

SLOHS EXPRESSIONS

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SLOHS students often fail to recognize their privilege when compared to larger global struggles. Illustration courtesy of junior Finley Pearse.

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- TRIMESTER THREE SLOHS EXPRESSIONS STAFF**
- Editors:**
People & Culture
Ava Rhodes
- Opinion**
Aidan Field
- Feature**
Vyolet Burrus
- Health & Sports**
Sophia Chaves
Kandon Sullivan
- Arts & Entertainment**
Emily Lopez
- Editor-in-Chiefs**
Vyolet Burrus
Aidan Field

- Reporters:**
- Archer Ackerman
 - Sofia Ballesteros Lopez
 - Wesley Bisheff
 - Ruby Blackburn
 - Salomon Bravo
 - Eiram Bussell
 - Loujain Chafroud
 - Rafael Chavez
 - Sawyer Cram
 - Beau Crew
 - Tyler Gerbel
 - Luke Henard
 - Waucoba Hunter
 - Logan Hutchinson
 - Lorelei Hutchinson
 - Isaac Mathiesen
 - Bear Medici
 - Leila Milton
 - Makaylin Molinar
 - Milla Watts
- Adviser Scott Nairne**
snairne@slcusd.org

Check Out SLOHS Photographer Alex Bastidas' Work!



REPORTER TYLER GERBEL

Shooting on one of our schools' Canon Rebel T6is, junior Alex Bastidas is a notable photographer in the local punk scene. He loves to do photography as a hobby, but he hopes to turn it into a career.

"I do a lot of punk/DIY shows in SLO, and I take photos of people in the bands. It's super thrilling to see my work finished and see the reviews of the bands and people at the shows," said Bastidas.

All photos courtesy of junior Alex Bastidas.



Students Beware! Job Ghosting is On the Rise in SLO

REPORTER WESLEY BISHEFF

For San Luis Obispo High School teens seeking employment, the modern job search has reached unprecedented levels of frustration.

Many local businesses advertise positions on Indeed or on their website, eliminating the need to drop off physical resumes and meet the manager in person. In fact, many local employers specify that they don't consider in-person inquiries.

Instead, job-seekers are forced to apply to tens, if not hundreds, of positions on Indeed and other websites, making the whole process way less personal.

Consequently, the days when applicants can expect a "yes" or "no" from potential employers are long gone. Instead, the new norm is no response, which can be disheartening.

"Back when I was a wee little lad, I applied to a monumental amount of local cafes and did not hear a response from a single one," said senior Diego Rosen. "It made me realize we live in a cold world, and it made me colder as a person."

Rosen has remained unemployed since, and isn't alone in his struggle.

"I've applied to 154 places now, and I've gotten four total callbacks," said senior AJ Schuberg.

53 percent of job seekers were ghosted by employers within the last year, according to a report from the company Criteria. This figure represents an upward trend. In 2024, 38 percent reported job ghosting. According to a Fortune article, this trend is a product of increased technology in the application process.

Applicants can now easily make resumes with AI and send them out to tons of employers through websites such as Indeed. This floods employers with high-quality resumes, making it difficult to identify truly quality candidates and maintain communication with all of them.

Additionally, there has been an increase in employers posting "ghost jobs." Some businesses offer fake jobs — positions that have already been filled or that simply don't exist — just to maintain a presence on job websites. 38 percent of recruiters admit to this.

Due to their age, SLOHS students often lack the skills and experience employers are seeking. Coupled with the current state of the economy and job market, this makes for particularly harsh circumstances for student job seekers, making it crucial for students to market themselves as well as possible.

"I think that high school kids have to make themselves really sellable," said SLOHS College and Career specialist Colleen Martin. "A lot of times I see kids that don't even put on their resume that they're bilingual, or that they're really good with computer skills and could maybe help the business with their website or social media."

Martin also recommends "getting back to the old-fashioned way": inquiring about jobs in person and on site whenever possible.

It's rough out there, Tigers, but keep applying!

Sources: [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com), [fortune.com](https://www.fortune.com)

What Should SLOHS Students Know About Tattoos?

REPORTER MILLA WATTS

Interest in tattoos has become increasingly noticeable throughout the world, even within high schools. Quite a few San Luis Obispo High School students have gotten tattoos, as well as many of the teachers. But how do students get tattoos, and what does the process involve?

In the U.S. there is no federal law deciding when people can get tattoos. Each state has their own restrictions. California law requires a minimum age of eighteen to get a tattoo regardless of parental consent. Outside the U.S., laws around tattooing seem more laid back.

The Netherlands allows minors at the age of twelve to get tattoos with parental consent, and at sixteen without parental consent. Going outside the state or country has been an outlet for students to get tattoos.

"I do think [California] restrictions are fair and reasonable, both for safety reasons [such as] unsanitary tattoo practices and poor aftercare can be seriously dangerous and for frontal-lobe developmental reasons. Personally, I am very glad that I ended up waiting to get any tattoos until I was 21 or 22, but I would not assume or insist that that should be the same for everyone," said English teacher Serena Enzerink.

It is important for those hoping to get a tattoo to choose an artist that fits the person's style, and to

pay a visit to the studio in person to talk to a consultant and plan perfectly. Booking a tattoo appointment can be months in advance. Tattoo studios ask for I.D., phone number, and the customers' address to contact them about it.

"My experience [getting a tattoo] was very good, my tattoo artist was very nice to me and he helped guide the process for me. It was very painful but he let me take breaks," said sophomore Eddi McConnell.

