

SLOHS EXPRESSIONS

JANUARY 2025 | ADDICTION FEATURE | SAN LUIS OBISPO HIGH SCHOOL | 1499 SAN LUIS DRIVE | SLO, CA 93401



Energy drink companies, such as the ones above, hide the skyrocketing amounts of caffeine and sugar in colorful packaging to draw in the attention of teenagers. Photo collage courtesy of freshman Mallory Cushing.

SLOHS Students are Running on Pure Caffeine

HEALTH & SPORTS EDITOR MALLORY CUSHING

The fruity, caffeinated drinks that San Luis Obispo High School students consume on a daily basis aren't as fun and harmless as their packaging suggests.

Seeing students sipping on a Red Bull, Celsius, or Alani energy drink while walking through campus is just another part of life as a teenager. More often than not, students find themselves needing an extra boost just to get through the day.

"I believe daily energy drinks are terrible for the teenage body and brain. Anytime I pick up on a student, who I notice is drinking them regularly, I usually pull them aside and talk to them about the long-term effects that they can have mentally, emotionally and physically. I definitely do not think they need them. What they need is more sleep!" said health teacher and Varsity Girls Basketball coach Dan Monroe.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, children between the

ages of twelve and eighteen should not consume more than one-hundred milligrams of caffeine per day and should avoid energy drinks entirely.

Well, most popular energy drink choices for kids contain up to two-hundred milligrams of caffeine, which is double the recommended amount for children younger than eighteen.

"I have tried to remind my athletes that there are many other healthy ways to energize your body to physically prepare for athletic competition other than drinking caffeine," said Monroe.

Many professional athletes advertise the usage of energy drinks before games. This leaves kids with the impressions that if they chug a two-hundred milligram energy drink before their game that they will perform like their idols.

However the exact opposite is true. Many nutritionists, doctors, and performance trainers around the world promote the usage of sports drinks and electrolytes before games instead of caffeinated energy drinks.

"My favorite energy drink is probably Celsius. I usually need an extra boost after my third

IN THIS ISSUE:

PEOPLE & CULTURE (2 & 3)

- Adopt Don't Shop: Local Shelter Scene
- Bow Ties, Top Hats, Trenchcoats, Oh My!
- SLOHS Staff With Weird and Bizzare Past Jobs
- Do Military Families Shape Student Lives?
- What's Up With All the Short-Term Clubs?

OPINION (4 & 5)

- Why Aren't People Creative With Their Outfits?
- How Much Military Pride Does SLOHS Have?
- How Do SLOHS Students Get to School?
- What Trump Will Do About LGBTQ+ Rights?

FEATURE (6 & 7)

- Mobile Video Games Dominate Student's Screen Time
- Weeding Out the Bad Stuff: Awareness on Delta 8
- The Media Needs to Stop Glamorizing Substance Abuse
- Young Addicts: Students Are Hooked
- Online Gambling Poses a Threat to Adolescents

HEALTH & SPORTS (8 & 9)

- SLOHS' Student Run Underground Basketball League
- Red 40: Is It Legalized Food Poison?
- Are We Seeing a Decline of Skill in SLOHS Sports?
- Does Meditating for Ten Minutes Daily Help or Hinder?
- An Inside Scoop on SLOHS' Water Quality
- Extracurriculars Outside of School: Pain or Gain?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT (10 & 11)

- The 2025 Grammys: SLOHS Edition
- "Spark The Electric Jester" is a Game Gem
- What Are Students' Thoughts on "A Minecraft Movie"?
- Who's Doing Better Disney or Dreamworks?
- SLOHS Fashion Trend Predictions for 2025

BACK PAGE (12)

- Dear Lucia: The Freshman Get Important Help
- Warm Up With This Seasonal Hot Chocolate Recipe

Editors

People & Culture

Roslyn Risner

Opinion

Joey Bernardo

Feature

Violet Burrus

Health & Sports

Mallory Cushing

Arts & Entertainment

Cadence Flickinger

Back Page & Web

Aidan Field

Reporters

Peyton Bonn

Leah Davis

Mariann Doring

Alex Durrant

Megan Elzer

Janette Flores Martinez

Amy Funk

Charles Gillmore

Samantha Gomez

Xavier Lara

Maddox Lee

Oliver Lyons

Lucia McCarthy-Zirion

Emerson Oetman

Vaughn Otto

Chase Philips

Sloan Retsek

Ava Rhodes

Anika Richard

Leo Ruiz

Julien Sheetz

Hunter Temple

Irelynn Zurbach

Advisor Scott Nairne

snairne@slcUSD.org

period English class because my English teacher drains me, so I go off campus for lunch to grab one," said sophomore Sofia Navarro.

Energy drinks contain large amounts of caffeine and sugar, along with other energy composers such as guarana, ephedrine, and ginseng.

When students consume large doses quickly, the stimulants rush into their bloodstream, giving the consumer a caffeine jolt and raising their blood sugar and blood pressure levels, leading their heart to irregular heart palpitations.

"I normally need an energy drink when I wake up because I'm tired and I don't really get enough sleep. I also need a boost on dance competition days because I need to be ready to go," said freshman Sam Pearson.

Is it okay to indulge in an energy drink every once in a while? Yes, but the long term effects of too much caffeine on a daily basis, has a profoundly negative effect on a teenagers body.

Sources: health.ucdavis.edu, wsspaper.com, hopkinsmedicine.org

Adopt Don't Shop: The Shelter Scene in SLO

REPORTER ANIKA RICHARD

Shelters have been a refuge and rehab to stray animals for many years, taking them in and caring for them until adoption. The shelter near San Luis Obispo High School is no different, boasting a huge variety of animals, from abandoned pets to homeless street dogs.

With their large selection of animals and welcoming staff, it's no wonder that so many people get their beloved pets from Woods Humane Society.

However how many actually get their pets from the shelter? How do people feel about the ethicality of dog mills and puppy breeders?

"All the dogs that come from the shelter are generally so kind and well trained and they're really well behaved, open to be taken care of. You get a dog from the shelter, not only are you saving a dog but you are supporting an animal shelter that's helping these [animals]," said freshman Irelynn Zurbach.

Rescuing an animal from a shelter is much more humane than from a puppy mill or forced breeding, which promotes these harmful practices and funds them to continue their work, and the ethicality of these places must be called into question.

"Puppy breeders inbreed their dogs, so the parents will definitely be related, and even could be brother and sister. They do this for

cosmetics, because it 'looks cute,'" said high school graduate Audrey Quick, who works with these animals every day at the vet clinic in Santa Barbara.

Shelter pets, on the other hand, could come into the shelter with a myriad of problems, because of their rougher circumstances.

"[Shelter animals] all have different backgrounds, so there is a behavioral difference between animals coming from breeders and shelter pets, they tend to be a lot more anxious," said Quick.

Even if students don't have the money for a pet and still desperately want a fluffy companion, the Woods Humane Society has a deal for everyone.

"Every Black Friday at Woods they do free adoptions," said senior Hailey Echano, who got two of her cats this way.

This deal is a wonderful one, promoting pet care and also making space for new pets to come in and receive care.

Shelters are an integral part of providing care for and cleaning up all the animals that society has shunned. This practice is invaluable to the health of societies as well, keeping our streets clean.

There is no reason people shouldn't adopt and bring home a fluffy companion, so get out there and rescue some animals!

Source: woodshumanesociety.org

Bow Ties, Top Hats, Trenchcoats, Oh My!



Jubilations! The Wicked Witch of Drab Clothing is Dead!
Photo courtesy of junior Lucia McCarthy-Zirion.

REPORTER LUCIA MCCARTHY-ZIRION

Fancy Friday is a campus-wide event focused on flaunting and embracing students' fancier side. Started in early 2024 by current junior Carlos Vargas, Fancy Friday is a weekly occurrence that any San Luis Obispo High School student wearing their finest or most outrageous clothes can partake in!

"[A good Fancy Friday outfit is] anything that's above and beyond what you'd normally wear to school," said junior Bob Meyers.

Students commonly see their peers sporting ties, hats, coats, or even three piece suits! Many students feel that this is a great way to have fun and relax after a long week, while getting out of the drab daily routine.

"[Fancy Friday] allows people to partake in breaking a harmless social norm without feeling ostracized," said Meyers.

However, it isn't all fun and games. Some students find that dressing up for Fancy Friday causes extra pressure and stress on their Friday mornings.

