathematical success in your future. Just to double check though, try to compute and simplify $f(a + h) - f(a)$ when $f(x) = x^2 + 2x$. and send me the answer. Preferably soon. It's due tomorrow and this homework is twenty percent of my grade.

Libra: September 23–October 23

Libra, your name is just "Library" but without the R or the Y. Did you ever notice that? Crazy. Anyway, you're gonna be like, happy or something.

Scorpio: October 24–November 21

Scorpio, just like Aquarius, the recent eclipse will change you. You may find yourself starting to grow a tail, walk on all fours, develop a concerning amount of body hair, and gain a sudden urge for human flesh. Uh... maybe see a doctor about this one.

Sagittarius: November 22–December 21

Sagittarius, I sense rekindling in your future. You should try to find old friends, get back in touch with them, and think of your fond memories. I had some good memories with a friend named Jim. He worked at Taco Bell and I'd go there every Sunday to say hi to him. Then the police found some stuff in his car and he went to jail and...uh...anyway, go rekindle with your friends.

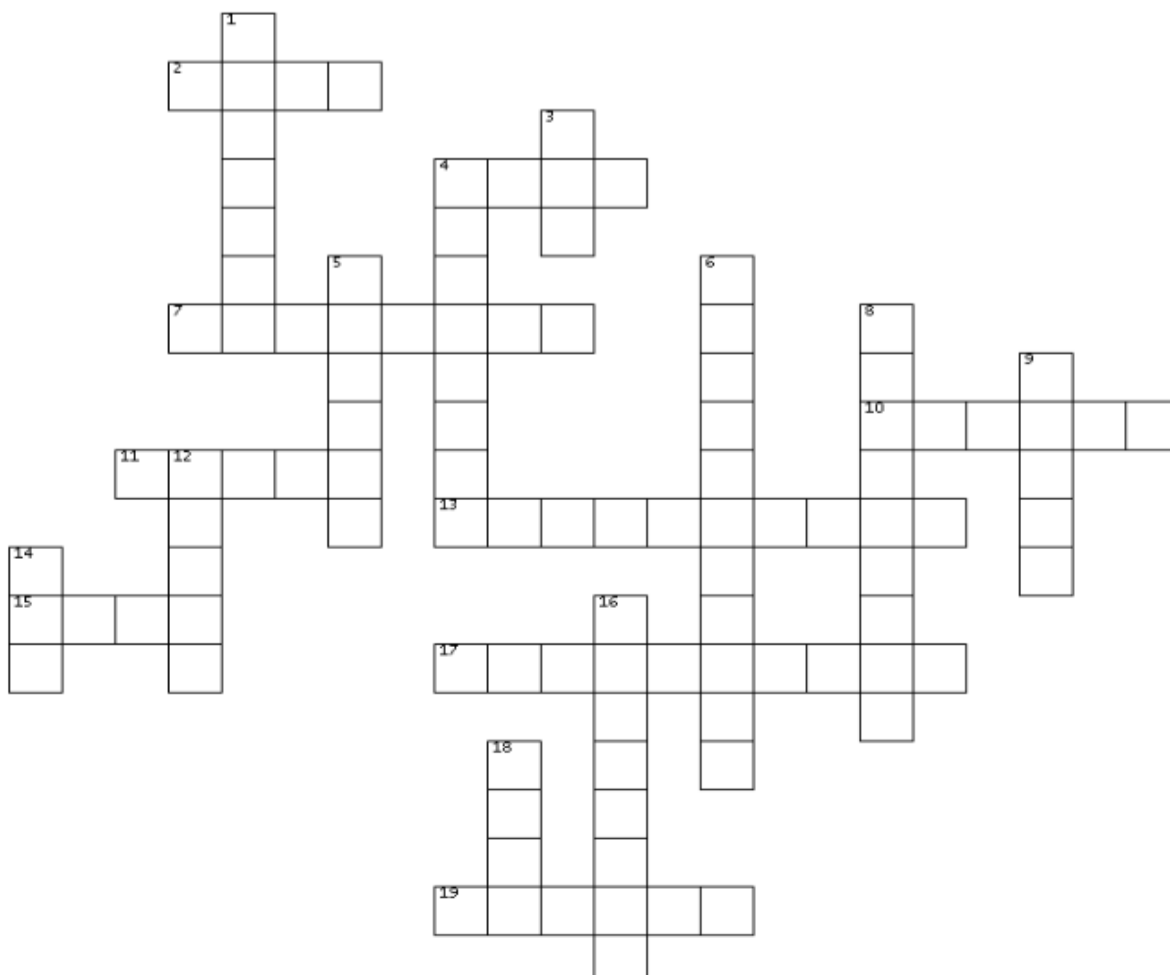
Capricorn: December 22–January 19

Capricorn, you...uh...where's...? Ok, I may have forgotten to come up with your horoscope this week but, um...Capricorn, ok, uh...your name. It rhymes with unicorn kinda? Yeah, unicorn. And that's like, a mythical animal, just like leprechauns. And leprechauns have pots of gold! Yeah, gold, I sense great financial fortune in your future. Boom. I'm a genius.

Tigers, whether you are Cancer or (ugh) a Virgo, the stars will bring things to you. Great or not, that's for you to decide.

We Bet You Can't Solve This Tricky Crossword

REPORTER BOB MEYERS



ACROSS

2. SLOHS Mascot Colors; Black and _____
4. ___ Tigers; The SLOHS Pre-school Program
7. Memorabilia received at the end of the school year after paying \$80 minimum
10. Website that tracks our grades
11. Schedule type during finals week
13. Locally unpopular software firewall
15. Test taken by juniors in the second week of April
17. First school dance of the year
19. Last name of the M-ROD counselor

DOWN

1. Website blocked by SLCUSD on the 1 of May
3. Title of the daily news videos played during 3rd period
4. Class between 4th and 5th period on Mondays
5. Nearby restaurant established in 1977
6. Title of SLOHS Newspaper
8. The 'P' in AP
9. SLOHS Mascot
12. 12:31 to 1:06 on non-Mondays
14. The only non-verbal language taught at SLOHS (abbreviated)
16. _____ Center, formerly the library
18. Natural disaster that occurred at SLOHS on October 30 of 2023

The first three people to turn in a completed crossword to English teacher Scott Nairne in room 203 will win a prize. Good luck, Tigers.