

# San Luis Obispo High School **Expressions**

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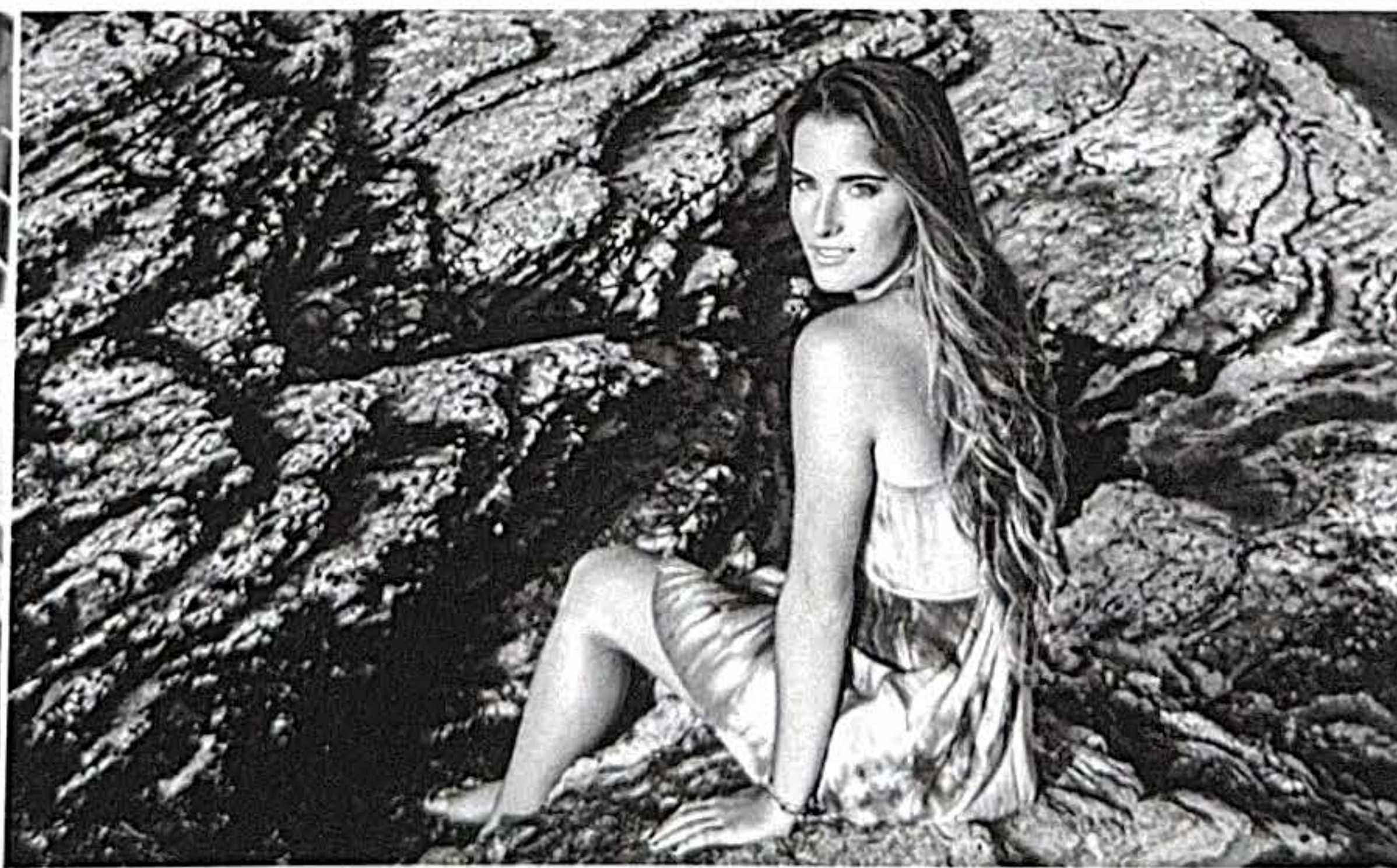


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# Teachers say goodbye to SLOHS

Josh Dorman  
Staff Reporter

A few teachers will be leaving San Luis Obispo High School at the end of the 2014-2015 year. Many have been wondering who, is saying good-bye to our high school for good.

Former SLOHS United States history teacher David Kelley, who transferred earlier this year, is the new head football coach at Morro Bay High School, and teaches criminal justice, U.S. history, and Associated Student Body Leadership.

"I miss the awesome students and staff," said Kelley after being asked what he misses most about SLOHS.

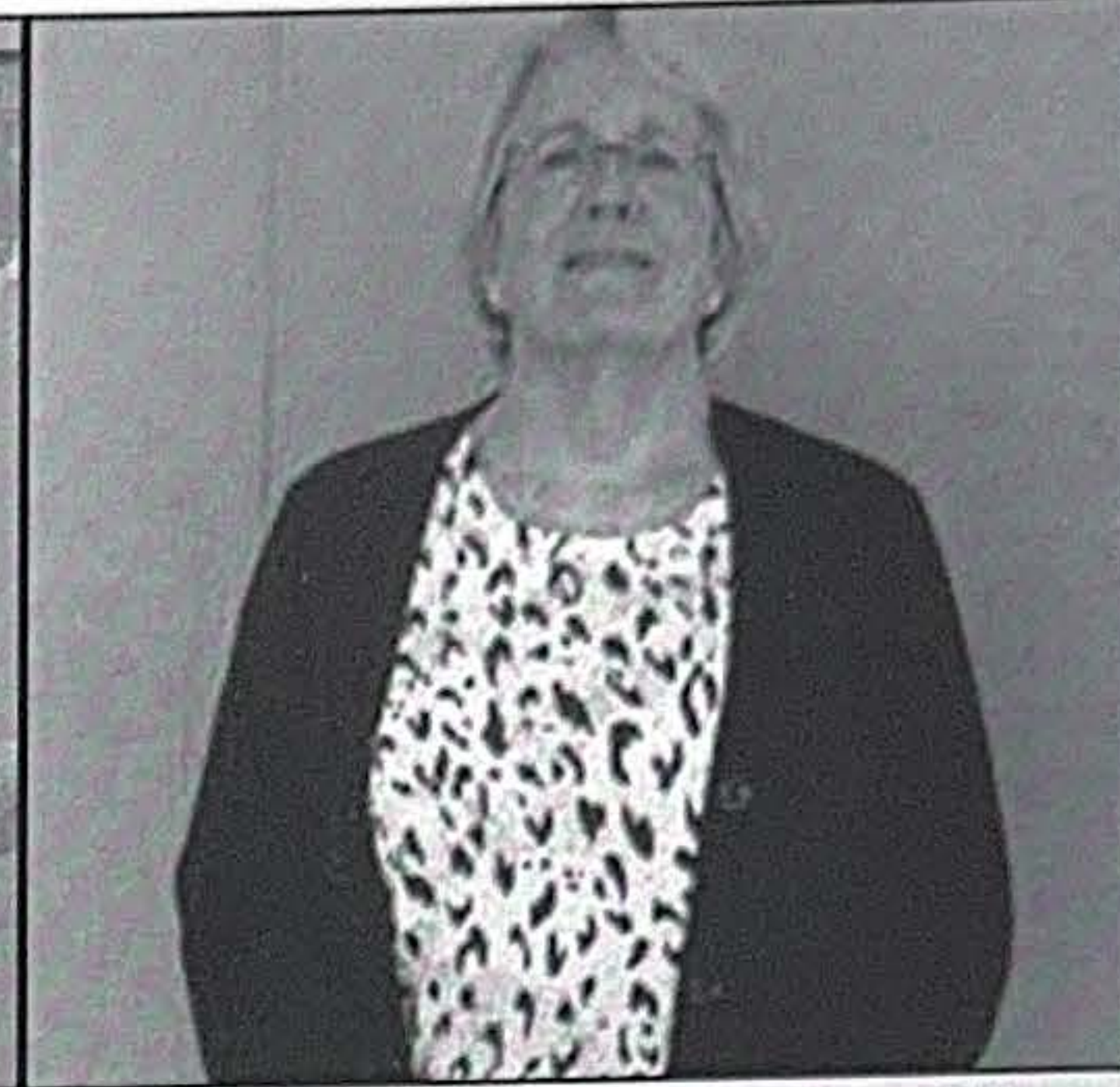
As detailed in a previous *Expressions* article, Spanish teacher Tracey Nelms will be transferring to Morro Bay High School at the end of the school year.

After five years of teaching at SLOHS, Advanced Placement Art History and Ceramics teacher Amanda Bockelman is moving to Orange County because her husband was accepted into graduate school.

She plans on taking a break from teaching



Advanced Placement art history teacher Amanda Bockelman and history teacher Carrie Zinn pose in the classroom.



to raise her kids and spend more time with family.

"I will most miss the creativity that I see in all of my classes," said Bockelman.

"I love SLO and [I'm] excited about what's coming up but I'm really sad to leave at the same time," said Bockelman.

History teacher Carrie Zinn is retiring after thirty-nine years of teaching in San Luis

Obispo. She said that she is looking forward to "not living by the bell," getting to sleep in more, traveling, and spending more time with her husband.

"I will miss the students who have taught me so much, even though I am supposed to be teaching them, and the love and appreciation they have given me for what I do. I'll never be able to replace that," said Zinn.