"It's actually a bit stressful for me at least, because it can take longer to get my outfit on if it's Friday," said junior Mateus Iscold.

Students are also worried about prices, noting that the cost of fancy clothes might make it difficult for SLOHS students to participate in Fancy Friday.

What started out as Vargas' approach to easily dress for the school's Jazz Band has spread to many students across campus carrying the tradition.

"I was a stage hand in the DOM Jazz Quintet, we used to play at this small coffee shop every Friday and I didn't wanna switch out to fancier clothes after school every Friday...I (allegedly) told my friends to also start wearing fancy clothes on Friday, and they continued the tradition. It also gave me an excuse to wear them a lot more," said Vargas.

Before students grow out of their finest apparel, Fancy Friday is an opportunity to celebrate their wacky charm and flaunt it to their friends.

KCBXfm
Central Coast Public Radio

npr

Local News
Great Music
Live & On-Demand

Listen 24/7

▶ **KCBX.ORG**

San Luis Obispo.....90.1 FM

kcbx1m

Follow us on social local music & ticket giveaways

Vinyl · CDs · DVDs · Books · Apparel · Turntables & More
978 Monterey Street, SLO
805-541-0657 · booboorecords.com

SLOHS Staff With Weird and Bizarre Past Jobs

REPORTER CHASE PHILIPS

On the first day of every trimester at San Luis Obispo High School, the majority of teachers present a slideshow as an introduction to their class in order to get to know them a little better.

With that said, after those first few days, students at SLOHS never get to learn more about them as a person because students need to be more focused on the subject of the class. Many teachers all over SLOHS have had a wild life before becoming a teacher and some have had jobs many students might've never expected.

"[I was the] vice-president of the First Bank of San Luis Obispo. I was the marketing vice-president. I actually didn't like sitting behind a desk all day. Banking wasn't my passion because I had the financial needs of people's lives in my hands, it was hard for me emotionally. My daughters were really little...three months and three years. I wanted a job that would give me more time with them as a single mom so I went back to teaching!" said English teacher Lynnly Sainsbury.

Isn't that surprising? From the vice-president of a bank to becoming an English teacher at SLOHS, Sainsbury must have a lot of interesting stories to tell.

"I was a gymnast growing up & when I was going to school getting my teaching credential, I had started training in aerial arts. I met some people who worked as acrobats in the Disneyland parades. So a month or two later I auditioned and got the job. I worked there for about three years in the Parade of Dreams in Disneyland in the 'Lion King,' unit and the Pixar Parade in California Adventure in the 'Toy Story,' 'Bug's Life,' and 'Ratatouille' units. It was fun to dress up in costume and get paid to work out and stay healthy. I actually kept working for Disney my first two years teaching in Orange County at Costa Mesa High School, but I had to quit when I took the job up here at SLOHS. It was a fun job, but not something I would want to do long term," said art teacher Amanda Bockelman.

Who knew that SLOHS' own art teacher had such a history as an acrobat for Disneyland? It must make one think what other jobs other teachers might've had.



English teacher Lynnly Sainsbury (left); Art teacher Amanda Bockelman (center); Social Science teacher Josiah Cameron (right). Collage courtesy of senior Chase Philips.

"I started an online tutoring business with a teaching colleague because we were young, had a lot of energy, and wanted to try to make more money doing something we knew pretty well: teaching. Our business failed for myriad reasons; some were in my control and others weren't. Ultimately, it was worth it for the life experience and the sheer amount of skills I learned. It has helped me be more successful in other business ventures. I am currently, and will always be, a teacher. Though I mostly teach world history, I am also passionate about teaching financial literacy, which is something I did at my last school. Ultimately, teaching brings me joy and, more importantly, purpose, so even if I try to start another business sometime in the future, it will be very difficult to leave teaching," said social science teacher Josiah Cameron.

Though these are just three teachers with stories of their past we might've never known about, who knows what other teachers have to share and what life lessons and experiences they've gained to better themselves.

Do Military Families Shape Student Lives?



Cal Poly on campus training with cadets in a classroom lecture. Photo courtesy of Cal Poly Army ROTC, the Department of Military Science and Leadership.

REPORTER MEGAN ELZER

Students at San Luis Obispo High School with military parents have a legacy that differentiates them from other students. This is not at all a bad thing, as being attached to the United States armed forces in this way could give students access to a personal connection and unique opportunities.

"The Military is important because it's defending the country from outside threats," said freshman Charlie Gillmore, who has a family ancestry of military occupation.

The United States Armed Forces comprises the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

Each of the military services is assigned a role and domain. For example, the Army conducts land operations, and the Navy and Marine Corps conduct maritime operations, with the Marine Corps specializing in amphibious and maritime operations supporting the Navy.

"My Dad was a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps and due to this, my father developed a strong level of determination, high work ethic, and an appreciation for physical fitness, which in turn passed onto me and my family," said sophomore Ella Staniec.

The Air and Space Forces conduct their respective operations, and the Coast Guard is unique in that it specializes in maritime operations and as a law enforcement agency.

"The armed services are often attractive to students who don't want to go to college, are looking for belonging, who want to see the world, and have the sense that they're a part of a family, as the military becomes their family," said SLOHS's College and Career specialist Colleen Martin.

There are a lot of opportunities for students at SLOHS for students in the armed services, whether in the Marine Corps or the Army.

Source: *College and Career Center*

What's Up With All The Short-Term Clubs?

REPORTER ALEXANDER DURRANT

Student organizations are perhaps the best picture of a unique school spirit. A place to meet new people, and develop interests/resumes; clubs at San Luis Obispo High school allow like-minded individuals to meet and develop a community outside of academics.

Yet despite this, student organizations have difficulty lasting for more than a year before fading from class consciousness.

In order to make sure this doesn't happen to a club, here are a few important things clubs-leaders should do to ensure their club's success.

One of the major issues clubs face is participation. After Club Rush, student organizations typically experience a massive surge in membership, only to bleed members for the rest of the year. This problem is often due to a loss of interest or being overwhelmed by the high expectations in clubs like mock trial and Harvard Model Congress. To prevent this, some clubs throw an endless string of pizza parties to entice its members. As sustainable as this is, there are better ways to grow a club.

"I think that you have to start off strong with a plan, it's better to be clear right off the bat what the commitment is, but also make it understandable that, that commitment is very easy to meet and that the teams are put in place to help support you," said senior Wesley Bartlett: president of the National Honor Society, Speech and Debate and Creative Writing club.

The problem with club participation is also being addressed by ASB's "Club Rush 2", which took place on January 15. The opportunity to advertise their clubs for a second time allows student organizations to replenish their losses over the first four months of the school year.

"Club Rush 2 will give kids a chance to connect with club opportunities on campus, and give the newer clubs a chance to be seen," said Club Commissioner Jaz Rojas.

Student participation is a basic club necessity, and opportunities to advertise are incredibly important ways to make sure the right people find clubs that match their interests.

Clubs also face the issue of balancing work between leadership positions. Some organizations make the mistake of placing the entirety of a club's administration on a single student.

"So I think it's really good to work as a team and to have it sort of staggered with like the president, obviously will have the most responsibility, and the vice president after that," said Bartlett.

While being president is a major responsibility, the ability to delegate to others is a vital part of club sustainability.

For clubs to remain after their founder's graduation, it is necessary to avoid "shell" clubs. In order to improve their chances of getting into college, some students create clubs with fancy names without putting much effort into organizing.

As college apps become competitive these "shell clubs" are a useful asset for appearing as an attractive candidate; but often lack the commitment or organization necessary to be called a real club.

Finally, It's important to remember that clubs are supposed to be fun (allegedly). While every meeting may not be a pizza party, making clubs inviting is key to an enjoyable school experience.

What is the Right Way to Get to School?



Busses are a common means of transportation for many SLOHS students. Photo courtesy of reporter Megan Eltzer.

REPORTER MEGAN ELTZER

San Luis Obispo students need to get to school somehow. However, there are many different ways students can travel, from biking to driving and taking the bus to even walking, there are many ways that students can travel to SLOHS from various distances.

"The bus does take a while and we gotta wait a bit, but I don't mind, as the bus brings me to school," said freshman Toby Bell.

While the bus is better for the environment than cars, as it's basically a massive carpool, and can decrease pollution output.