Tattooing aftercare takes up to about thirty days. Fresh tattoos will look red and irritated. Beginning aftercare includes lots of washing and cleaning of the tattoo and by days four to six the redness should disappear and the tattoo may appear more dull or cloudy. During days six to fourteen, the area of the tattoo may start to irritate again. If so, you are supposed to gently apply alcohol-free moisturizer. By day thirty the tattoo should be healed on the outer skin level and will appear much more noticeable than before.

According to a survey done on high school students, fifty percent of the students were interested in getting tattoos, and ten to twenty-three percent already having tattoos. Tattoos are a way to show the significance of something in a person's life. In a different study they found 69 percent of people have tattoos dedicated to something of importance. It has also been described as a form of therapy, self-acceptance,

or self-expression for some people.

"Both my parents and my older sisters have at least one tattoo each and I have always been super excited to get one of my own. My tattoo is a forearm sleeve made of Hawaiian tribal print and I chose this specifically to represent my native Hawaiian lineage," said junior Keanu Kiaha.

Tattoos have had a negative representation in the past decades, often associated with violence and rebellion; but in recent years they have become a staple in human culture, especially in the U.S.

However, that doesn't mean everyone is accepting of tattoos as some people still find tattoos impure or not practical. A study showed that 26 percent of the people with tattoos regret at least one of their tattoos.

"I think people shouldn't get tattoos young or at least be wary of where they place them because they might regret them later," said sophomore Blake Vang.

The most important thing about tattoos is that it is up to the person themselves to decide whether they get one. Tattoos are meant to be enjoyed by the person who wears them and shouldn't be judged for getting one or not getting one. Enjoy your life with or without tattoos Tigers!

Sources: codes.findlaw.com, [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com), hopskinsmedicine.org, prairie-care.com, byrdie.com

Comedy or Controversy: Druski's Erika Kirk Portrayal

HEALTH & SPORTS CO-EDITOR SOPHIA CHAVES

One recent skit ignited fierce reactions, with viewers divided over what counts as humor and what crosses a line. Internet personality Drew Desbordes, known as Druski, took the stage portraying a conservative woman resembling Erika Kirk in whiteface. San Luis Obispo High School students have observed the online controversy, and it has become a buzzing topic on campus.

The performance has sparked a heated debate over comedy, race, and how far humor can go before it becomes offensive.

The internet's focus on Kirk has increased exponentially since her husband's assassination in September of 2025, giving her a new spotlight, which she hasn't let go to waste.

Kirk has been on an infamous "Make Heaven Crowded Tour" in light of her husband's assassination.

This tour has received criticism for being insensi-

tive to Kirk's husband and making light of his death.

Druski's skit parodied the pantsuits, heavy makeup, and blonde hair extensions that Kirk has worn during this tour, as well as recreating some of her viral moments. Druski had painted himself white, and used prosthetics to imitate Kirk's appearance.

"When I first saw Druski's skit, I thought it was the funniest thing ever. I laughed so hard and showed it to all my friends. One of my friend's said it was kind of disrespectful, but I didn't really view it that way," said sophomore Kandon Sullivan.

The two main viewpoints concerning this controversy are deeming the skit as hilarious, or as disrespectful and hypocritical.

"We have to protect all men in America, especially all white men in America," said Druski's conservative woman at one mock press conference.

"I thought it was kind of funny cause it resembled her a little bit," said sophomore Oscar Hill.

However, not all students found humor in the performance. Some argued that the use of whiteface crossed a line, pointing out the historical weight behind race-based portrayal and questioned if the joke relied on shock value or actual satire.

"At first I thought it was funny, but after reading some stuff I can see how it was offensive. He probably shouldn't have done that," said an anonymous sophomore.

The controversy surrounding Erika Kirk and Druski's portrayal highlights how quickly online content can spark real world discussions. At SLOHS, the debate has moved beyond the skit, raising broader questions about accountability.

As reactions continue to pour in, one thing remains clear: humor is no longer just about making people laugh, it's evolved into a complex landscape of perspectives.

Source: *yahoo.com*

Debunking AI Water Usage: Is It Actually An Issue?

HEALTH & SPORTS CO-EDITOR SAWYER CRAM

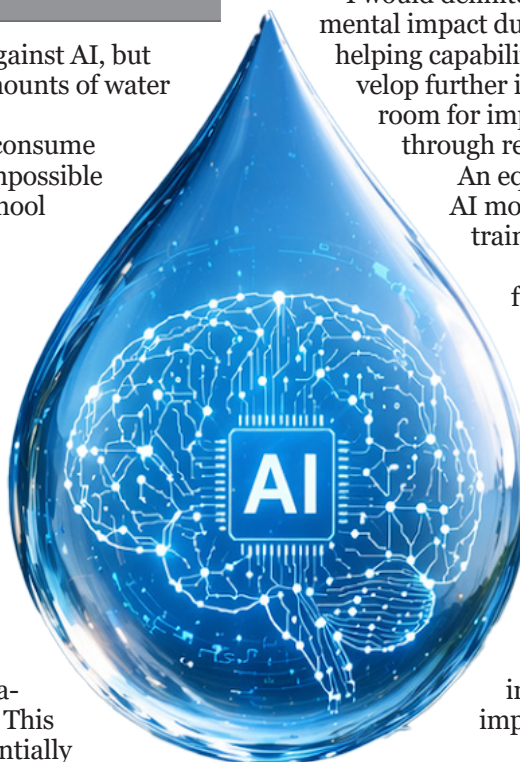
Extreme water usage is frequently cited in arguments against AI, but how truthful are the claims that AI consumes immense amounts of water in order to operate?

While many AI datacenters have a thirst for water and consume vast amounts of it everyday, the exact numbers are near impossible to find for many people including San Luis Obispo Highschool students.