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# Joelle Lewis is a Future Farmer of America



Photo courtesy of Joelle Lewis

Senior Joelle Lewis celebrates on the national FFA stage

**Krissie Miller**  
Staff Reporter

Senior Joelle Lewis has again amazed the community of the Future Farmers of America and the student body of San Luis Obispo High School with her dedication to the club and her success in the competitive field. With her high school years coming to a close, and her FFA responsibilities growing faster than ever, *Expressions* sat down with Lewis to find out exactly what was on her mind.

**Expressions:** Why did you join FFA?

**Senior Joelle Lewis:** Both my sisters were involved, and so it was only natural that I also got involved. They were pretty much the sole reason that I joined in the first place.

**Expressions:** What caused you to continue being involved with FFA?

**Lewis:** What made me stay involved was how awesome the whole experience is. I got to compete in a variety of contests, have extensive leadership experience, and make friends that I will keep in contact with for the rest of my life.

**Expressions:** What awards or roles have you been given through FFA?

**Lewis:** Throughout the past four years I have been a part of the 2012 national novice parliamentary procedure champion team, been a state competitor for both impromptu and prepared public speaking, and our advanced parliamentary procedure team just won the state

“I know that the impact FFA has had on me will remain present, as this organization has completely transformed who I am, and I will continue to give back to it in every way I can,” said senior Joelle Lewis.

contest and we will move on to nationals in the fall. As far as leadership roles go, throughout high school I have been fortunate enough to serve as an officer on the chapter, sectional, and regional level, and I was recently elected to serve as the California State FFA President for the upcoming year.

**Expressions:** What has impacted you most about FFA?

**Lewis:** The comfortable atmosphere that is present not only in our Ag department, but throughout the entire organization, because it truly encourages members to grow and try new things. I never thought I would be able to stand in front of thousands of people to give a speech, let alone want to, but that is the impact this organization has: it encourages you to constantly jump out of your comfort zone until you are self-motivated to continue growing.

**Expressions:** What does your future look like with FFA?

**Lewis:** I will spend this next year traveling around California putting on leadership based workshops and conferences for FFA members, as well as interacting with industry leaders and agriculture teachers to learn what the future of the agriculture industry needs. Beyond my year as a state officer, and as I attend college, I know that the impact FFA has had on me will remain present, as this organization has completely transformed who I am, and I will continue to give back to it in any way I can.



# What students want in new teacher hires

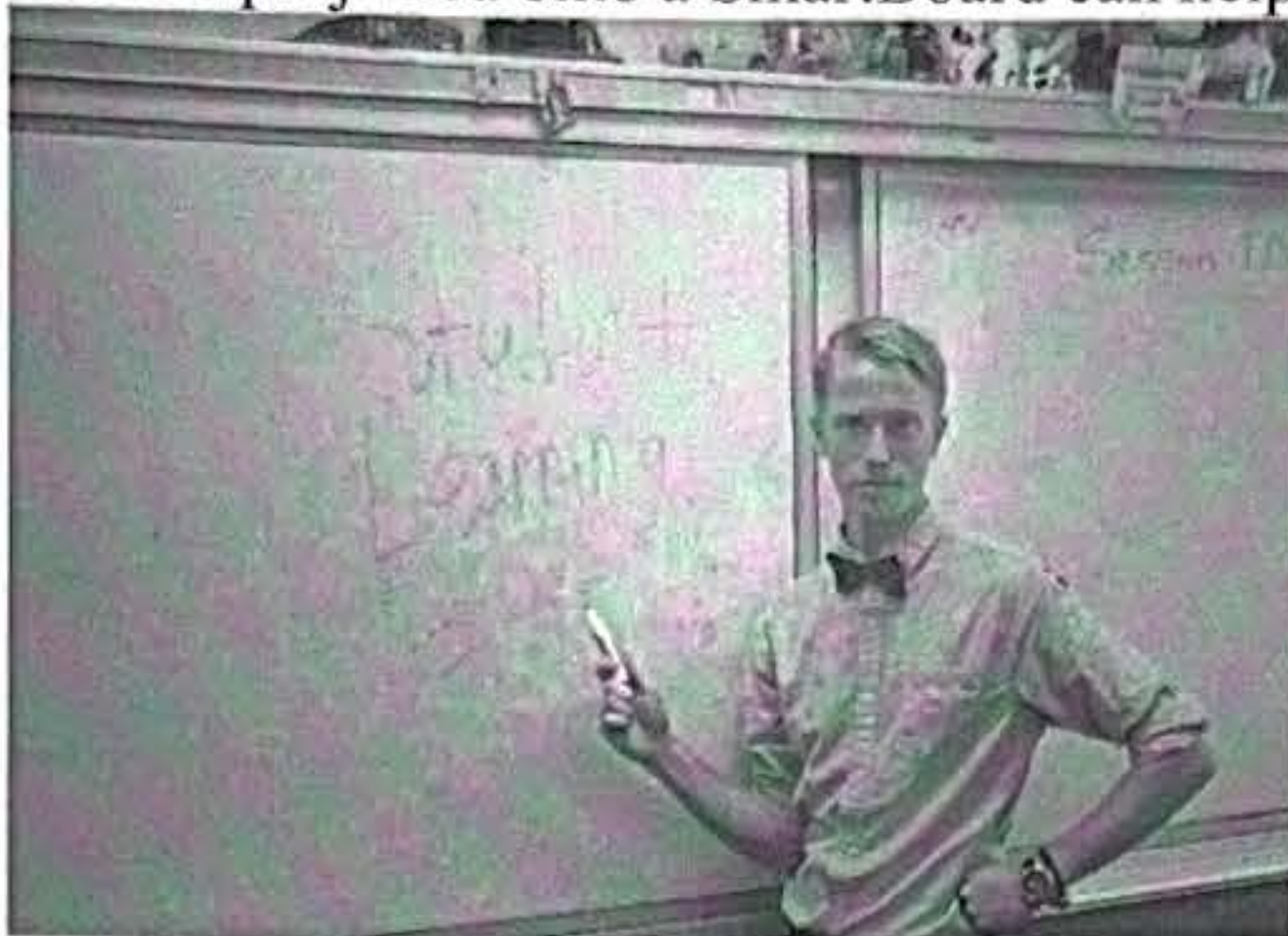
Drew Minnoch  
Editor-in-Chief

With three teachers leaving San Luis Obispo High School after the 2014-2015 school year, administration is currently hiring to fill the vacancies. The process is intensive, requiring in-classroom evaluations and multiple rounds of interviews. Though students give some feedback after a sample lesson, their input has relatively little decision-making power. Naturally, there are certain factors to this process that students are unaware of, but from a student's perspective, the best teachers are ones who form meaningful connections with their pupils.

"A teacher needs to show students that they care," said sophomore Rae Odom. "Teachers like [Biology teacher Jenny] Macartney actually care about how students comprehend the material on an individual basis," said Odom. According to *The Telegraph*, the most successful teachers show passion for their subject and command respect from their students.

"Students can tell when a teacher doesn't really care about their subject. Great teachers can engage even reluctant students," said

Odom. Increasingly, teachers are using new mediums to captivate their students. An Advanced Placement government class, for example, can utilize information from Twitter to stimulate a discussion of real-time current events. In a calculus class, three-dimensional models projected onto a SmartBoard can help



students visually conceptualize the rotational volume of a function.

Technology literacy, in that context, is a crucial aspect of a prospective teacher. It can be a novelty when teachers fumble around looking for the Tiger News Network link, but in some cases, tech incompetence can actually hinder student learning.

"I want a teacher who is more hands on and

incorporates more technology in class," said sophomore Sheri Donahue. "You can use programs like Google Classroom to look at missed assignments and Power Points."

Students who participate in sports, on-campus clubs, extracurricular activities, or even extra late-start Mondays, miss school and need to be able to clearly communicate with their teacher.

Though flashy computer programs can certainly be effective in the classroom, the core values of a teacher are the ones that shine through. English teacher Ivan Simon, who still clings to his chalkboard, is still one of SLOHS's greatest educators because he inspires students to achieve their greatest potential. During my time in his AP class, we probably successfully watched TNN about seven times, but I still think to "tighten, brighten, and sharpen" my prose, as I learned in his class.

To the hiring board, don't choose a candidate based on how prestigious their alma mater is. Pick the candidate who can make a tangible difference in a student's life.

Source: *The Telegraph*

## Take the focus off of grades

Zach Wise  
Staff Reporter

School is supposed to be a place of knowledge, but how much are we actually learning? Ask most students and they will say that for them, high school is a place of strict grading and harsh judgment. As grades continue to build, it creates a very competitive, stressful environment.

To me, this is not how school should be. School is supposed to be a place of learning where we are taught information and life skills that will improve our well-being as adults. With the system currently in effect, not only are many left behind, but often the information is useless. Even if the information is important, students are so distracted with both the insane work load and the intense grade competition that the actual material is often not retained.

Though grades do pose an issue, it's the curriculum that adds insult to injury. I would be perfectly willing to compete for good grades if the information was worth the time. Most of the things I find myself learning will be com-

pletely useless as soon as I graduate. An example of this would be tangent ratios. I cannot possibly imagine a reason I will ever have to use tangent ratios after high school. Perhaps if I plan to do something in the math field, but I am positive that is nothing I am interested in. I think it is unfair we must endure all this completely useless information.