However, it's proven that walking and biking instead of driving or taking a bus helps decrease the amount of pollution being pumped into the atmosphere. It's also a proven way to be physically active, by giving you a purpose by keeping active and positive.

"I get to SLOHS by bike each morning. I have an electric cargo bike that allows me to take my kids on the rear bench seat. I drop them off at Hawthorne Elementary School and then I continue to SLOHS. It's super fun and I enjoy the exercise!" said math teacher Kevin Woodward.

Walking, of course, is the traditional way to get to school, and many students do it to get to SLOHS.

"Walking takes a decent amount of time, but I feel like it's a good wakeup to just get out there, and considering it's very cold right now, it definitely wakes me up." said senior Anika Richard.

Ultimately, the best way to travel to SLOHS depends on the situation. It's advised if you live far enough, to drive or take the bus. If you live close enough, you can afford to walk or even bike to school, getting exercise in the morning. It doesn't matter in the end which is preferred or best way to get to school in the morning, all that matters is if you get there.

Source: edf.org

What Trump Will Do About LGBTQ+ Rights?



Members of the LGBTQ+ express themselves in various ways. Photo collage courtesy of sophomore Peyton Bonn.

REPORTER PEYTON BONN

San Luis Obispo High School LGBTQ+ students are currently fearing for what their life is going to be like for the next four years with Donald Trump becoming president and his plans for Project 2025. As an example, Trump wants to start banning transgender women from playing in women's sports.

With Trump as president, he is planning on doing a removal of anti-discrimination policies, proactively requiring discrimination by the federal government, and weaponizes federal law against transgender people across the country.

He also states to erase federal nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people, which means that he will strip LGBTQ+ people of nondiscrimination guarantees across a vast swath of federal government programs including social security, medicare, and housing programs.

Expressions: What is your opinion about Trump and his idea on LGBTQ+ rights?

Senior Oliver Lyons: I think he hates us, honestly. I'm sure he'll enact this hatred in any

way he can through law and speech.

Senior Anika Richard: I think things will get worse before they get better, I'm not sure exactly what the policy is on gay rights so I can't accurately determine, but going off an educated guess it's probably going to be bad.

Sophomore Spencer Gonzales: I think it honestly goes against what we stand for because it states in multiple articles that he doesn't want transgender and LGBTQ+ citizens in the country. I think he is trying to make us evolve backwards. It sends people back when we had to fight for our rights once again.

Expressions: Are you afraid about what's going to happen to gay people rights?

Lyons: Yes. Dear god, yes. I'm terrified. I am worried that my existence will be worth less than it already is. I'm scared for my life.

Richard: I'm worried, I think things are gonna regress a bit and once these next four years pass, there will be a lot to clean up from this.

Gonzales: Yes I am, I'm scared that one day when I have a family that my kids will grow up in a world of hate and fear of being judged and that I'll struggle to help out if they refuse to

employ or house and my family who would be a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Expressions: Should same sex marriage be banned or not?

Lyons: Absolutely not. So many people fought for so long to get to the point we're at now, losing that would be awful. I don't know what I'd do.

Richard: Aw hell no, our history has been erased time and again and same sex marriage is a huge win in a fight we shouldn't even be fighting. It should be a given to be able to love who you want.

Gonzales: Same sex marriage should be legal because love and equality are basic rights. Banning it is discrimination, plain and simple.

From doing interviews and researching about what is going to happen to LGBTQ rights, students believe that we are evolving backwards.

Many think LGBTQ+ people are not going to be safe with Trump as the president for the next four years with Project 2025 in mind.

Source: aclu.org

How Much Military Pride Does SLOHS Have?



A photo of recent graduates from Grizzly Academy. Photo courtesy of the Grizzly Academy website mission statement.

REPORTER ANIKA RICHARD

Military pride, something ingrained in the history of America, is very prevalent here at San Luis Obispo High. With our military center located in SLO, Camp San Luis Obispo, and Grizzly Academy that promotes the joining of the national guard, it's safe to say that this town supports and advocates for military ideology.

But what do students and teachers at SLOHS think about the military? Is it as glorified as some claim, or just as prevalent within the student body?

Most people believe that the military is what keeps us safe and protects our borders, but with all the time, effort, and resources devoted to funding, maybe its time to take a step back from the intensity.

That funding could be going anywhere, and as

we are in times of peace (at least within our country) it could be used to improve infrastructure, help raise people above the poverty line, and much much more.

"We have like thousands of nuclear bombs, I feel like that is enough to scare anybody off from attacking because, like, we don't need more," said senior Hunter Temple.

Why then, do we invest so much money into training actual troops who can lose their lives or be permanently scarred to fight wars? The system does not make any sense in this day and age.

"On the other hand, due to all the current conflict happening around the world, it is essential for us to have a military in order to defend ourselves" said high school graduate Audrey Quick.

This is absolutely true as well. Our world is a very violent one, and people need to feel and be

safe.

The push for going to the military is very intense at SLOHS, with recruiters showing up every year to sign people off for going away to the military.

"They come and set up their booths and try to recruit people and we do pushups and stuff, it's weird," said Temple.

It is very much encouraged, should you want to take part in this fitness challenge, that you should consider joining the military, and while you aren't pushed into anything, they definitely promote military pride.

Everyone has differing opinions on military involvement and installation, and it has become a polarizing topic within communities.

Source: grizzlyyouthacademy.org

Why Aren't People Creative With Their Outfits?

REPORTER IRELYNN ZURBACH

Where do people fit? A question asked by San Luis Obispo High School students for millennia. Are they preppy, alternative, goth, light or dark academia, scene, grunge, emo, basic, or are they one of the many 'cores'? These are popular styles, a form of expression.

Yet, personal style is supposed to be what people make it, people shouldn't copy others, but take inspiration to make a style of their own.

But do people choose what they wear based on others' opinions?

"Yes, one hundred percent. I was like that for a while but then I was like 'screw that, that's so lame'. Wear what you want, wear what makes you happy. What you wear shouldn't dictate how someone likes you," said senior Jenna Cross.

Personal style is an extension of someone's personality, a piece of their soul, the essence of who they are. Translated through their clothing. Someone can't wake up in the morning, put together the same cookie cutter outfit and say that's their personal style. That's someone else's style copied over thousands of times.

Some claim that wearing a uniform outfit reduces everyday stress,

one less decision to make in the morning. But, it makes it difficult to find people of similar style if everyone wears the same clothes.

How do people find their style then?

The truth is it's not an exact formula, it's how someone or their friends would describe themselves. If they are described as caring, they could show that through the bright colors they wear or lively makeup they apply. If they have punk or rivaling political stances, they can wear dark clothing, pins or any kind of heavy makeup if they want.

Yet, style is all narrowed down to the person who is wearing the clothes.

Just because someone acts or looks a certain way doesn't dictate what they wear. Style is narrowed down to their own creativity, so they should be creative in the outfits that they chose.

The people who talk down to others about the style that they choose are people who don't style their clothes creatively in the first place, so people should wear whatever they want.

Sources: linkedin.com, nytimes.com

Disclaimer: Official Student Publications

"The San Luis Obispo Coastal Unified School District is committed to upholding the rights of each student to free expression, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, Article I of the California Constitution and the California Education Code. Consistent with California Education Code section 48907, students will publish only legally protected speech, which does not include obscene, libelous or slanderous material, or unwarranted invasions of privacy. Students will also refrain from publishing material which so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of commission of unlawful acts on school premises or the violation of lawful school regulations, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school. The views, opinion, and content expressed herein are those of the student author(s). Therefore, the content may not necessarily reflect the official policies, opinions, or positions of the San Luis Coastal Unified School District, its schools, administration, faculty, staff or the Board of Education."

Mobile Games Dominate Student's Screen Time



Students frequently abandon class work for mobile games like “Brawl Stars”. Photo courtesy of junior Violet Burrus.

BACK PAGE & WEB EDITOR AIDAN FIELD

It's no secret that San Luis Obispo High School students love video games, and when they're on their phones, they're more accessible than ever. Students pull out their devices at any available moment, laser focused on playing games like “Clash Royale”, “Brawl Stars”, and many more.

“I could spend a few hours, probably up to three on a weekend, but on a normal day probably like half an hour to an hour,” said freshman Leslie Koenig.