Furthermore, many AI models complicate claims that AI uses large amounts of water, such as Chat GPT, which claims to use as little as 0.32 milliliters of water per query.

"Even if the most liberal AI water usage statistics are correct, they still pale in comparison to other industries' use of significantly more water. For example, estimates for annual nationwide corn production are in the range of tens of trillions of gallons. To put that number in context, that's nearly fifty times more water than AI's absolute maximum annual usage figures," said junior Lyon Frank.

Even though AI uses much less water than other industries such as agriculture, the source of the water that AI uses raises concern. A significant portion of the water that is used for AI data centers is pulled from municipal water sources (treated water supplied by local governments). This water is then returned to the municipal water supply, potentially introducing dangerous chemicals and contaminants in the process.



"I would definitely argue that the benefits of AI outweigh the environmental impact due to the fact that not only is AI ever-evolving to expand its helping capabilities with humanity, but additionally AI could help us develop further improvements to its own sustainability. There is certainly room for improvement for its efficiency with more limited resources through research," said junior Jonas Morstad.

An equally if not more more concerning usage of AI is energy. AI models require massive amounts of energy in both their training and operation.

This energy is often taken from grids powered by fossil fuels which in turn increases carbon emissions. This increase of carbon emissions directly contributes to climate change.

"I think that AI water usage matters a lot right now. Although, I think we will be guaranteed to develop technologies that make it much more efficient and less environmentally demanding in the future buy I think we should still keep it in the back of our minds," said junior Henry Cody.

While the exact amount of water used by AI is hard to track down, it's evident that it's not as concerning as many people believe it to be. Still, it should not be treated as having little to no impact. As AI continues to be integrated into people's everyday lives, the environmental impact of its use needs to be minimized.

Source: *eesi.org*

Use of AI has been a divisive topic among SLOHS students ever since claims of extreme water usage began to surface. Graphic courtesy of junior Sawyer Cram.

Are Students Still Learning How to Drive Stick?

REPORTER ARCHER ACKERMAN

While the manual transmission once reigned supreme, they are a rare sight in this day and age, with auto makers making only a few manual cars in 2026. Despite this, some San Luis Obispo High School students are still learning how to drive manuals.

Driving a manual car involves the use of a clutch pedal, which detaches the engine from the transmission, allowing you to shift between gears, which control how the engine output is changed into rotation at the wheels.

When you drive an automatic car, the brain of the car controls the clutch and gear shifts automatically, without any input from the driver.

"I like driving manual cars because they make driving more fun than just pressing the gas and brake. I also think driving a manual is safer than an automatic because I always need to be engaged with the road and car knowing my speed and when to shift," said sophomore Magnus Larsen.

Many people prefer the experience of driving a manual because it gives a more engaging experience, and gives you control over how the car drives.

"What I like about driving manual is how it makes driving more interesting, it keeps my mind focused a lot better," said sophomore Lilly Snyder.

However, the majority of people driving automatics will likely claim it adds needless complexity to the task of driving.

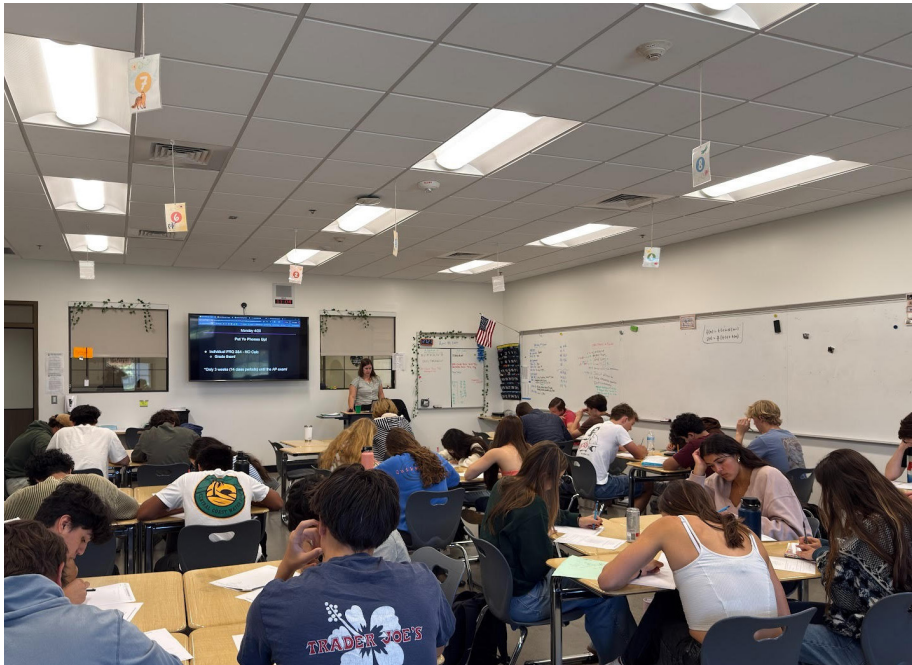
"Driving a manual vehicle is irrelevant in the modern day. Automatic vehicles make it so the average person with less skill is able to drive and focus on the road and external conditions," said sophomore Noah Frago.

While they may not have the presence they once did, manual cars still have a loyal community surrounding them.

Source: *kbb.com*

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Testing Out of Precalc Needs to Remain an Option



Students are working hard in math teacher Nicole Stearn's AP Calculus AB class and some of them never even took Precalculus! Photo courtesy of senior Tyler Gerbel.

REPORTER TYLER GERBEL

Historically, San Luis Obispo High School has allowed students to skip Precalculus by proving their readiness through exceptional math grades and a challenging exam. Only around fifteen students were able to test out per year, making the process highly selective. Unfortunately, SLOHS is now removing this ability as part of the recent changes to the math department.