By freshman year, I knew which subjects I enjoy, and which I did not. The choice should be ours of what subjects we devote such a large amount of time to. This also builds the concept of reward over happiness. Students focus entirely on their "A" grade, and though they may not find enjoyment in many of those subjects, endure so they can get into a good college. Once in these colleges, many of these people go into fields that may make them a lot of money, but do not provide them with any real enjoyment. Grades are teaching us that reward is more important than happiness and well-being, and that is not what people's priorities should be.

"Grades don't reflect intelligence, as they are mostly comprised of unproductive busy work. I also think the school system is more

oriented towards indoctrinating students to be good citizens and is less concerned with inspiring students to seek out knowledge for themselves," said senior Ian Bertrando.

Now, I'm not saying that school is useless. I think it is important we develop social skills and high school is a great place to start this developmental process, but for me, that's where most of the usefulness ends. I think that we should reshape the entire curriculum. I know I would be much more interested in school if I knew that the things we are learning would have a real impact on my life.

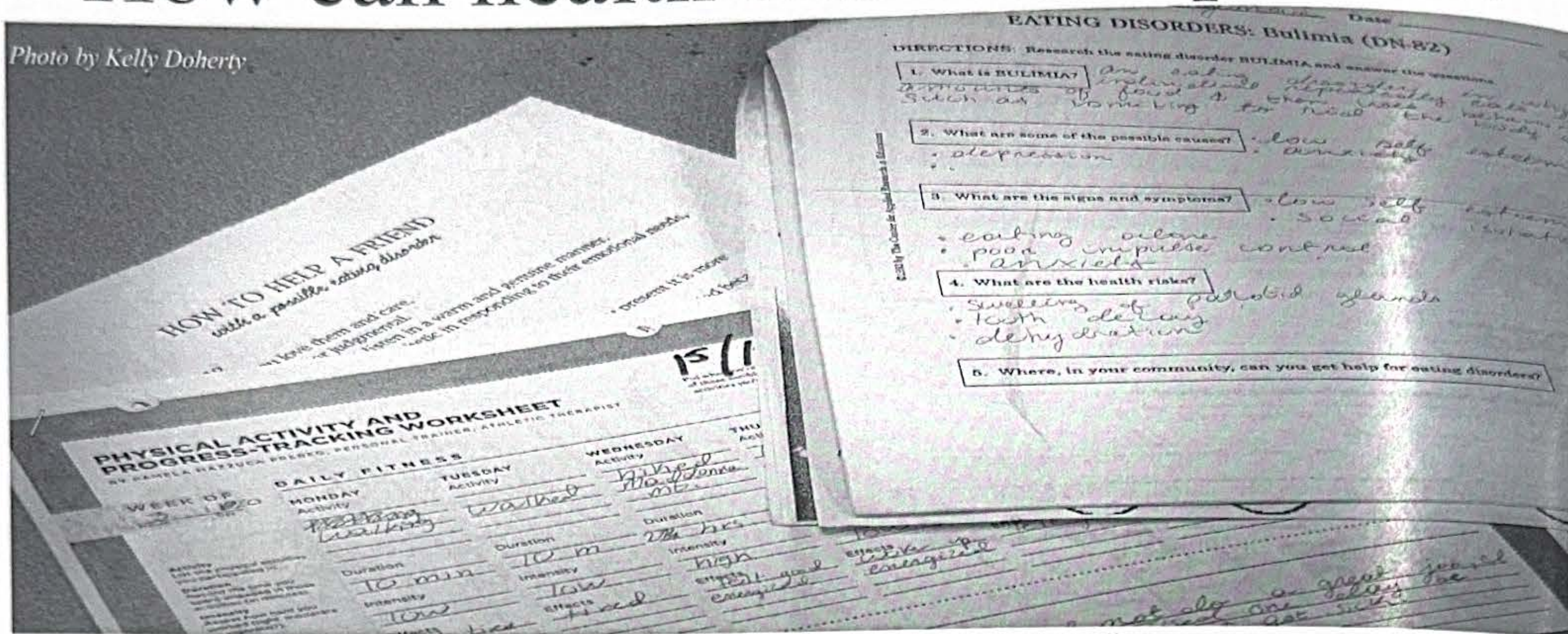
As for grades, they make learning heavily stressful and competitive, which is not the environment I most want to work in. Add this to the extra pressure most parents put on their kids to retain straight A's (B's are punishable nowadays), and you have students with lasting psychological damage and little real world knowledge.

I know that this is the way things have been run for years, and there is something to be said for tradition. However, imagine how much happier people would be if they didn't have four years of their lives wasted.



# How can health class be improved?

Photo by Kelly Doherty



**Let's get physical:** With a rigorous curriculum and a wide range of topics, Health class strives to educate us all.

**Kelly Doherty**  
Staff Reporter

Health Class is a required course at San Luis Obispo High, and for good reason; meant to teach our students crucial information about their own minds and bodies that they wouldn't otherwise know, the basis of the class is a noble one. However, many students don't feel fulfilled by the knowledge that has been imparted unto them. Taught by teacher Dan Monroe for the last two years, many students have voiced their opinions on what they consider to be subpar curriculum.

"I think there should be a bigger focus on mental and sexual health, because they're considered to be somewhat taboo, and the stigma should be eliminated. I feel that mental health needs to be addressed more, because it's difficult to maintain physical health when

you aren't mentally able to function normally. Also, I feel there's a definite imbalance in the curriculum when we spend over a week learning about staying physically fit and only about an hour discussing suicide," said one anonymous senior.

However, other students don't share such a negative opinion on the course. "Mr. Monroe does a really good job of keeping [each unit] at a safe length of time," said freshman Will Anderson. Students must also consider the privilege SLOHS students have with our curriculum; many other schools, both public and private, only teach abstinence-based sexual education, as well as biased viewpoints when it comes to other topics.

"We need less time spent on obvious things, and more time spent on things more relevant to people our age," said sophomore Whitney Burns. Teacher Dan Monroe, though he has

spent fewer years teaching than many of his peers, has been trying his hardest to create the best Health program that he can; however, he often feels that the time constraint he faces tends to create an issue when it comes to fully covering crucial issues. "I do believe that all of the information is covered in the health curriculum. However, in a perfect world, I wish I had more time in each area of health. The reality is with a 13 week trimester system I am not able to go into depth with every topic while still covering [the entire] necessary curriculum in the class."

Health is a difficult topic to cover; from overly opinionated parental opinions, to the immense amount of information expected to be taught in such a short period, it is not an easy task to create a course suited for all. However, with the input of students, we can hopefully work to mend the issues at hand.

## Should P.E. be mandatory?

**Holly Schultz**  
Sports Editor

According to the California Department of Education, Physical Education is taught in order to keep students healthy and promote active lifestyles as they grow into adulthood. However, PE in the high school setting accomplishes none of these goals. If you take a look into a San Luis Obispo High School P.E. class you will see unmotivated students walking a basketball from one side of the court to other before giving up and retreating to the locker room. P.E. does not combat obesity

and restricts the freedom of a student's course load.

Based on 37,000 high school students' responses to surveys from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most students do not believe gym class is effective. Attempting to fix this problem by making P.E. mandatory is counterproductive because it then becomes a compulsory activity that students dread.

"Everyone in this class is forced to take it and that causes extreme apathy throughout the students," said junior Sophia Rawson on the attitude students have towards the class.

If by high school someone has not learned

how to stay active for your health, it is very unlikely that they will grasp it by partaking in a gym class. P.E. has little to no difference in an individual's health and should be only taken voluntarily.

No one can argue that physical exercise is important for adolescents but making P.E. a mandatory class is not the answer. Once students lose their freedom of choice and are forced into a class the benefits are eliminated.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention  
California Department of Education



# Do video games encourage violence?

Daniel Imrem  
Staff Reporter

The issue of violent video games and their connection to real-life violence is a difficult one to discuss, mainly because you can't choose one ultimate side without either ignoring studies, or generalizing a large segment of youth culture in its entirety. There is an undeniable link between crimes in both the real world and the digital one; however, the point that is often missed by sensationalist sources and reporters is that it isn't the ONLY link.

There are numerous variables that go into every outburst of violence, and "Grand Theft Auto V" or "Mortal Kombat X" shouldn't be labeled as the primary source of all evil.

One of the reasons news organizations and their like often tie the two together is because, well, the connection is just so easy to make. You see blood on the screen, you see blood

in the streets, it's not strange to wonder if the two translate somehow. However, video games are -at the end of the day- just another type of media.

Be it an audio-visual one that requires interaction, it's still a hardly more involving form of media than the mental stimulation you receive from reading or watching a film. And, on the topic of literature and cinema, it's only through hindsight do we scoff at speculation and censorship in regards to their passionate, if at times violent, content.

Now, I'm not saying it's wrong for a concerned public to keep on the side of caution, but from what I can tell, it looks as though what we're witnessing is something different in its intent. It seems to be scapegoating. Criminals have cited movies from "A Clockwork Orange" to "The Matrix" to excuse their behavior, and even novels like "The Catcher in the Rye" have been thrown under the

easily excitable news bandwagon. Even Ted Bundy claimed the evils of pornography were to blame for his violent actions, but we were smart enough to ignore him then because of his obvious sociopathy.

So why are we allowing ourselves and others to be convinced by it now? Why are we letting the words of criminals and madmen dictate how we live our lives, when we discharge them from society because we've already deemed their mental constructs unstable?