Koenig's go-to game is “Clash Royale”, a game by the company Supercell. According to an *Expressions* poll, thirty percent of students play games from Supercell, which offers a multitude of free multiplayer games.

Teachers, classmates, and self-aware students might say that they're addicted. Addiction is a scary concept, but should it be assigned to mobile games just because students play them a lot?

Estimates of people addicted to video games from professional studies range from 1.7 to 10 percent of the general population, largely due to the fact that nobody can agree on what “video game addiction” even means.

At SLOHS, twenty-two percent of students who play mobile video games believe that they're addicted.

Addiction is usually classified as the uncontrolled use of a substance or participation in an activity despite its negative consequences. Applying this to video games, this would mean when people play video games to a point where they can't stop playing, thus making their habit negatively affect the rest of their lives.

Even with this definition, it's difficult to say whether this is actually happening with students playing these games on their phones. Additionally, it's hard to determine if students are addicted to these games, or simply addicted to their phones.

“I wouldn't say I was addicted to video games so much as the phone in general,” said an anonymous sophomore.

Usually, the usage of mobile games doesn't happen in the middle of an important lesson or activity, but rather it's students' free time that's spent.

Still, it may be odd to see hundreds of young people glued to their screens.

In some individuals' views, mobile video games make a dangerous, potentially addictive activity more accessible to students, harming their education and being an annoyance.

For others, mobile games are just a fun activity. They might fill the empty times in classes during passing periods. Times where students might have sat in silence waiting for a lesson

to start, instead are filled with students taking some time to unwind.

“I think the only way it could harm students is if they play games during class, but during passing or lunch it isn't as bad,” said sophomore Kai Liwanag.

Some may argue that time is much better spent academically. The time students spend on video games could be spent doing homework or other assignments.

For students, the point is that video games are fun. If students weren't playing mobile games, they would be doing something else for fun.

Out of all the things in the world that students might do to get away from stress, mobile video games are probably one of the least harmful options.

“It's just fun to play with friends and just progress,” said Koenig.

Like all things, mobile game addiction should be talked about on an individual basis. It's also important to consider the bigger picture; mobile games could just be a fun activity that helps students enjoy both themselves and school, but as with everything, anything good is only good in moderation.

Sources: *my.clevelandclinic.org*, *asam.org*, *SLOHS Expressions December Poll*

Weeding Out the Bad Stuff: Awareness on Delta 8



Delta-8 products are often packaged as colorful products, drawing teenagers in. Photo courtesy of whyy.org.

REPORTER EMERSON OETMAN

San Luis Obispo High School students should be aware about Delta-8 THC, which is becoming super popular amongst younger consumers. It's a chemical from hemp that's like Delta-9 THC (which is found in marijuana), but it's supposedly weaker. The problem? Some think companies are marketing it to teens.

When the 2018 Farm Bill got passed, allowing hemp to be grown and no longer viewing it as a controlled substance, the manufacturing of hemp-based products skyrocketed. Since then, Delta-8 gummies, vapes, and oils can be found almost anywhere. But the colorful packaging, fun names, and candy-like flavors seem designed to grab young people's attention, similar to the advertising on flavored vapes.

“I wouldn't consider myself an addict, no, it's simply for special occasions,” said an anonymous student.

The student defined these “special occasions” as “hangouts” and “grinding on Roblox”.

Companies have also taken to advertising on social media. Delta-8 products have been advertised on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, places notorious for teen activity and engagement. By making it seem fun, young and cool, companies are able to reel teenagers in who desperately want to belong in their communities.

But here's the catch: Delta-8 isn't totally safe.

It can make consumers dizzy, tired, or uncoordinated. The FDA even says people have had bad reactions, like throwing up or hallucinating, after using it. Plus, since it's not well-regulated, some products might be laced with questionable substances.

“I feel like a lot of substances are marketed to younger people because they're easily influenced,” said an anonymous SLOHS student, who has admittedly used products with THC, but doesn't consider themselves addicted to it.

Students should be careful about what they're consuming. Delta-8 products can be packaged to look like a simple gas station snack, like Dorito chips or Trolli gummies. The more knowledge gained about the product, the less likely teens are going to fall for the hype.

Sources: *ams.usda.gov*, *cdc.gov*

The Media Needs to Stop Glamorizing Addiction

REPORTER AVA RHODES

Beginning in late elementary school, San Luis Obispo High School students and millions of other teens are diligently educated on the dangers of substance abuse. They are shown X-rays of nicotine users' lungs, educated on the carcinogenic properties of alcohol, and even told of real-life experiences from people of various backgrounds and ages.

Given the importance of these lessons in motivating teens to keep themselves and their peers safe, the fact that the media sometimes presents a more positive version of real-life experiences with substance abuse is extremely harmful.

"I show a lot of real life images and videos, I also have very powerful guest presenters come in. One of which is a friend of mine who lost his son to a drug overdose. Talking about it is one thing, but when I can show my students real life pictures and have people come in and talk about real life experiences I think those can be the most powerful influencers," said health teacher Daniel Monroe.

In addition to the required freshman year health class, SLOHS also has a Wellness club that works to educate their peers and provide support.

"We usually do a lot of activities, so people are engaged, but also are able to learn about the things that to look out for, and also the ways to keep themselves and others safe," said junior and Wellness Club member Abby Wren.

The question then arises, why does the media and entertainment industry so often go against these lessons, portraying the use of substances as something cool and impressive that will elevate teens' appearance in the eyes of their peers?

Out of a poll conducted by *Expressions* of 228 SLOHS students, more than forty percent admitted that they believe substance use is often glamorized in the film and music industries, which aligns with studies conducted to learn how much teens are actually being exposed to.

According to American Addiction Centers, substance use is portrayed in nearly half of mu-

sic videos, contributing greatly to the nearly 85 drug references the average teenager is exposed to in a day through popular music. In addition to this statistic, less than a quarter of drinking scenes on television show any negative consequences.

"Media often portrays alcohol, tobacco and drug use as 'cool, fun, social, and enjoyable', but what they don't show are the harmful and negative consequences those substances have on the individual and people around them," said Monroe.

Media's representation of substance use as inconsequential at best is extremely dangerous given the amount of entertainment teens consume on a daily basis.

Given the influence celebrities and entertainers have on teens, the media should reconsider their representation of dangerous behaviors to align with the lessons teens are taught.

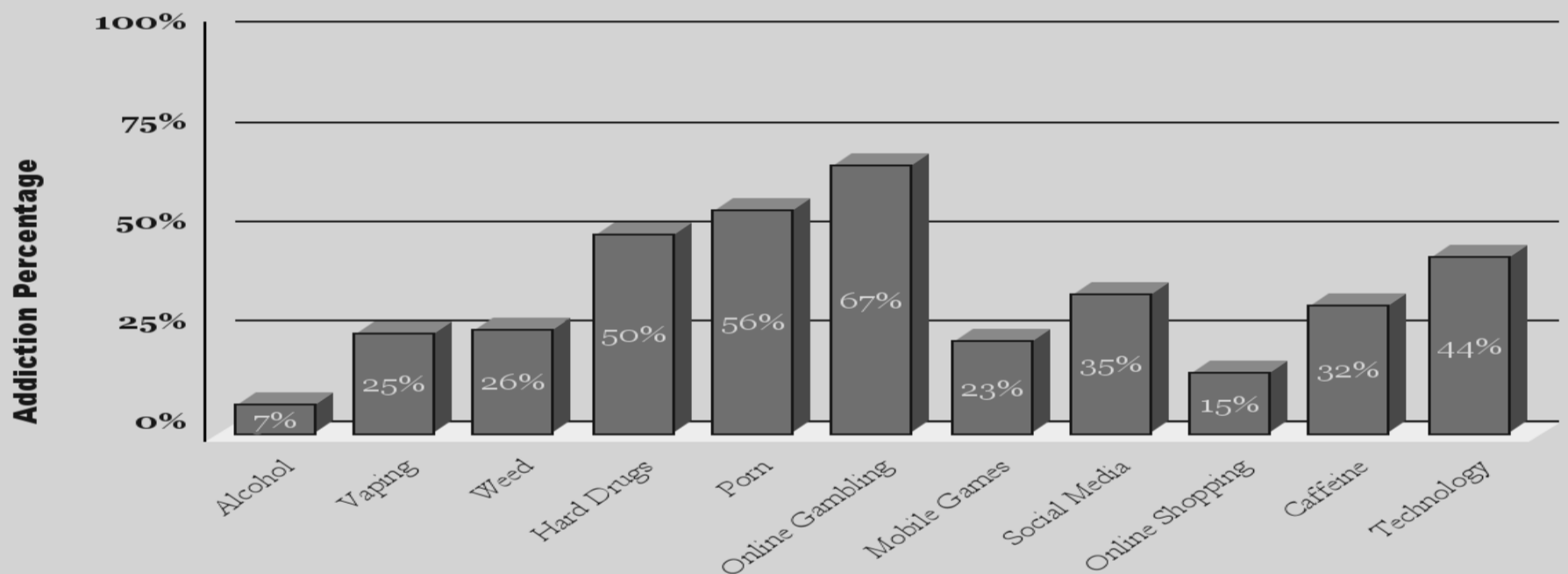
Sources: hopkinsmedicine.org, americanaddictioncenters.org, *SLOHS Expressions December Poll*

Young Addicts: SLOHS Students Are Hooked

FEATURE EDITOR VIOLET BURRUS

There are many addictive behaviors that San Luis Obispo High School students exhibit and many students also consume addictive substances, but how many students would recognize that they have an addiction? To understand how SLOHS is affected by addiction, *Expressions* sent out a poll to all students.