For the talented students who were able to test out, going directly to AP Calculus AB seems to be a much better use of their time, and is great for getting ahead in math as they prepare for college.

“I didn’t have to do precalc, which I think precalc personally would have just been kind of a waste of time,” said junior Riley Holden. “I probably wouldn’t have been doing much at all in that class.”

Many SLOHS students plan on applying to prestigious colleges, and having a strong math foundation in high school is a bare minimum requirement to get into a lot of schools, especially for STEM majors. By skipping Precalculus, students can move on to Calculus much faster and demonstrate their ability to learn quickly and effectively.

Most of the coursework taught in Precalculus isn’t even necessary to begin Calculus, which is how skipping it is even possible in the first place.

“[Precalculus] did teach me a lot of new stuff. Most of it was useless, according to all my friends who are in Calculus. They said, most of the things that we learned did not benefit them at all in Calculus,” said current Precalculus student junior Logan Shimazu.

However, SLOHS does have valid reasons for why this could be an issue. The main one is that if a student tests out of Precalc and then can’t handle Calculus, then it’s somewhat the school’s fault for allowing the student to move on before they were ready. The solution here is to make the test harder if need be and to factor in a student’s work ethic more, not to outright stop students from skipping Precalculus.

Additionally, the students that have tested out seem to be doing very well in Calculus AB.

“I believe I have an A this trimes-

ter,” said Holden.

The other major reason has to do with SLOHS’ other changes to the math department, namely the shortening of the non-AP math classes.

“The math classes are going from three trimesters to two, allowing students to take Geometry, Algebra II, and Precalc over a two year period without having to do summer school,” said Calculus teacher Jimmie Johnson. “Given the new sequencing of math classes, I believe it makes the Precalc challenge test a moot point as students have an opportunity to advance within the school year.”

This makes perfect sense, and despite the potential concerns with making students learn the coursework in a much shorter amount of time, the changes to the non-AP courses will likely benefit the majority of students. Students can also still take Precalculus at Cuesta College.

Testing out of precalc could still be used in this transitional period. After the changes, testing out of Precalculus could be used to free up spaces in student’s schedules.

However, it’s important to note that the Precalculus challenge test is not meant for everyone, it’s meant for a very few, select groups of outstanding students to help them get very far ahead in math.

But do students in Precalc wish they skipped?

“Hell yes!” said Shimazu.

Resellers Have Taken Over The Goodwill Bins

REPORTER LORELEI HUTCHINSON

Students at San Luis Obispo High School love to experience the joy of finding treasures at the Goodwill bins. This thrill is increasingly being taken away by the rise of resellers entering our local Goodwill.

Students are not afraid to express their anger towards forty-year-old resellers taking away their opportunities of scoring on clothing for cheap prices.

“They’re so annoying. They are mean, and they steal your clothes, and it’s like, these fifty-year-old men, and eighty-year-old women, who steal teenage girl clothes and sell them online. I need those clothes more than you,” said an anonymous sophomore.

Clearly, students at SLOHS are unhappy with resellers who have no respect or understanding of students in need of cheap good quality treasures found at the Goodwill.

While many students are unhappy with the out-

“I need those clothes more than you.”

come in the rise of resellers, one sophomore informs us of another perspective.

“I’m not taking every single item. I’m only taking the niche vintage clothes. People reselling is not a bad thing, because it doesn’t really affect people that need clothes, because people that need clothes would already be there, and, when I go out and buy these clothes, I don’t really see anyone who, like, ‘needs clothes’,” said an anonymous sophomore.

The assumption that people who ‘need clothes’ would have a certain look to them is inaccurate. Although thrifting is not an unhealthy habit, resellers should use this skill to do better things in support of people in need.

Resellers are not necessarily trying to harm anyone in need, but they do have an effect on students from our school. Students are on the hunt for vintage clothes which is difficult to come across when resellers are on a mission to take every single item.

“The teenage girls and boys that go to the bins

for fun are looking for certain clothing they’ve been wanting for a while for cheaper prices, and they’re looking for good brands, and resellers are taking as many good brands as they can find just to resell them for more money. The whole point of the bins is to be able to search for expensive brands for cheap prices,” said sophomore Kate Fouhy.

Personally, I’ve witnessed a friend lean to grab a Billabong hoodie she has talked about wanting for months and a reseller swooped in to grab it before she got the chance. Everyone knows that reseller has found hundreds of hoodies like this and sold them each for forty dollars online. This friend definitely would have loved this clothing item and been grateful to have found it for such a cheap price.

Hours are wasted for students waking up early in hopes of a Patagonia. These resellers each claim a bin every rotation, leaving no open bin for the teenagers to dive in. Groups of friends come to the bins expecting an opportunity of at least one cool clothing item. Those hopes are quickly taken away by resellers in a matter of seconds.

Resellers have ruined thrifting for students.

How Can Students Make Better Career Decisions?

REPORTER SOFIA BALLESTEROS LOPEZ

San Luis Obispo High School students at the age of fifteen or younger, are asked the same big question: What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Going from choosing classes to choosing careers is a big change that requires a lot of responsibility from teenagers. Students today are facing pressure to plan their future earlier than ever, and while some might be excited to “start living” or to create their dream life, it is normal for the rest to feel overwhelmed by the idea of taking a life-changing decision at such a young age.

Between expectations from teachers, parents, and society as a whole, adolescents feel the pressure to have their whole life figured out by the time

they’re eighteen. “I sometimes feel stressed when planning my future, because I’ll never be sure of what I would want to end up doing,” said sophomore Kassia Voermann. “I think making a teenager choose what they want to spend their lives doing is a lot of pressure because at this age is when you just start to know yourself.”