We cannot allow ourselves to be moved by murderers and FOX news. We cannot, in a sense, let a few "bad eggs" ruin the basket, because when we have given up our intellectual power to delineate right from wrong for ourselves, that's when we really should keep away from even the mere suggestion of violence- be it in the format of a videogame, or a children's bedtime story.

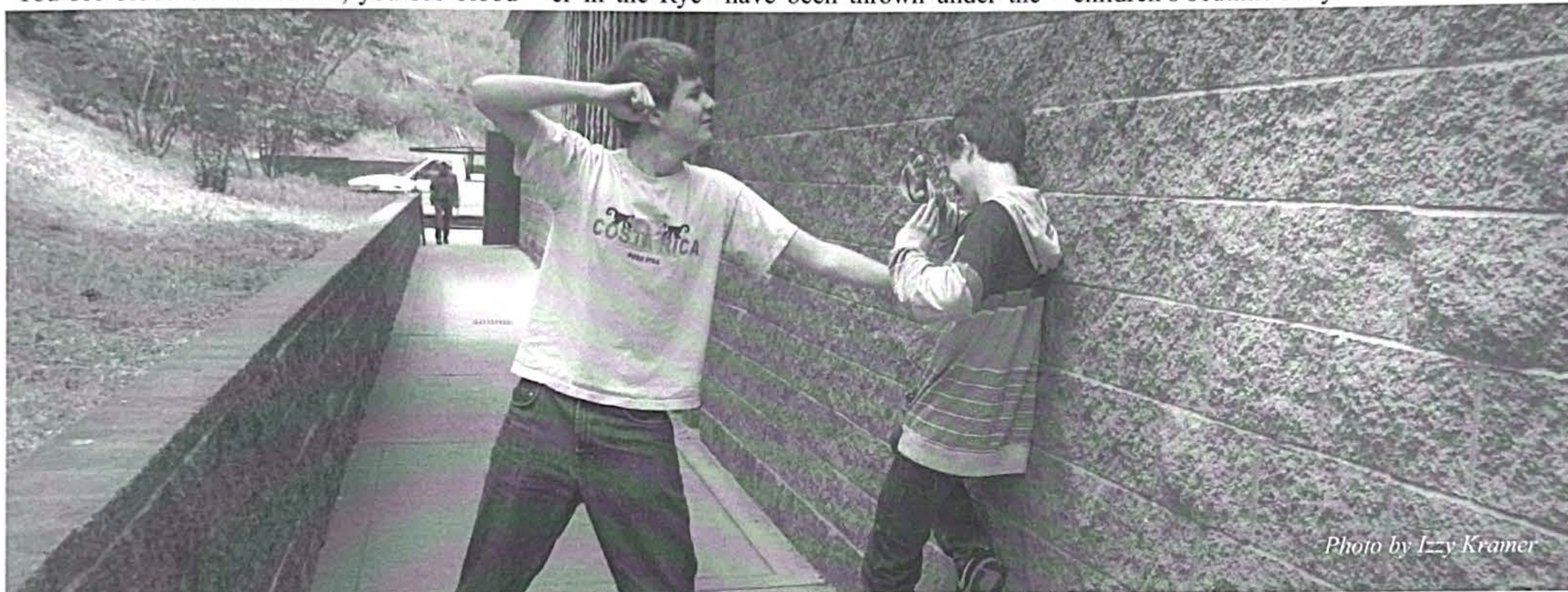


Photo by Izzy Kramer

**Freshmen Frenzy:** Freshman Roland Moore receives a (friendly) lesson in intimidation from junior Eric Osmond.

## Give freshmen a chance

Roland Moore  
Staff Reporter

As a freshman, I'm surrounded by the hatred and discrimination following every ninth grader at San Luis Obispo High School. It isn't fair, as many freshmen such as myself are just trying to get through their first year of high school. The term "one bad apple spoils the bunch" has never rang more true, as freshmen acting immature and annoying are the only ones that upperclassmen notice. Not every freshman deserves to be hated.

"I don't dislike freshmen in general, it's just

when they're immature. [People dislike them] because they're new to it all, like they're straight out of middle school, although some can be loud and really immature which really annoys people. Some freshmen are really chill though," said sophomore Ryan Stokes. "I'll admit I do like to give freshmen a hard time."

A lot of freshmen are really loud and immature. In my own freshman classes, there's often at least three students who are loud and act out of line to try to be funny or seem cool. Lots of freshmen are also able to identify off the top of their head immature freshmen, yet

the ninth graders who don't stand out because of obnoxiousness are still lumped in as freshmen.

"Freshmen new and immature a lot of the time. Like we're straight out of middle school and new to everything," said freshman Daniel Duffy.

"I think it's a maturity thing. They think things are funny that normal people wouldn't find funny," said science teacher Ryan Ritchie.

The loud, obnoxious, annoying freshman should be put in their place, but the ones who are just going through the motions shouldn't have to suffer because of them.



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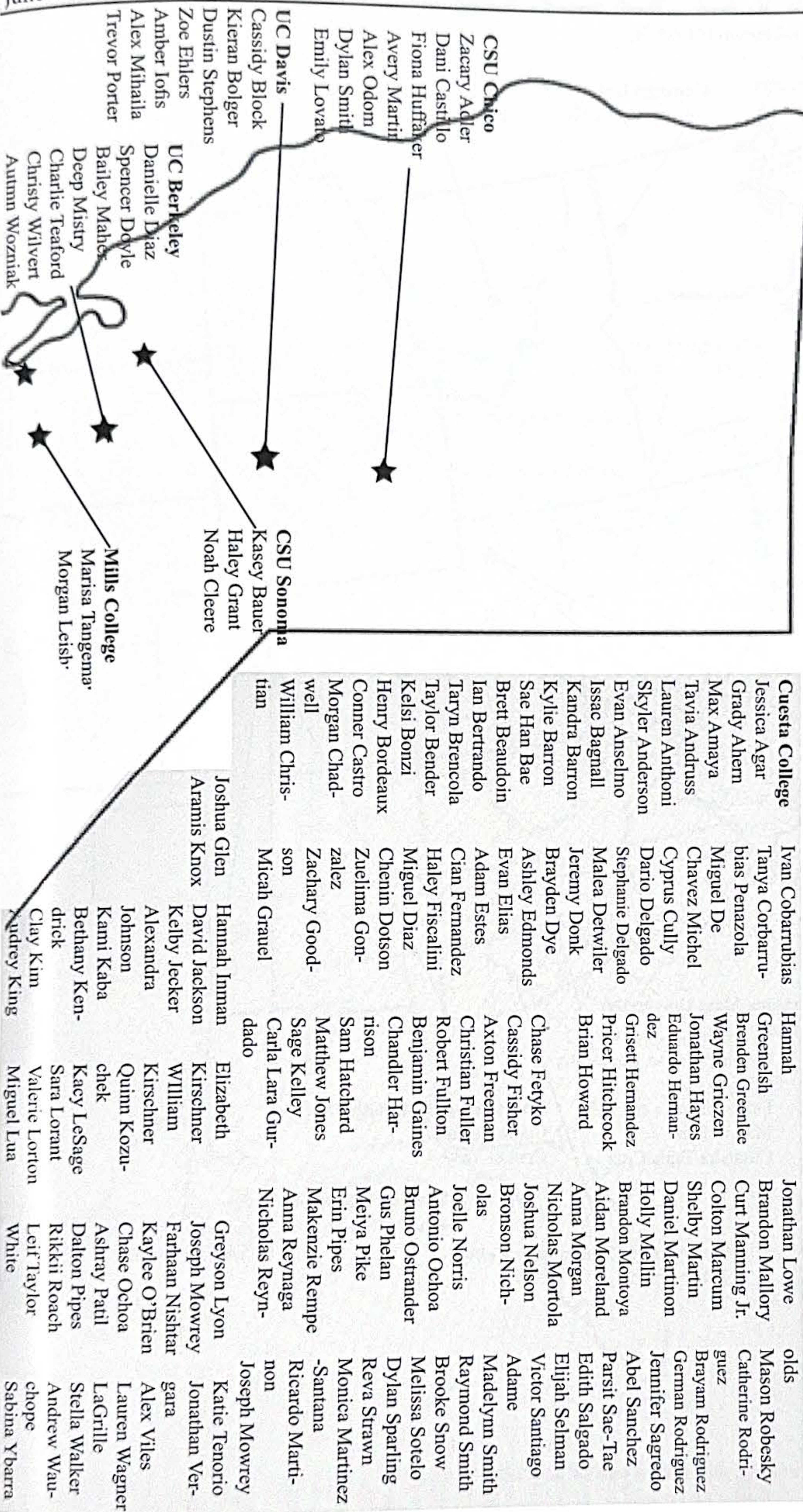
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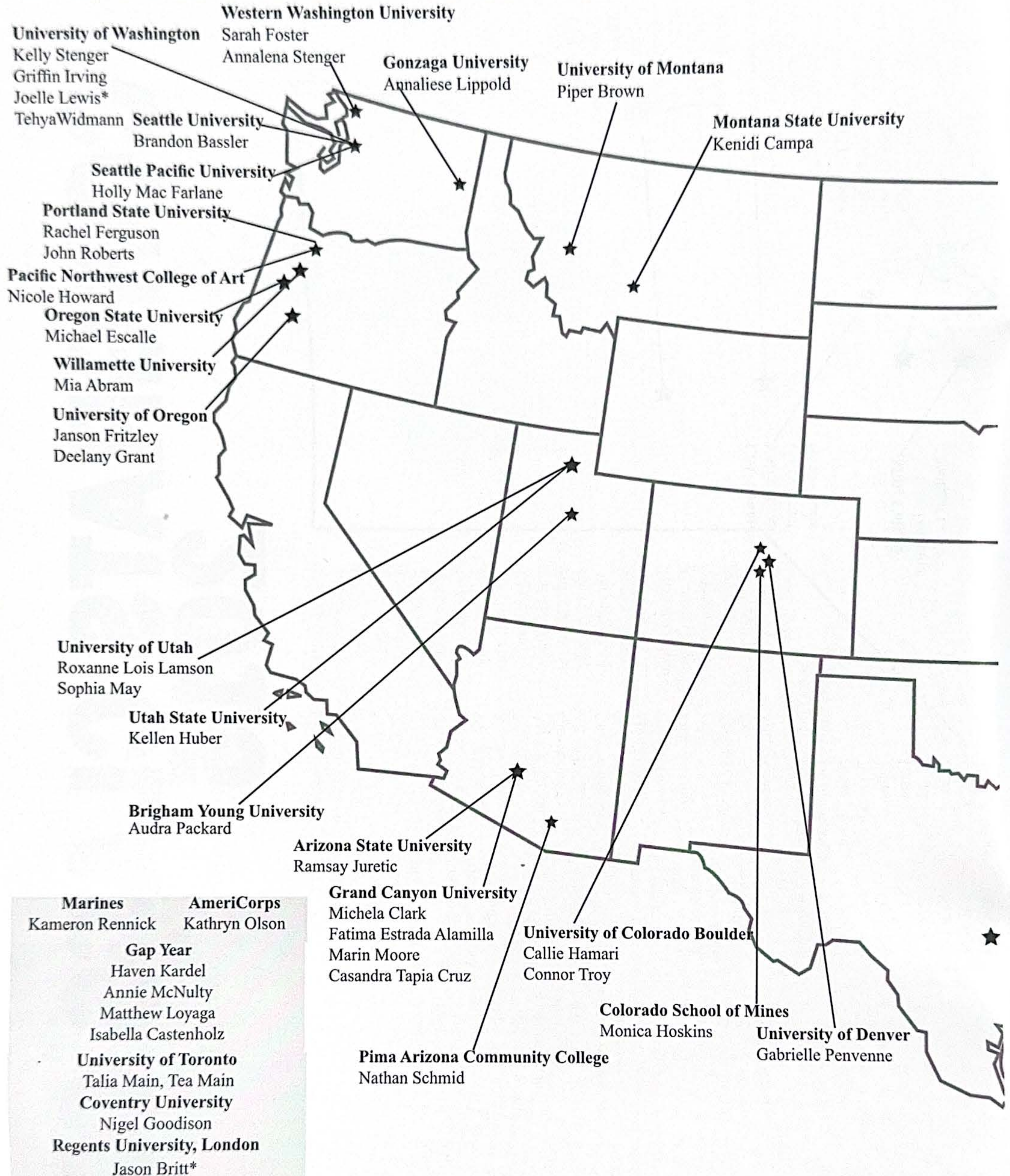
# CONGRATS CLASSES OF 2015