The graph below shows what addictive behaviors and substances were polled about, reflecting the percentage of students who'd consider themselves addicted to the behavior they engage in.



Online Gambling Poses a Threat to Adolescents

FEATURE EDITOR VIOLET BURRUS

With students at San Luis Obispo High School having greater access to the internet than ever before, addictions are being fueled, one of the most concerning being online gambling.

"[Online gambling] is just fun. [I do it because] it's a spontaneous waste of money and a waste of class time, that lets me avoid doing things," said an anonymous senior.

Based on a poll run by *Expressions*, two-thirds of the SLOHS students who engage in gambling would consider themselves addicted to it. Gambling is a process addiction, meaning that it will affect one's brain similarly to a substance addiction, creating irresistible urges to continue engaging in this behavior despite how dangerous it can be.

"A key feature of adolescence is thrill seeking and risky behavior. Adolescents' brains are not developed enough to make rational decisions consistently when up against an intermittent positive reward system," said psychology teacher Chad Timm.

Teenagers spent a lot of time on social media, being exposed to over an estimated ten thousand advertisements a day across various platforms. Some of these advertisements are mature and only promoted to 18+ accounts, however around a third of adolescents engage in "age-gating", lying about their age in order to access this content.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and most notably the streaming site Kick, are responsible for promoting online gambling and betting to young audiences, showing teenagers the easy accessibility of gambling while teaching them how to bet 'intelligently'.

Influencer's promotions as well as the allure of quick money and the glorified portrayals in media have led to the rise in adolescent gambling.

"Online gambling is easier to access. You can just put your credit card

information in and then play an infinite amount of times right from your house or your bed," said the anonymous senior.

Streaming sites like Twitch and Kick have come under fire in the past for promoting gambling to minors, being responsible for the majority of crypto gambling and online slots promotion. In 2022, Twitch banned recreational gambling streams, requiring formal gambling regulation licenses for streamers and implementing age verification systems to protect users.

"In California the sites have age restrictions, but using VPNs allow you to bypass any age restrictions there are by claiming you're in a different country. I think I said my location was in Sweden, and it didn't even ask my age" said the anonymous senior.

Kick on the other hand has been more lax with regulations than Twitch, promoting many different types of gambling and having weaker age verification systems. However, starting on February 1, Kick "will no longer allow streams of gambling sites that do not use ID verification to ensure users are at least eighteen years old".

While teenagers will continue to find ways around these systems, ID verification is a step in the right direction to prevent adolescents from engaging in this behavior.

Regardless of the restrictions put in place for minors, with the advancements in technology and increasing understanding of the internet, there will continue to be ways to bypass measures put in place.

Gambling may be a fun source of entertainment in moderation, but it can quickly become problematic both the more one engages in it and the more rewards one expects from it.

Sources: theguardian.com, gamblingcommission.gov.uk, ymcaofniagara.org, gamingtoday.com, evolvreatment.com, ihpi.umich.edu

Does Meditating for Ten Minutes Daily Help or Hinder?

REPORTER SAMANTHA GOMEZ

Meditating at least ten minutes a day can be a new mental health tool for San Luis Obispo High school students.

Every individual living in 2025 knows that their mental health is extremely important. Mental health can impact high school students preparing for their future and staff trying to support everyone, creating a heavy toll all around.

Studies show that two weeks of ten minutes of guided meditation reduces stress by fourteen percent and decrease the quickness to get angry or annoyed.

It has also been proven through studies and images of the brain, that neural pathways responsible for concentration and attention are improved after ten minutes of meditation.

"I would say meditating grounds me and in this sense I probably am then able to focus more," said librarian Nikole Dowler.

Meditation, if done correctly or consistently can improve how one person, as Dowler said, 'ground' oneself in a state of mental well-being or a good way to organize thoughts.

After doing meditation daily it can reduce anxiety, depression, pain and improve memory, attention, and sleep.

While many do not have the time or place for just sitting with one's thoughts in a healthy way, some classes have put in a slight option for a couple of minutes for meditation.

Such as before a test, before class starts, or for the psycho-

logy class elective. For example psychology teacher Chad Timm meditates daily.

"I meditate in psychology class and the teacher leads us through for five minutes each day," said senior Corrine Sears.

The five to ten minute meditation placed by psychology electives can sometimes allow some students and staff to know where to start in their meditation journey.

The use of meditation has also different effects on an individual based on if they meditate by themselves, with a class or a combination of both.

"Meditating helps to recognize the white noise in your head, and with acceptance over your thoughts that you slowly let go like a cloud going by," said sophomore Mariann Döring.

For others meditation not only helps remove the jumbled chaos in their head but can serve for other purposes too. It can range from the way one thinks, feels, or their ability to focus.

"I think it helps me remove any negative thoughts or my problems and helps me focus more on my goal, [making] my mental health become more fresh and to have more positive thoughts," said senior Bill Nguyen.

There are a variety of ways someone can think about meditation. Making a big range of ways mental health can help a person.

How could a meditation day help SLOHS students a their fights with mental health?

Sources: health.ucdavis.edu, trytwello.com

Are Extracurriculars Outside of School Beneficial for Students?

REPORTER SLOAN RETSEK

Many San Luis Obispo High School students are involved in extracurriculars, but are these helping or hurting their mental health?

Extracurriculars can be a way for students to de-stress. They're often a safe space, they allow students to not worry about school or family problems.

Yet these same activities can cause a loss of sleep and a messed up eating schedule.

"I feel like dance kind of affects my mental health. Dance helps relieve some stress but sometimes I just get home so late," said freshman Madison Palmerston.

Palmerston explains to us how she feels that dance has affected her mental health. From getting home between the hours of nine to ten, Palmerston is getting very little sleep causing her mental health to decline along with the ability to focus in school.

"I think climbing made my mental health better, I can kinda relax

and not think about it, like my schoolwork," said freshman Blake Hammer.

For Hammer, it's the opposite. Extracurriculars are having a positive affect on his mental health, it is actually helping it. Climbing is a way for him to decompress and not have to worry about what is going on in school and his personal life.

"Dancing takes my mind off stuff. I feel like I've grown with a really good community at my dance studio. Everyone's really nice and kind and supportive, and dancing it's just my thing," said freshman Emmie Grant.

Dancing has had a positive effect on Grant's life. The community and just the sport itself have had a huge positive impact on her mental health.

Whether extracurriculars are helping or hurting one's mental health, knowing what is good or bad for mental health is the first step to achieving good mental health.

We're Drinking WHAT? An Inside Scoop on SLOHS' Water Quality



SLOHS decrepit water fountain outside of girls locker room. Photo courtesy of Emerson Oetman.

REPORTER EMERSON OETMAN

The students of San Luis Obispo High School drink school water on the daily, but what exactly is in our school's water?

Studies show that seventy-five percent of Americans are chronically dehydrated. Well even if SLOHS students wanted to drink enough water, they couldn't anyways! The school water has been said to have a 'metallic' taste. The seniors at SLOHS, being here for four years, know it all too well.