Since adolescence is a time in which we start to discover new things about ourselves, the fear of making the wrong decision or changing opinions after graduation is pretty common.

“I have a lot of plan b’s because I don’t know if I’m going to regret my decision or realize that what I wanted is not for me. I think schools should make sure to let the students know that college is not the only way out,”

said Voermann.

Counselors and other staff at SLOHS are there to help make these decisions.

“Most of the students don’t know what they want to major in, some of them leave high school without really knowing what they want to do, but the biggest mistake students make is not researching enough the school they want to go to. It’s very important to research the college and the career you want to make sure is something you’ll like,” said college and career counselor Colleen Martin.

On the other hand, academic pressure is another factor.

“Even though I know they want to see me succeed, I tend to feel pressure from my parents to keep up with my grades. I think it is harder for them to

be academically-motivating because they don’t really know what is going on at school so they think that my only responsibility is to focus on school,” said senior Savannah Crocker.

The school environment also plays a very important role on how anxious a student feels. It’s important to make a student feel understood and heard.

“The number one option would be to have more counselors, so every student has someone to talk to about their concerns,” said Martin.

After all, while planning for the future can make students feel prepared, many others feel pressured to choose too much too soon.

With the support of teachers and family, students might feel more comfortable exploring through possibilities.

The Atom is the Only Practical Replacement for Fossil Fuels: Nuclear Is the Only Path Forward

REPORTER WAUCOBA HUNTER

Almost a century ago, Oppenheimer split the atom, demonstrating the immense amount of energy contained in the matter that surrounds us. Today, two twenty foot long machines can propel a 105 thousand ton aircraft carrier across the ocean for over twenty years without needing a refuel, yet politicians and activists still squabble about oil and solar. San Luis Obispo High School's closest nuclear power plant, Diablo Canyon continues to face heavy scrutiny, which while based in truth, is gravely misdirected.

The carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels are undeniably the largest contributor to climate change, and combined with the fact that we are running out of oil, another source of energy is required. Many "green energy" alternatives have presented themselves, like solar, wind, and hydro, but they are expensive, unreliable, and take up land that was often undisturbed wilderness. Energy needs are also on the rise with AI centers, database servers, supercomputers, and electric vehicles consuming power on levels never seen before, levels that we cannot hope to meet without coating every last National Park in solar panels and wind turbines.

It seems obvious, one option cannot work, another requires extreme sacrifice, and the third will work very well, so why didn't the world go fully nuclear a long time ago?

"When you use uranium in a nuclear power plant you need enriched Uranium-235 at a certain percentage (typically 3-5%). (Enriched Uranium is when you take Uranium ore and you make it more concentrated and pure so it is at the right percentage of uranium that is fissile.) During the reaction that emits the energy, some Uranium 235 absorbs a neutron and then splits (fissions) into Barium and Krypton as well as other elements. At a certain point there isn't much Uranium 235 left and they are considered "spent" or used up. Although they don't have enough energy left in them to be useful in the powerplant, they are still ra-

dioactive. These "spent fuel rods" need to be stored so the remaining radioactive matter's radiation doesn't interact with the environment," said physics teacher Marie Pink.

There are two answers, one is that oil companies bribe politicians to make laws that keep nuclear from fully taking root, because if it does they will go out of business. The other is that the Chernobyl incident in 1986 caused many to fear the nuclear radiation that could result if an accident occurred, even though the casualties

The US refuses to build the facilities needed to recycle most of the radioactive material.

of Chernobyl were merely a result of poor Soviet engineering and management. However, this didn't stop the same threatened oil barons from capitalizing on that fear.

In large amounts, nuclear waste can be very difficult to transport and dispose of safely, which is where nuclear reprocessing comes in. Nuclear reprocessing is used by many European and Asian countries to convert 96 percent of nuclear waste back into usable fuel, leaving only four percent needing disposal, making it multitudes easier.

"The long timescales over which some waste remains radioactive has led to the idea of deep disposal in underground repositories in stable geological formations. Isolation is provided by a combination of engineered and natural barriers (rock, salt, clay) and no obligation to actively maintain the facility is passed on to future generations. This is often termed a 'multi-barrier' concept, with the waste packaging, the engineered repository, and the geology all providing barriers to prevent the radionuclides from reaching humans and the environment," said experts at the World Nuclear As-

sociation.

The issue is that in order for the deep geological disposal method to be as simple and safe as described above, the actual mass of the radioactive waste must be relatively small.

Unfortunately, the US refuses to build the facilities needed to recycle most of the radioactive material, leaving it to sit in temporary storage, often on site at plants like Diablo, where it poses a potential risk to the people and environment around it.

It is a misnomer that the waste will be radioactive forever, when in reality, almost all of the radiation will subside in a couple hundred thousand years. If buried deep enough in the ground, it will no longer pose a significant threat after just two hundred years, which is a much more realistic expectation for our engineered containment measures to hold.

Even if there is a breach in containment, the "threat" we are talking about is not death, but poisoned ground water that will probably be so heavily diluted by the time it makes its way out of the restricted zone that the amount of radioactivity per cubic meter of water would be low. Additionally, ground water around nuclear disposal sites is regularly tested, meaning if irradiated water is detected, people will be told to stay away from it.

Essentially, even in the worst case scenario, no one will be killed or or significantly injured as a result of deep geological disposal.