June 2015





# CONGRATS CLASS OF 2015



\* Deferring for a year







# Drama Club seniors reminisce



Photo courtesy of Alison Turner

Seniors Krissie Miller, Danielle Diaz and Brandon Bassler get their smile on.

Jason Britt  
Staff Reporter

Seniors Danielle Diaz, Krissie Miller and Brandon Bassler have been integral members of the San Luis Obispo High School Drama Club since their joining in freshman and sophomore years and are now saying their goodbyes as they reflect on the past four years.

**Expressions:** How does it feel to graduate and retire from Drama Club?

**Senior Brandon Bassler:** We've all gotten along for such a long time, everyone is nostalgic about going. As a trio, along with senior Dimi Hall, we built this sanctuary, like a family. It's very open and I hope that the future generations will follow in our footsteps to keep it a positive environment.

**Senior Danielle Diaz:** Drama Club is a place where we can all express ourselves in a safe environment. It will be odd not having that safety for college.

**Senior Krissie Miller:** I definitely grew into myself through Drama Club, I don't think I would have been able to graduate without it.

**Expressions:** How was "Hairspray" as your

final show?

**Miller:** I think "Hairspray" was the best show we could have ended with, it was an all-inclusive show and we had such an ensemble cast. Even though the show is a tribute to Tracy's character, it was very equal for everyone.

**Bassler:** It was such a big blowout! Not just sales wise, but the entire rehearsal process was entertaining and fun to watch. Watching the entire cast gives me hope for next year. I used to be unsure of the club's survival, but seeing so many kids come out onto the stage gave me hope!

**Diaz:** Hairspray was absolutely amazing! I'm so sad to see it all go but I still feel like we're preparing to start the next show.

**Expressions:** What kind of advice would you offer to the new Drama Club?

**Miller:** Never doubt yourself, I feel like a lot of times the thing that amped people up the most was us being motivational, and letting people know that screw-ups happen and that they've happened before.

**Bassler:** The theatre is here to let people have a good time, they may get crazy, but that's

because we care about our space. It's not really about what the performance looks like, it's the people who perform it. I feel like that needs to be something that is carried out of the experience, the people.