"What I'm going to say is that if I had a choice between drinking the school water and drinking out of a toilet, you would see me bent over in the bathroom. I think the school water stunted my growth. I was on the track of growing an inch a month, and then I had a sip of that school water. Look at me. I'm 5'3," said senior Talia Ramezani.

The issue isn't just the taste, it's what might be causing it. Some students and staff wonder if the pipes in the school's infrastructure might contribute to the metallic flavor. Some students even decided to take a closer look, using an AP Chemistry experiment to test the school's questionable water.

"My sophomore year we were doing a chalk lab, and after using the school's tap water, the remaining liquid after filtration was significantly more murky than the peers who had used distilled water," said senior Alana Cowan, an AP Chemistry student.

Finding these results to be rather alarming, Cowan ran further tests the following year, including alkalinity and water hardness.

"We had high fluoride levels. It was a fairly high alkalinity for just water, and the total hardness, or what you think of like mineral build up, was very significant. I found that one thousand two-hundred parts per million of the water was solid. It was really concerning, because usually you don't want it to get over one thousand. That's when the water starts getting hard and ruins things like equipment," said Cowan.

The school's water fountains may not offer the crisp, alpine purity of bottled springs, but rest assured, taking a sip won't transform you into a tragic figure from a science experiment gone wrong. It's drinkable, just not delightful.

Source: vcuhealth.org



SLOHS Student Run Underground Basketball League Hits Public Courts for the First Time!



When on the courts of KBL, Kermit the Frog is a common friendly face. Photo courtesy of @kermit_basketball_league.

REPORTER SLOAN RETSEK

Wanting to play basketball? Missed tryouts or didn't make the San Luis Obispo high school team? Kermit Basketball League, otherwise known as KBL, is the solution!

Kermit Basketball League is run by SLOHS senior Milo Nemetz. Besides being run by a SLOHS attendee many of the players are also tigers. Players are drafted by team captains, from there teams play each other in entertaining and exciting games, the winner is then ranked better for the playoffs.

After playoffs and a league winner has prevailed, there is award night where the best players receive awards for their impressive stat lines.

"I decided to start the league because a lot of kids love sports but aren't good enough or don't have enough time to play for their school, including me. I love sports and I wanted a place to play basketball that had some structure, not just pickup games but introduce some more competition and energy into the games" said Nemetz.

KBL is made up of forty-two players with varying ages, schools, and skill levels. This diversity builds a strong community inside the league.

"Although I was initially hesitant to join because I'm pretty terrible at basketball, I eventually realized that KBL was meant to be super casual and more of a social and hangout activity than any actual competitive league," said senior Leo DeTurreis.

KBL is a way for any and all skill levels (except for varsity players) to play basketball in a fun semi-competitive environment.

"It starts out relaxed, you know, it kind of depends on the people. There's a lot of skill levels so no one gets too competitive about it," said senior Ezra Nielsen.

KBL has grown from an idea among friends in class to something bigger than Nemetz could ever imagine.

KBL is an example of how it is possible to turn a dream into a reality.

Red 40: Is it Legalized Food Poison?

REPORTER VAUGHN OTTO

Allura Red AC, better known as Red 40, is a synthetic food dye used in all factory made foods and candies that have a red color. People around the world are consuming this poison daily.

The question is are students at San Luis Obispo High consuming this product themselves? And are they aware of the major effects this dye has on their health?

"No I am not aware of the effects of Red 40," said senior Finn Hickey. Red 40 is used extensively in processed foods as a coloring for beverages, frozen treats, powder mixes, gelatin products, candies, icings, jellies, spices, dressings, sauces, and baked goods.

The effects that Red 40 have on the human body are DNA damage, it

causes colonic inflammation, and impacts the microbiome in mice that were given Red 40. In children, this dye causes hyperactivity and irritability as well as affects their attention span.

According to the National Institute of Health over ninety-four percent of people over two years old consume Red 40 in the US.

"I consume Red 40 probably like three or four times a week when I drink like gatorade or eat Skittles," said senior Jace Gomes.

Red 40 is a poison sold on the shelves of every gas station and food store in America, Tigers these are the facts, now it's up to us to choose whether they make a change or not.

Source: *nih.gov*

Are SLOHS Sports Declining in Skill Level?

REPORTER MADDOX LEE

Here at San Luis Obispo High school many sports teams have been performing extremely well since the beginning of the year. But even with the great season there is definitely a noticeable difference between sports teams today, verses past years.

This data is taken from Maxpreps.com, California rankings, Varsity Boys team only with scores taken from the most recent complete season, right after COVID, and right before.

Starting off with SLOHS' most popular sport: Football! Currently the football team is ranked two-hundred twenty third in the State.

"[We're] definitely better, we just won league for the first time in a while, and we were the seventh team to ever have double digit wins in a season," said senior Dane Adler.

Adler believes this is a product of the team as a whole improving.

"This year, my senior year was for sure the best. We did very well, and my character has grown. I have also played the best and we have the best coaches," said Adler.

Right after COVID, the football team was ranked three-hundred and seventy-second in the state, and right before COVID six-hundred eighty-two. SLOHS' football team has definitely been improving, but what about the other sports?

Similar results are seen in Water Polo, going from 179 to 164 from 2017 to 2024. Definitely not as big of a difference but still improvement. Unfortunately it's not like that with all of our sports. Basketball has moved down two hundred spots (250-450) from 2017-2023, and Soccer went down 162 spots from 2017. Unfortunately, the exact rankings of the Cross country or track team are not available.

"[For Cross Country] I think they have gotten better. Before COVID, the team was unknown, but after COVID, they won a State championship in 2021 and won Division I CIF in 2022," said senior Jacob Schuetze.

Post COVID, SLOHS Cross Country has been one of the top teams in the state.

"It's hard to pick out a favorite year, but I would say freshman year [2021 season] was my favorite. I was new to running and the team was very inclusive and nice. I made lots of different friends that I am still friends with

now, and the team was very good and went on to win Division II State," said Schuetze.

So to answer the big question, are SLOHS sports getting worse or better? Unfortunately not all official rankings for some teams can be found, but on average SLOHS sports are getting better! In 2017-2018 the average ranking was 328 and in 2023-2024 the average was 251. Fans can see similar results in girls teams as well.

Way to go Tigers! Keep the hard work up!

PAUL CUSHING
AGRONOMIC TURFGRASS SERVICES

Soil & Water Analysis
Construction & Renovation
Spraying Services

PCTURFPRO.COM



The 2025 Grammys: SLOHS Edition

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR CADENCE FLICKINGER

It's no secret that students at San Luis Obispo High School listen to music. When walking the halls every other student has their AirPods in. With the biggest awards night in music on the horizon, it only feels right to see who SLOHS students would pick to win.

The 67th annual Grammy Awards are being held February 2 in Los Angeles. 112 SLOHS students responded to a survey with their votes for the awards.

"[The Grammys] are very entertaining to watch and it's an overall good award show experience," said junior Kinan Issa.

SLOHS Students took a particular interest in Song of the Year with 87 percent of respondents voting on it. As well as Record of the Year with 86 percent and Best New Artist with 81 percent.

The way the Grammys organize their awards is by breaking them down into categories. The most voted genre was Pop & Dance/Electronic with an average of 69.24 percent respondents voting on its questions. Some of the results include "Die With A Smile" by Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars winning Best Pop Duo/Group Performance with 40.9 percent. As well as "Hit Me Hard and Soft" by Billie Eilish taking the Grammy for Best Pop Vocal Album with a close 29.8 percent.

Billboard's top pop-star of the 21st century, Beyonce, is leading the nomination count this year. She is up for 11 Grammys in 2025. Already holding the record for the most Grammys in history, she is ready to win some more.

"[Beyonce] worked hard for it, I don't really listen to her but

if she's doing well then good for her," said sophomore Taylor Wakeman.

If one thing is for sure, students love "Saturn" by SZA. In the category Best R&B Performance it won with a whopping 74.7 percent.

SLOHS has made up their mind, but does the Recording Academy agree? The Grammys has been flamed online in the past for their unfair decisions and alleged favoritism to certain artists. There have been many that claim the panels that make decisions have taken bribes or use their personal music taste and industry connections to hand out awards.

"[The Grammys] make okay fair decisions but I feel as if they could make better decisions, but that's not really up to me," said freshman Brielle Bremer.

The most well-known Grammy categories are definitely the general field awards. For Record of the Year "Not Like Us" by Kendrick Lamar won with 32 percent over songs like "Espresso" and "360".