"[Nuclear] is definitely worth it because there are really only two major risks. One being the human factor, in a conflict with someone, someone might target a nuclear power plant. Even if this happens, we have an incredible amount of security measures in place. The other is a meltdown, with the main one people point to being Chernobyl. Not only did they cut corners and ignore safety regulations, but the tech was so much older compared to what we have now. Because of the immense amount of clean energy it generates and the risks being meager and fear-mongered, it's an undeniably

valuable resource for humanity," said junior Otis Grieshop.

Diablo Canyon is no exception, boasting on site personnel and advanced technological security measures to defend against threats like terrorism. If there is an issue with the nuclear reactor itself, an army of highly

Contained by a 10 inch steel core, built to withstand pressures up to 15,200 kilopascals. Housed by 5 foot thick walls of steel and concrete.

trained engineers can detect and fix the problem before it even approaches dangerous levels. If this should fail, the reaction itself is contained by a ten inch steel core, built to withstand pressures up to 15200 kilopascals. If the core is breached, the building it's housed in has five foot thick walls of steel and concrete, built not only to withstand high pressures, but are also airtight to contain radiation.

If San Luis Obispo County residents (and Americans everywhere) direct their activism toward nuclear recycling and safer, more sustainable disposal sites, the problems with nuclear that they fight so passionately will disappear.

Nuclear power gives the option for almost limitless energy, free from carbon emissions, reliable, and proven.

Nuclear energy is only as dangerous as society is negligent. If flawlessly safe nuclear power is something humanity wants to pursue, nothing will stand in our way.

Sources: [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org) [fpl.com](https://www.fpl.com) [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov) [sciencedirect.com](https://www.sciencedirect.com) [world-nuclear.org](https://www.world-nuclear.org) [gao.gov](https://www.gao.gov)



Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in SLOHS' backyard produces around ten percent of California's energy. Photo courtesy of George Rose/Getty Images.

China’s Efficiency Over America Comes at a Cost!

REPORTER SAWYER CRAM

The United States has historically had tensions with China due to its communist government. The two countries’ conflicting systems of government have been the source of distrust and confusion to San Luis Obispo High School students and others for many years. China’s communist government gives it the power to make quick decisions with incredible power compared to countries such as the United States.

However, all of the potential benefits of China’s ability to make quick changes come with equally as many risks.

“It allows the country to respond to national conflicts, deal with economic changes, and act as a single unit much better than the United States. However, it would be poor research not to include the many drawbacks associated with this system. One byproduct of an authoritarian government is that you allow radical decisions to be made too easily in the hands of too few,” said junior Levi Davis.

The reason behind China’s quick decision making lies in the architecture of its government. China’s government is ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CCP maintains authority over government decisions at both local and central levels. Furthermore, due to China’s government structure, decisions are made at the top level and are sent down to be enforced in all levels of government.



“China is not a democracy nor a republic, instead it is an authoritarian governmental regime. If the current leader Xi Jinping decides to pursue any acts that violate human rights there are extremely limited checks and balances on this decision,” said junior Timothy Seng.

“One of such historical instances of this lack of checks and balances is the Tiananmen Square Massacre. This event has then been censored by the CCP, even to this day.”

China’s lack of obstacles when it comes to

decision making shouldn’t be viewed as a pure advantage over the United States. Many Chinese officials fear facing political repercussions from making a decision that ends up being misguided or incorrect. Overall, China’s government’s method of making decisions shouldn’t be seen as superior or inferior to the United States but rather as different.

In the United States laws are first proposed through bills that must be researched and discussed by a committee before being voted on.

The bill is then approved by both bodies of Congress and if they can agree on a finalized version of it it will be passed on to the president where it will be either approved or denied.

This system of decision making by the United States operates much more slowly than China but helps to guarantee stability and success in all laws that are passed.

“I would consider moving to China, I would enjoy moving to a small village where I can connect with nature and my world. I do not believe China poses a threat to the US. I would like to learn ancient Chinese medicine,” said junior Josue Saavedra.

Hopefully the tension between the two countries will be lifted sometime in the future.

Source: *britannica.com*

1998: The Year Humanity Began Innovating Themselves Towards Involuntary Social Stagnancy

REPORTER WAUCOBA HUNTER

For eons, necessity was the primary catalyst for invention, attempting to do away with the many perils and inconveniences of life on Earth. It was in 1998 that humans had either solved virtually every problem (that we had not caused ourselves), or had the technological capability to solve them, and began participating in a pointless crusade in the name of curiosity, efficiency, and pleasure. This placed ourselves on a road not to an explosive, violent end, but to a slow, quiet, societal decline. San Luis Obispo High School students are now in the midst of that decline, taking the role of either perpetrator, victim, or somewhere in between.

Most of the inventions that the critics of their time thought were a danger to humanity, capable of destroying civilizations and poisoning entire cultures, were invented long before 1998. Ironically, it is their raw destructive power that blunted them against the masses. Everything from deadly, life-ruining narcotics, to the efficient, man-killing automatic firearm, to the continent-incinerating atom bomb were an ineffective blade against the human race. Most people would not take an action that they knew would result in the death or the harm of a human life, whether that action be smoking a drug, pulling a trigger, or turning a key.

The only way humanity could truly cause their own decline is if the road leading to it was so subtle and so convenient that they walked it willingly. This metaphorical road is the digital computer, invented in 1946. The computer alone is a benefit to humanity, a humble servant to its programmers, helping us to complete calculations in minutes that would have taken years if done by hand. Computers only revolutionized aspects of civilization that required computation, modeling, or automation.

Computer technology only became a problem as it began to alter the social and intellectual habits of individuals. The year 1998 is significant because it is the point in which computers could do amazing things in math, science, and engineering, but before they began to taint the fundamentals aspects of what make us human.