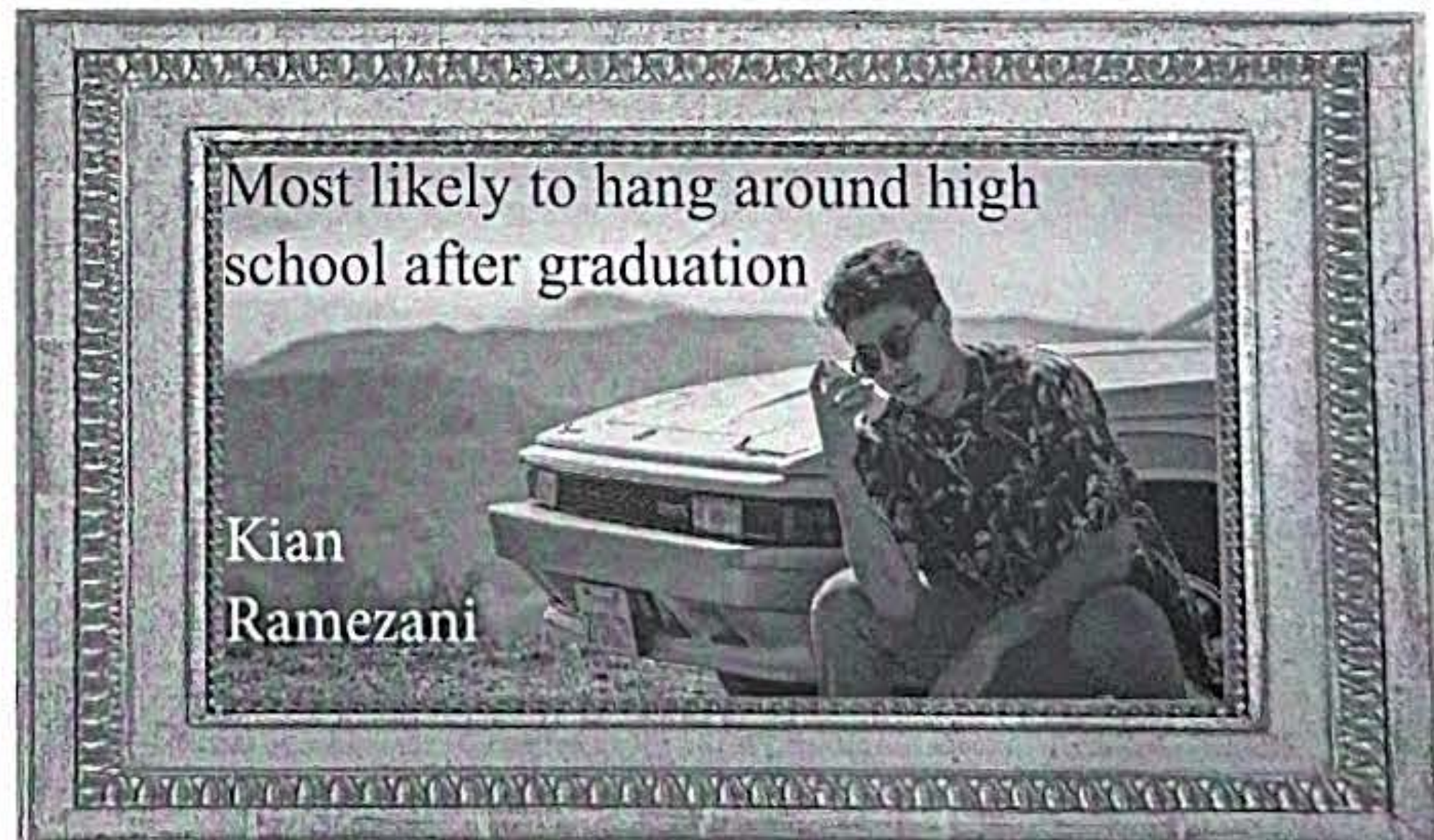
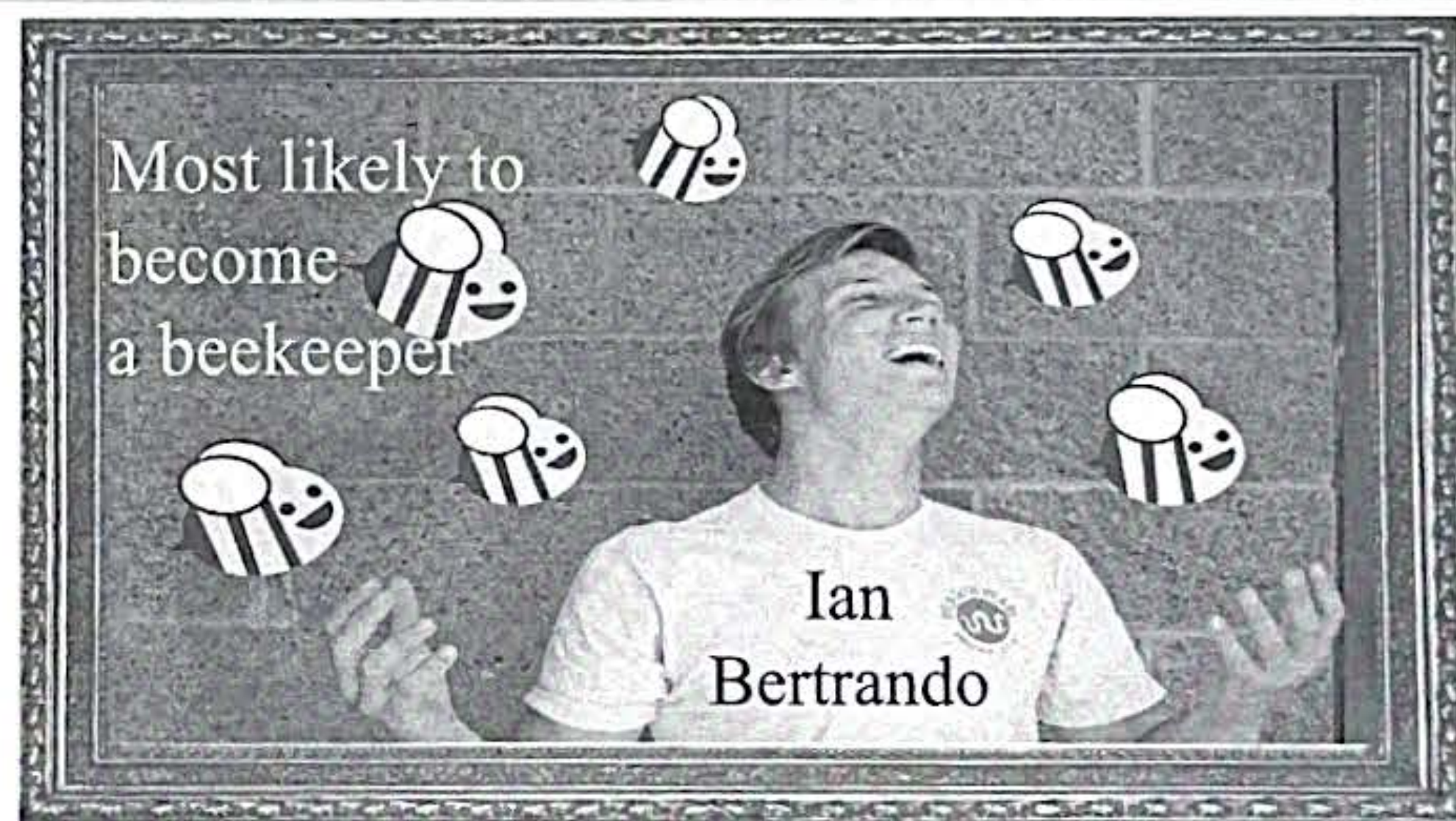
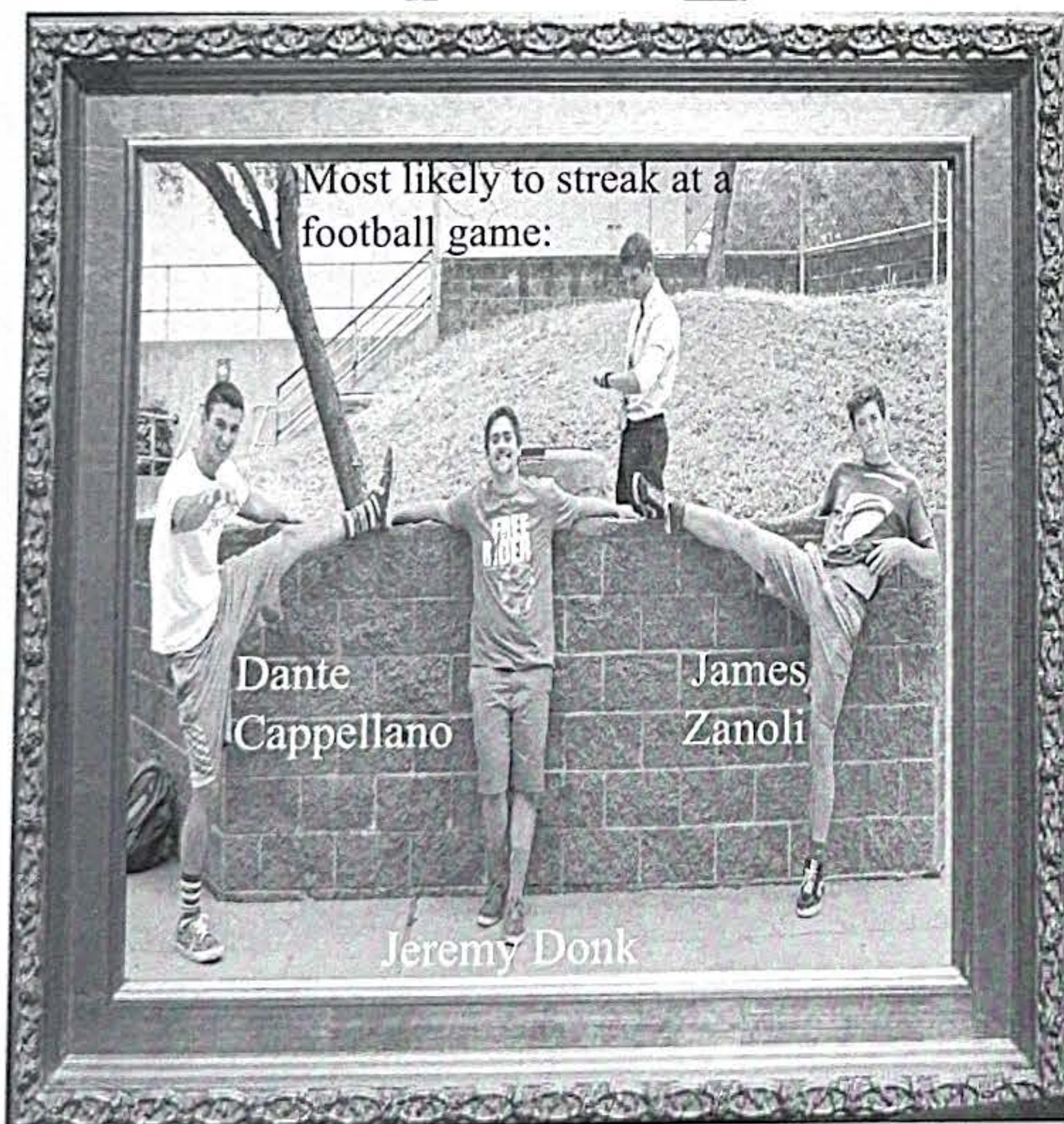
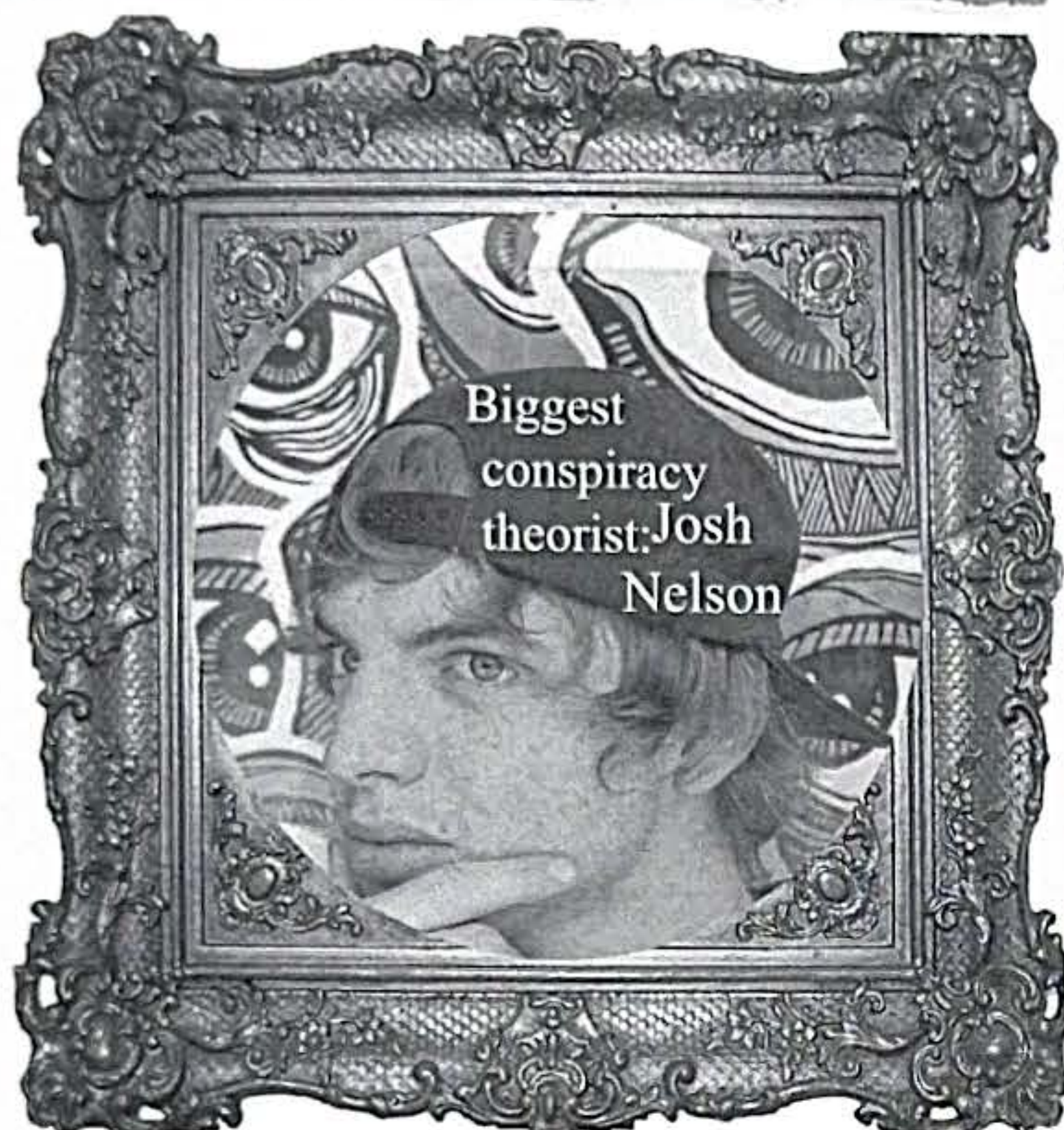
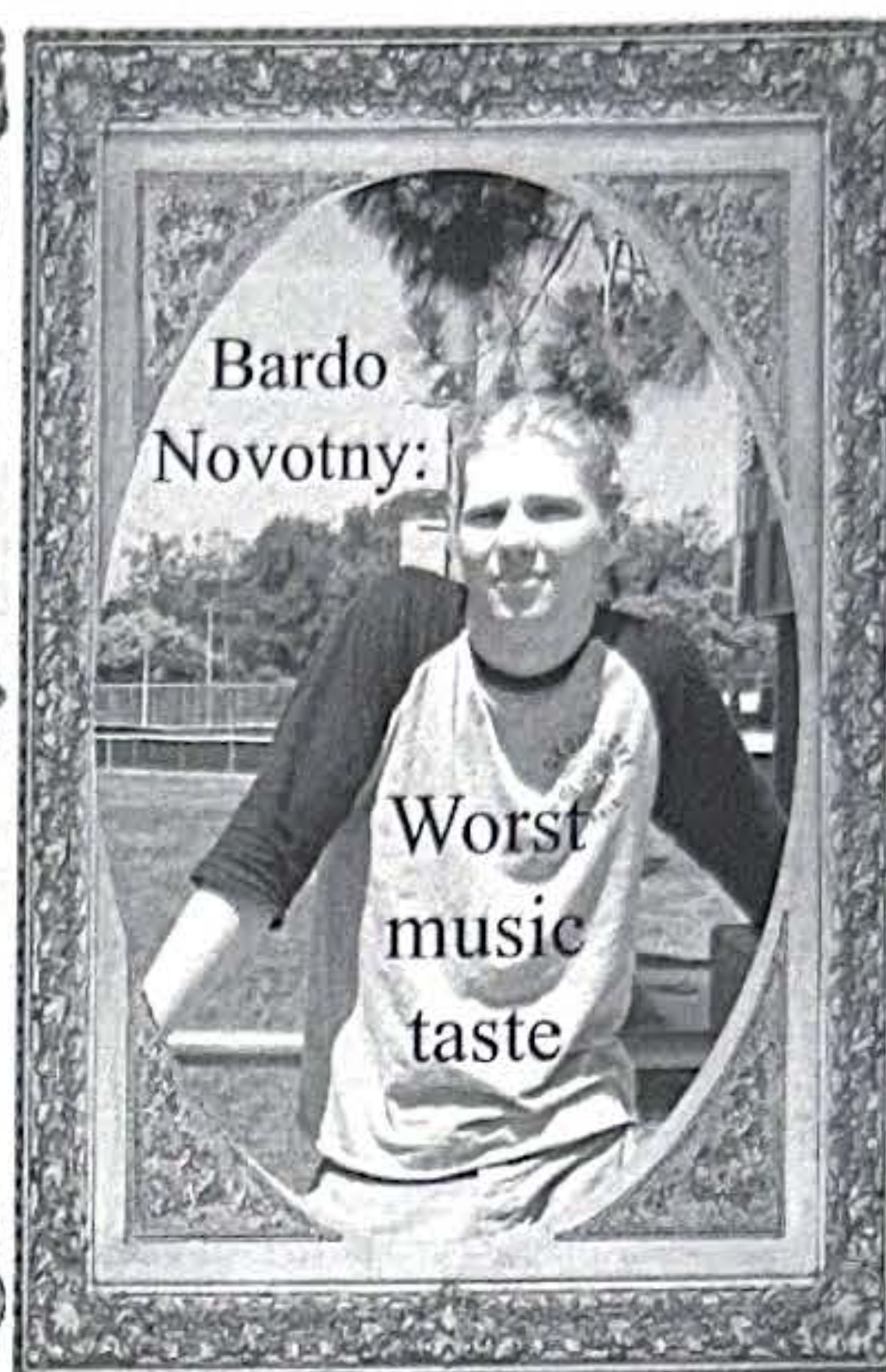
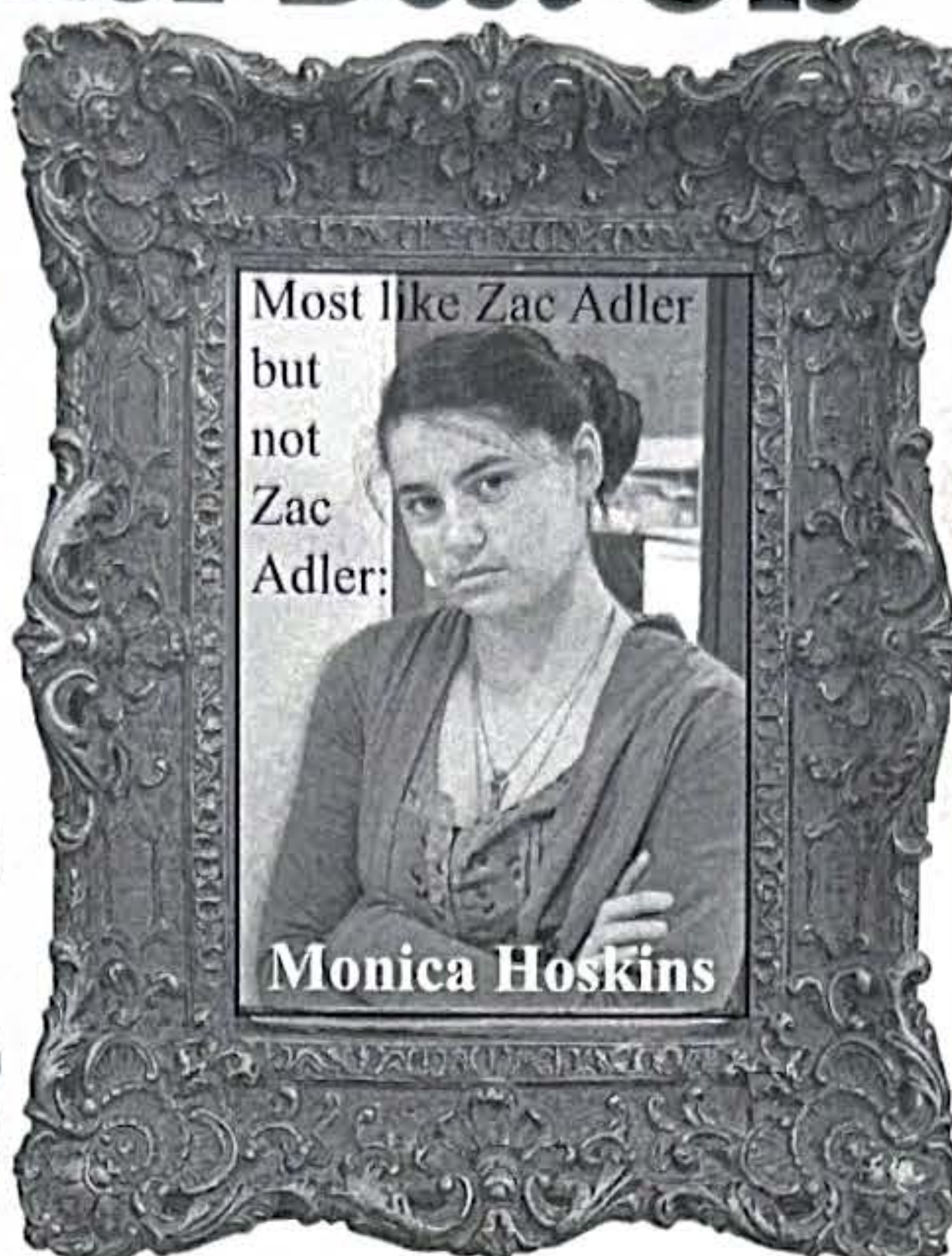
**Diaz:** To anyone who is not running leadership, but auditioning, the worst audition is the one that you don't show up for. Drama Club is an amazing opportunity that you have in high school and is one you might not get when you leave, so take advantage of it.