Album of the Year went to "Hit Me Hard and Soft" by Billie Eilish with 24.7 percent. Song of the Year was "Not Like Us" by Kendrick Lamar with 31.6 percent. Lastly, Best New Artist was Sabrina Carpenter with 33.7 percent.

It's important to recognize that so much music exists in the world with just the tip of the iceberg receiving Grammy nominations. But for those who have a chance at a Grammy this year, the day is just around the corner.

Sources: *usatoday.com*, *cbs-news.com*, *grammys.com*, *Expressions December Poll*

What Are SLOHS Students' Thoughts on "A Minecraft Movie"?

REPORTER CHASE PHILIPS

Warner Bros. Pictures attempts to unite gamers all over San Luis Obispo High School together with their newest upcoming movie, "A Minecraft Movie", but not in the way one would think. Since the movie's trailer has come out on Youtube, the video has amassed 1.6 million dislikes compared to 743 thousand likes. Does this hatred of the movie translate to SLOHS students' thoughts and feelings?

"It's an absolute disgrace. I'm excited to see how badly they do it, really, because they could have just done so many better things," said senior Alex Santiago Adames.

Even with the mass amounts of computer-generated imagery and the out of place live-action, some of the visuals still look really cool. Although the producers must've really taken "bring Minecraft to life" a bit too seriously, some people appreciate the little things and are grateful that we're finally even getting a "Minecraft" movie in the first place.

"I don't think it's that bad... I think it's alright," said senior Aidan Rivero Santana.

Although many are choosing to rather be picky and hateful to every little detail of plot and visual art Warner Bros. has put together in teasers and official trailer

"A lot of things I see on ['A Mindcraft Movie'] are usually hate, but I know a couple people do appreciate it," said Rivero Santana.

Good or bad, fans of "Minecraft", gaming, and movies will still come to see it in theaters in 2025. Perhaps this movie will be like the old "Super Mario Bros." of our time.

Source: *comicbooknews.com*

"Spark The Electric Jester" is a Game Gem



Promotional image featuring Spark's main characters. Photo courtesy of Fepard Games.

REPORTER AMY FUNK

Students at San Luis Obispo High School play a variety of different games, but some less popular games get left unchecked. Games like "Fortnite" or "Call of Duty" can be great, but some hidden gems can be overlooked. A commonly overlooked game is called "Spark The Electric Jester".

"Spark The Electric Jester" was released in 2017 by Lake Fepard, a solo developer who worked on well-known Sonic fangames like "Sonic: After the Sequel".

"I would consider playing 'Spark'," says sophomore Thomas Spears. The story follows Spark, a jester with electric powers who lost his job to a robot doppelganger named Fark. The plot circles around robots going rogue from a virus created by the villain Freom.

The gameplay takes inspiration from some of Lake's favorite games, like "Mega Man X", "Sonic", and "Kirby". At first, Spark has some moves at his disposal, a dash to reach speeds faster, a three hit combo attack, and a charged shot. But that's not all.

Throughout the levels, gamers will find "Jester Powers" which is where the Kirby influence really shows. These powers can alter Spark's moveset significantly, sometimes to the point of feeling like a completely different character. There's so many of them, make sure to try them all!

"[I liked Kirby because] the variety of the abilities, and the unique style of gameplay is fun," said Spears.

The stages are where Lake really got to use his experience from making fangames. Each level feels like a distinct and logical place with tons of background detail and decoration. As levels progress, the background and look changes to signify Spark's journey.

The level design is even better too. Each level has tons of hidden goodies and powers, which a keen-eyed player can spot, or a quick player can blast through levels to get a fast time. They always have a singular gimmick tied to them, but said gimmick gets used in more and more creative ways, so it feels fresh. Levels are also full of loops and slopes, which really makes a great sense of speed.

"[I liked] 'Sonic' because it was simple, and the speed in the levels is fun," said Spears.

On release, it was met with generally positive reviews from websites like Destructoid, and very positive reviews on Steam. The success prompted Lake to create two other games, "Spark 2" and "Spark 3", all of which are worth a play for any gaming fan.

Source: *steampowered.com*

Your Central Coast One-Stop-Shop for Gaming and Comics!

Deck Boxes - Dice - Card Sleeves - D&D - Warhammer - Miniatures - MTG - WotC
Comic Books - Action Figures - Graphic Novels

GAMES
Games Workshop, Clix, D&D
CCG Headquarters
MTG, Pokemon, & More
Video Games - New & Old

NEW & USED GAMES
Trade-Ins Accepted!
Cash or Store Credit
Buyer Always on Duty

COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS
New Comics Every Wednesday
1000's of Back Issues
Graphic Novels

ACTION FIGURES
Comic & Fantasy Related
DCI SANCTIONED DRAFTS
Every Friday Night at 5 p.m.!
Special Tournaments

565 Higuera Street, SLO - (805) 544-Nemo
BECOME A FAN!
Add us on Facebook for special updates, coupons, & give-aways!
Facebook.com/CaptainNemoGames

Magic Boosters \$2.99
FREE PARKING ALL AROUND STORE
Tons of Dice!
T-Shirts too!

FNM DCI

Who's Doing Better Disney or Dreamworks?

REPORTER SAMANTHA GOMEZ

San Luis Obispo High School students love animated films, and today Disney and Dreamworks studios are competing for domination. How do SLOHS students feel about their changes and what might the future entail?

As the years pass by, students and staff have seen the adjustments made by Disney and Dreamworks. They have a new way of creating animation that tries to keep up with the viewers taste and attention.

Compared to the original Disney movies, the characters and storylines have improved. Becoming more inclusive and projecting the idea that not all female characters need a prince to save them.

“Encanto’ is my favorite because of the in-depth character arcs. I love a movie where most, if not all of the main characters learn a lesson that changes them for the better,” said freshman Irelynn Zurbach.

As the character arc has been improving in Disney, Dreamworks has continued to invent strong themes in their movies.

“I believe Dreamworks works much better at their quality than Disney does. [Disney] makes sequels of something that might be trending,” said junior Haley Sarabia.

Each animation industry has areas that make it wonderful. On one side there is a great improvement in character depth and the other has a great ability to create follow-up movies to their original. However, there is some argument as to studios ability to create new, unthought of movie ideas.

“It was bound to happen that they would run out of ideas because I’ve noticed [the studios] making a lot of recreations that do not do justice, such as the new ‘How To Train Your Dragon’ coming soon I do not think they did it justice, however ‘Mulan’ was an amazing movie I will watch over and over again,” said senior Lina Arnold.

Consumers live in a reality that, many might agree with, has gone soft or extremely fragile. Any little thing can set off adults as insulting, younger generations as hurtful, and overall can ‘cancel’ someone for an opinion they said. Each movie industry knows this. Has taken that into account when making their movies.

“I don’t believe that they are running out of ideas...but are too afraid to take the lead with a new original idea because the question always is will the audience like it. But when putting out something new in a genre that already has an audience, you can always guarantee money from that one until it fails,” said Sarabia.

But on the other hand, Dreamworks has made “The Wild Robot”, “The



New movies coming out from Dreamworks and Disney. Photo collage courtesy of senior Samantha Gomez.

Bad Guys”, “Ruby Gilman Teenage Kraken”, and “The Abominable”. While Disney made “Encanto”, “Wish”, “Strange World”, and “Raya and the Last Dragon”.

“I think there is still a lot of creativity out there and I look forward to seeing what they come up with in the future,” said librarian Eliza Escareno.

Every person can choose if Dreamworks and Disney have quality, quantity, or both.

Sources: dreamworks.com, disneyanimation.com

SLOHS Fashion Trend Predictions for 2025

REPORTER PEYTON BONN

San Luis Obispo High School fashion trends that will continue into 2025 will be Y2K staples, low rise jeans, crochet clothing, bubble skirts, and aesthetic inspired styles like the Brat Girl or Coconut Girl look.

Fashion currently doesn’t really change that much at SLOHS, but people definitely like to keep up with the trends and do research on current styles.

Expressions decided to interview people around campus to find what 2025’s next big trends will be.

Expressions: What are your predictions for fashion trends in 2025?

Freshman Cadence Flickinger: People wearing lace tops and they are definitely going to stay in fashion. A style that should definitely stay are jerseys because they are so cute to wear.