“Technological advancements have made a positive impact to our lives, creating convenience and efficiency. However, over-reliance on such tools may create negative consequences for developing interpersonal bonds – particularly when instant messaging replaces deeper conversation and face-to-face communication,” said Dr. William Hedgepatch from American Public University.

Technology allows us to avoid inconvenience and awkwardness, which is exactly what it was designed to do. However, when that inconvenience and awkwardness is what defines part of our existence, technology becomes a threat to that existence, in a manner of speaking.

Another fundamental aspect is thought, contemplation. Computers by design are there to do the heavy lifting in calculations so people could focus solely on solving. The issue is, computers became so easy to produce and so simple to use that people who don’t have any calculating needs utilize them in their daily lives. Aside from the social issues, computers do much of the thinking and planning that keep people’s minds involved and invested in the world around them. This

problem is especially worsened with the rise of AI.

“There is less patience for the process of problem solving and students expect results and answers much faster. The world has shifted to be product focused, leaving little room for appreciation of the journey needed to produce a product that is worthy of our attention, praise, and acknowledgment. Part of this is the general speed in which larger society operates; texting, emails, the internet, AI, all allow us to communicate and move at breakneck speeds. When something doesn’t match the expectation of this pace, it feels “slow”. As a result, students want to learn faster, figure out problems with fewer steps, many times skip steps and cut corners, so they can move on to what they assume (wrongly) is a more important problem to solve. I’ll add that this is not reflected just in students, but in the larger society as a whole,” said English teacher Ryan Mammarella.

Additionally, the imagination and reverie that occurs during their idle time contribute greatly to an individual’s perception of their situation and their sense of purpose. Now, this is on the decline as people are constantly occupied by technology.

“High school students today were born around 2010. This is significant because it was around this time that smartphones, social media, and the internet in general became mainstays of society. High school students today have never known a world without Youtube, or Instagram, or iPhones. Most grew up with an iPad in their hands before they could formulate full sentences,” said Mammarella.

While the internet and video games existed long before the year 1998, they stayed within their respective audience. It was after 1998 that the internet became a staple of the American household and social media began to take the world stage. Paired with the invention and popularization of the smartphone, these issues followed people everywhere they went.

“There is a lot of merit to the idea that we as people may be using our phones too much. I think that really tapping into what makes us human, engaging with the arts, sciences, and other such things would be very beneficial to a lot of people, as opposed to just scrolling for a few moments when we are free. I also think that in our day and age we are so focused on being productive and locked in, that we seem to shun the idea of just sitting doing nothing for a bit. Personally, I feel that this practice can be very beneficial. When I have just a few moments of down time, it can be good to just observe the world around me, and really be present in that moment,” said junior Timothy Seng.

Advancing computers past where they were in 1998 was detrimental to society, encroaching on the fundamental tasks and sense of purpose that makes us human. However, is blind innovation not also part of the human condition?

The universal quest to better ourselves is equally as defining as anything computers have robbed us of. In fact, the embracing of one aspect of mankind resulting in the inadvertent destruction of another is perhaps the most human thing of all.

Sources: *apu.apus.edu, archivesit.org*

With Shrinking Demand for American Goods, How is Importing Going to Affect America's Economy?

REPORTER ARCHER ACKERMAN

When the industrial revolution spun into America, the boom in capitalism led to the rise of American factories and US industrialism. In the modern era focus has shifted to trade and importing from countries such as China, rather than the homegrown industrialization that defined the nineteenth century. But when the economy is solely dependent on relations with other countries, what can happen?

In today's world, it's very easy to get cheap goods shipped overseas from foreign factories that use cheap labor and focus on mass production over making a quality product. Corporations do everything they can to maximize profit margins, and the first things to go are often humane practices. The US imports large amounts of goods from countries like China because they have much cheaper labor costs, often because of inhumane labor practices.

"I think that the overreliance of imported goods has led and will lead to more labor exploitation, not enough regulation, and repercussions like environmental harm. However, tariffs also raise the cost of living for a lot of the working class," said sophomore Trey Funk.

Tariffs are taxes on imports, and one purpose of theirs is to make domestic goods a better option by making importing more expensive. However, when it is so much cheaper to outsource labor to other countries, prices of goods ultimately increase to take on the burden of increased taxes rather than incentivizing domestic production.

Foreign sellers not only employ inhumane labor practices, but cause harm by using low quality materials that are bad for the environment.

"Fast fashion brands like Shein and general Chinese stores like Alibaba or TaoBao cause massive waste as their cheapness encourages throwing out products after only a few uses. These sites, especially TaoBao, also undermine global copyright protections as Chinese companies can make one to one replicas of brand cornerstone products like Maison Margiela Gats or Rick Owens shoes and sell them for a fraction of the price without repercussion," said sophomore Henry Wilkes.