**Expressions:** What do you get out of Drama Club?

**Diaz:** I get a very safe space out of Drama Club, it is a place where you can be yourself, there is no defined structure. What I think is so cool is that there are many people involved, but it feels so small because you know everyone and know how to work with everyone.

**Bassler:** It allows us to have a lot of fun which I think, when you're in a high school environment, is beneficial because we focus our lives around grades and GPA scores. But when we all get together in Drama Club we tend to look past that and look at the more brilliant side of everything.







P

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Senior  
Advice



Don't try to be something you're not; try to find things that interest you and try finding yourself.  
-senior Rattil Chowdhury



Just have fun in High School; it seems to go by really fast. But not too much fun, because grades actually matter.  
-senior Haley Grant



Just keep pimping. Call me if you need tutoring. 805-704-9905.  
-senior Dario Delgado



Remember that high school isn't the be all end all; sure it matters, but it doesn't decide your life.  
-senior Maddie Whalen



Have fun, and allow yourself to do whatever you want, because high school isn't just about grades. It's about finding who you are.  
-senior Brandon Bassler



Be yourself. Have fun and work hard. Time goes by faster than you would think. Good luck!  
-senior Kylie Barron

## A mindful chat with Mila Dorji

Alex Hack  
People Editor

The class of 2015 is a notoriously academically minded group of students, and as such, the spots of valedictorian and salutatorian are extremely coveted. We sat down with future Yale attendee Mila Dorji to discuss some of life's more complicated topics. **Expressions:** What is your name? -

**Dorji:** "Mila Dorji. Solid first question."

**Expressions:** What is your quest?

**Dorji:** "To help people and travel the world."

**Expressions:** A Scottish mountain must be at least how many feet high to be called a Munro? (3000)

**Dorji:** "uh. I'm gonna say 750."

**Expressions:** You are shrunk to the height of a nickel and your mass is proportionally reduced so as to maintain your original density. You are then thrown into an empty glass blender. The blades will start moving in 60 seconds. What do you do?

**Dorji:** "Ya know the base of the blender? Like below where the blades are? I'd just hug that thing and hold on until it stopped spinning."

**Expressions:** Who is the current Prime Minister of England? (David Cameron)

**Dorji:** "Is it still Cameron?"

**Expressions:** What is the official language of Nigeria? (English)

**Dorji:** "Uhm, I'm gonna say Nigerian.

No wait! I change my answer to English."

**Expressions:** What is the correct title for a group of albatross? (Rookery)

**Dorji:** I'll assume it's not a flock, so I'm going to say a berth.

**Expressions:** Why do they cotton swab the guy's arm with rubbing alcohol before a lethal injection?

**Dorji:** "Well this is America, the dude still has rights till he's dead, right?"

**Expressions:** If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?

**Dorji:** "Succeed, obviously."

**Expressions:** What is the air-speed velocity of an unladen swallow?

**Dorji:** "Well that depends, is it a European swallow? Or African?"



## Senior Staff Farewell

Izzy Kramer  
Opinion Editor

Throughout our lives, we are inundated with ideas about what high school will be like. From movies to books, we have a specific, contrived concept of those famous four years. However, it is safe to say that, as seniors, nearly all of us can view the media depictions of high school with a grain of salt, knowing that our experiences hold the truth.

Now comes the time for us to bid farewell to the place where we have learned and evolved for our formative years. While all of our futures hold great things, it is still with a twinge that we finally graduate, both from this school and this time in our lives.

As I reflect on my time at San Luis Obispo High School, I often wish I could be a fly on the wall during certain moments of the past four years. Ironically, these moments are not even particularly crucial, for the seminal events are etched into my memory- for better or for worse. Instead, I would like to revisit the mundane: struggling through yet another chapter of "Great Expectations", attempting to decipher a Spanish worksheet, frantically writing an AP U.S. History report. It is not that these times were particularly exciting, but that for the last few years, they were my life.

Often, people my age complain that their time was "wasted" in school. While there are many things about high school I will not miss (some of the more judgmental attitudes, running the mile, etc..), I am grateful for the time I spent here.

Everything, from the coursework to the social interactions, shaped me in some way. Because of high school, I have met people who I want to remain friends with for the rest of my life. Because of high school, I was exposed to subjects I adore, and plan to pursue in my future academic career. Also because of high school, I learned how to deal with difficult people, and how to pretend I understand Calculus, although I probably never will.

In many ways, the clichés are accurate- spending time in a place links you to it intrinsically, making it almost impossible to forget. While I didn't have the classic high school experience (who among us did?), I love high school for what it represents: a time in my life where I was figuring out crucial truths about myself, making decisions that would directly affect my future, and meeting some of my favorite people in the world.

Although I enjoyed it, I must admit that I am glad it is over, if only because the future is so enticing.

## Oh, The Places You'll Go

Expressions asked San Luis Obispo High School's staff to choose what song they would dedicate to the graduating senior class. The following is a farewell playlist from SLOHS to the class of 2015...

1) "More than words" by Extreme - The Lunch ladies

2) "Where do the children play?" by Cat Stevens - Mrs. Delkeskamp

3) "Free" by Rudimental ft. Emeli Sande - Mr. Rose

4) "There's a Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow" by Disney - Mrs. Nusbaum

5) "Like a Rolling Stone" by Bob Dylan - Mr. Weinschenk

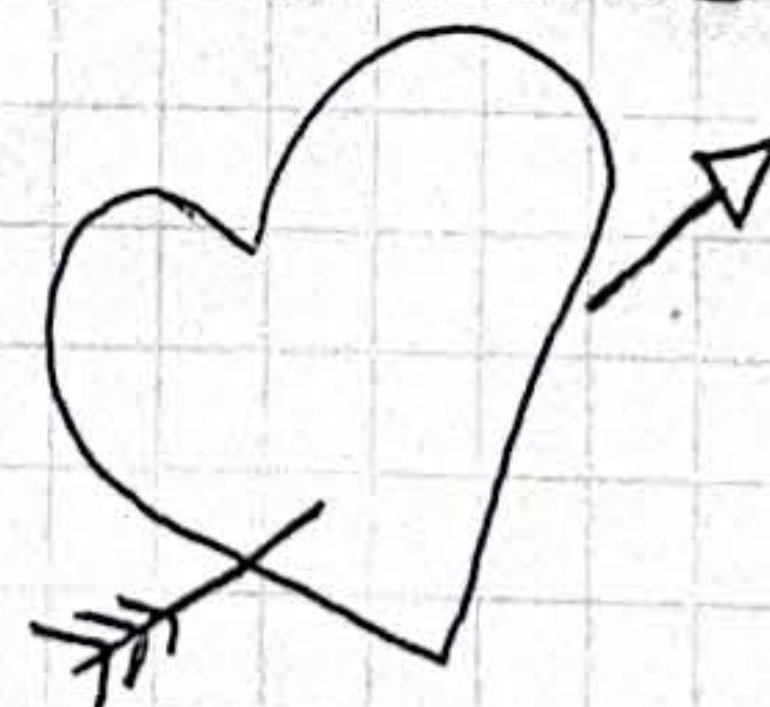
6) "You can't Always Get What You Want" by The Rolling Stones - Mrs. Avery

7) "Rather Be [All About SheRemix]" by Clean Bandit ft. Jess Glynne - Ms. Nichols

8) "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash - The Deans

9) "Beautiful Day" by U2 - Mr. Franklin

10) "We are Never Ever Getting Back Together" by Taylor Swift - Mr. Nairne





# 15 THINGS TO DO BEFORE LEAVING SLO

Mia Rolph  
Back Editor

For many seniors, the clock is running down before they will be leaving San Luis

Obispo and moving on to bigger and better things. Here is a list of things to do before the big move, to help the seniors who are leaving make their last months on the Central Coast memorable and fun.

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1. See a movie at the Fremont Theatre.
- 

2. Attend waffle night at Linnaea's Cafe.
- 

3. Camp in Big Sur.
- 

4. See a double feature at the Sunset Drive-In.
- 

5. Go to a concert at SLO Brew.
- 

6. Walk or bike the Bob Jones trail.
- 

7. Have a bonfire at Port San Luis.
- 

8. Kayak in Morro Bay.
- 

9. Hike the peaks.
- 

10. Day trip with friends in Montana de Oro.
- 

11. Swing Dance at the Madonna Inn on a Monday night.
- 

12. Find out the life story of the Sunshine Donuts guy at 3 a.m.
- 

13. Have a conversation with a homeless person.
- 

14. Get a donut at SLO Donut Co.
- 

15. Shop at the Swap Meet.