Sophomore Mars Devereaux: Hopefully vintage blouses and fur coats

SLOHS Fashion Teacher Avery Leone: Lace has been big for a while. I definitely think that will stay. Gucci has been reaching into this red burgundy color and it’s really popular this winter. Pants are gonna stay large, like wide leg pants. Also the color of the year is like a mocha mousse color.

Expressions: What trends that were in 2024 are going to stay in 2025?

Flickinger: The bow tops and the star trend where you have like star jeans and a star top. Also, baggy jeans that are not super baggy but baggy enough since I really like them.

Devereaux: Slip dresses and skirts.

Leone: Wide leg pants. People definitely haven’t changed and tend to stay the same. SLO fashion doesn’t really change.

Expressions: What are some trends that will immediately become popular and people will become obsessed with it?

Flickinger: Flannels since everyone always wears them during fall, and the bow trend which might die off but I hope it doesn’t. A bunch of necklaces because people wear them a lot and also are common.

Devereaux: Thin brows, skirts over jeans, platform uggs, and tote bags.

Leone: Cherry tones, pantone tones, mocha mousse color. Suede color. Earth girl and new earth tones. Laces and animal prints are definitely big so those will stay.

People have different opinions about fashion and the trends that will be coming into this year. But there are some items that won’t go out of style anytime soon considering how popular they are.

Source: heuritech.com



People expressing themselves in fashion and putting themselves out there. Photo collage courtesy of sophomore Peyton Bonn.

SLO's ORIGINAL INDY MUSIC STORE

since 1971

FREE PARKING
ALL AROUND STORE

WE REPAIR DISCS!
CD, DVD, MP3, VHS

CDs

- All categories and styles - Rock to Rap, Country to Metal, & tons more!
- Huge selection of Used CDs - Starting at \$2⁹⁹

DVDs

- Largest selection of Movies
- SLO's only Movie Specialty Store
- Lots of great like-new Movies - As low as \$2⁹⁹

Vinyl Records

- Largest selection of New & Used Vinyl Records
- From 7" to 12", 33's to 45's, LPs to EPs, and more!
- Low Prices - Tons of Used at \$1⁹⁹ - \$2⁹⁹

Video Games

- Consoles, Games, Accessories, Parts & Repair
- NES to Wii / PS1 to PS3 / Xbox / 360 / Sega PSP / Gameboy/ DS / PC Games

and Tons of Other Great Stuff!
Cables, Connectors, Hook-ups, Carrying Cases, Cassette tapes, Band T-Shirts & more

Gift Cards accepted from any major retailer of music*
Trade-Ins Accepted - Buyer Always on Duty!

563 Higuera St., SLO - 805.544.0686

Add us on Facebook for special updates, coupons, & give-aways! [Facebook.com/CheapThrillsSLO](https://www.facebook.com/CheapThrillsSLO)

Dear Lucia: The Freshmen Get Important Help

DISCLAIMER: The content in this article is entirely satirical. The letter's and responses are meant for entertainment purposes only. Zero parts of this article should be taken seriously or acted upon. Resemblance to actual events and real situations are purely coincidental. Only consult professional resources for serious help and genuine issues.

REPORTER LUCIA MCCARTHY-ZIRION

Dear Lucia,
My boyfriend asked me if I wanted to have an open relationship. How do I tell him that I thought it already was... and so did his best friend?

Sincerely, Freshman Freaking Out.

Dear Freshman Freaking Out,
Your boyfriend is in the wrong here. You must tell him that it was his fault you cheated on him, because he was the one who tried to communicate. Lack of communication is key in relationships. I, a wise and experienced high school upperclassman, should know.

The mistake you've made is forgivable and a direct result of his toxic communication. What he should have done was bottle up his desires deep inside and let you walk all over him. You are asking me how to tell him what you've done, but this is the wrong approach. I am glad you came to me before making your situation far, far worse.

Now, as for what you should do going forward, there is only one healthy solution. Elope with his best friend to Botswana, without telling your current boyfriend.

You must also keep this secret from all of your friends and family, you don't want to be that person that nobody likes anymore because of your unwholesome communication during a major life event. Trust me. Don't even tell your new fiance about the move, strap a blindfold on the guy and you're set. He will thank you later, men love to be deceived.

Remember, communication is the downfall of every good relationship. The earlier you learn this, the easier your life will be.

If you absolutely must communicate, like a total weirdo, partners like it if you are as passive aggressive as possible. It really eases the tension. I believe in you, Freshman Freaking Out. Rock on.

Sincerely, Lucia.

Dear Lucia,
I woke up alone on top of the roof after having several drinks with friends and I don't remember how. What do I do?

Sincerely, Freshman on Da Roof.

Dear Freshman on Da Roof,
Well that's rough. It seems you have no other choice but to make this roof your new home. The gutter is no longer safe for you, and this is Lorde's way of letting you know. Or perhaps you've been reality shifted into this dimension and given the memories of some poor innocent earthling. You never had several drinks with your friends, those are merely your human host's memories, which you have so eloquently stolen. My pal Garrett thought he could reality shift, and the poor lad's been spouting Lord of the Rings lore ever since. If you woke up on the roof with the name Garrett, give him back, ye ol' body-stealin' beast!!!

Sincerely, Lucia, currently in mourning of Garrett's departure from this mortal plane.

Dear Lucia,
I live near a fraternity club, and every night my dreams are interrupted by my neighbors' rude singing. I can't take it anymore, their voices keep cracking and their tone quality will be the death of me. What can I do about it, and should I consult them about singing lessons?

Sincerely, Vocally Gifted Freshman

Dear Vocally Gifted Freshman,
I am so grateful that you have turned to your wise and oh-so-very experienced elder for advice. As a very elite, incredibly advanced junior in high school, I can tell you exactly what you should do in this situation. Yes, you should absolutely consult them about voice lessons. They will never go far in life if their voice isn't soothing and supple. Tell them that if they can't afford expensive vocal training, to take a SLOHS choir class to get their mistakes beaten out of them. If they refuse to try to improve themselves, they are not worthy of being in the carolling fraternity.

Sincerely, High-schooler who knows everything, Lucia.

Warm Up With This Spiced Hot Chocolate Recipe

REPORTER AVA RHODES

As San Luis Obispo High School returns from a much-needed winter break, students will naturally be feeling a bit of despair at the conclusion of their peaceful time off and the return back to a chaotic schedule. This recipe works wonders when you're tired, overwhelmed, or just need a break from a busy day.

Ingredients:

- 5 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 3 1/2 tablespoons white or cane sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of cayenne pepper or more to taste
- Pinch of salt
- 5 cups of milk

Instructions:

Combine all dry ingredients and two cups of milk in a pot over low heat. Whisk until all ingredients are combined and no lumps remain. Once this mixture is smooth, add the remaining three cups of milk and continue whisking until the hot chocolate is heated to your liking. Feel free to adjust the spice and sugar content to your preferences, add any toppings you like, and enjoy!



This cocoa is sure to warm you up! Illustration courtesy of eighth grader Lily Rhodes.

GET INVOLVED



SLO COUNTY ARTS

Empowering local artists and connecting cultural institutions throughout SLO County

VOLUNTEER

Gain experience in skills that interest you, increase your visibility within the art community, and grow your personal rapport with artists and supporters around the county. Tasks needed vary throughout the year and include event assistance, community engagement, and administration.

EXPERIENCE LOCAL ART

Participate in **Poetry Out Loud**, attend **Art After Dark** every First Friday of the month, go to a free **Art Talk** to learn more about artists and the arts community, submit your work to local **calls for art**, and more!

LEARN MORE!

SLOCOUNTYARTS.ORG



THE SLO FILM CENTER

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
23 	24 	25 	26 	27 
30 	31 	<p>VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR SHOWTIMES, TICKETS, AND TO SEE OUR FEBRUARY LINEUP OF FILMS!</p> 		

↓ JANUARY NEW RELEASE OPENING DATES (PLAYING DAILY)

3 	10 	17 	24 	31 
--	---	---	---	---

JOIN OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP!

\$79 FOR STUDENTS!

PALMIE MEMBERSHIP

START THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT!



\$99 general, \$79 students each year. Receive 6 free admissions + \$1 off tickets + a free small popcorn with each visit + birthday reward + discounts + more!

NEW RELEASE INDIES, THROWBACK FILMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS WEEKLY!