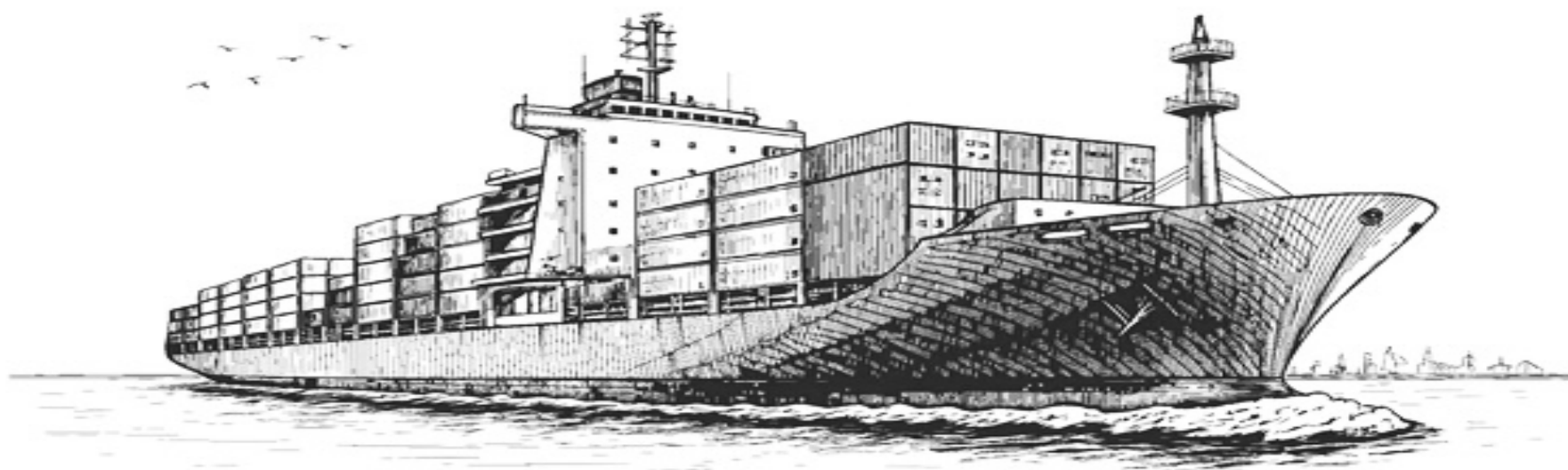
When they use such cheap materials it almost becomes a single use item, cheap and easy to throw away, creating overconsumption because instead of having stuff like clothing that are kept for a long time people will buy cheap many times.

Having exact replicas at a much cheaper rate hurts brands and hurts American companies.

"I think Chinese sites like Temu hurt businesses because of how cheap you can buy the same things from those sites," said sophomore Huck Peterson.

Overreliance on importing from sellers that prioritize profit margins and production speed over quality leads to an economy that is strongly affected by foreign markets, as well as creating an environment of overconsumption and quantity over quality.

Sources: stlouisfed.org, usitc.gov



Thousands of cargo ships ferry goods to the U.S. each year to meet the demand for foreign goods. Illustration courtesy of Shutterstock contributor Lipi Mon.

The Global LGBTQ+ Community is Still Fighting for Equality: A Look Into Today's Queer Discrimination

REPORTER MILLA WATTS

The first records of homosexuality can be dated back to 2400 BCE with the founding of an art piece depicting an Egyptian male couple in a nose-kissing position that was used to portray other couples in Egyptian history. San Luis Obispo High School is a mostly accepting school with our own GSA club,

The LGBTQ+ community has a history of discrimination and persecution but they have had accomplishments in gaining rights but it still remains a global issue politically and socially.

"It sucks [that gay people aren't globally protected] because every person should be protected and we're all people," said GSA member and sophomore Shadrach Weddige.

Most persecution when it came to the LGBTQ+ community was derived from religious beliefs such as Christianity criminalizing it as against God and the Bible.

Within history, religions have had power over nations and their beliefs influenced laws and punishments being seen as the moral guidelines of their nations. But in more recent years religion has become more open to the community with forty percent of LGBTQ+ adults between the ages of 18 to 34 following a religion, some of them even greeted with open arms to religious communities.

"I consider myself Christian and I find it a struggle to balance my religion and sexuality, especially at church," said sophomore Caleb Cortez.

Countries around the world have their own values and moral stances. When it comes to LGBTQ laws the countries with the most rights for the community are Germany, Malta, Spain, and Uruguay. The most socially friendly countries are Iceland, Norway and Cape Verde. The most dangerous countries on the list for LGBTQ+ people are Afghanistan, Gambia, Senegal, and Iran.

Most countries that lean anti-LGBTQ+ are in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Their beliefs stem from their legacy of colonial rule and extreme nationalism, causing LGBTQ+ people to be stereotyped as 'hooligans'. This continues the cycle of oppression as LGBTQ+ people are still threatened with fines, incarceration, physical torture, and death penalties in these countries.

Within 2026 there are still legal events around the world, such as in Botswana a same-sex couple is suing the government over the right to marry.

In late 2025 Kazakhstan banned 'LGBT Propaganda' online or in any media, with punishments leading to ten days in jail. As of this year twenty-two anti-trans bills have been passed in the U.S. alone.

"I do worry about leaving the country, because I think I look queer and that could definitely get me in a lot of trouble in other countries and I could be harmed," said junior Ragz Neves.

Results of a 2024 survey that included 2,800 students run by Glisten Advocacy Group shows that nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ+ students in the U.S. feel unsafe in school due to their sexuality or gender orientation. In Europe they surveyed seventeen thousand people between the ages 14 to 24 and results showed that 54 percent of the LGBTQ+ people were being bullied based on their sexuality and gender orientation.

"A big misconception about the community is that we like to push onto other people, we talk about it so we can let other people know that we're proud

and that we shouldn't be feared or ostracized," said GSA president and sophomore Exander Luna.

Glad Law, an advocacy group that helps out the LGBTQ+ community, has made plans to advocate for the community as of 2026 using community building tactics. They plan to make sure LGBTQ+ youth are protected from more recent anti-LGBTQ+ actions in the government. They also plan to provide more healthcare to LGBTQ+ individuals because healthcare has become increasingly unattainable in the past few years.

"A big misconception about the community is that we like to push onto other people, we talk about it so we can let other people know that we're proud and that we shouldn't be feared or ostracized." "I think people can help out by supporting the people around them and treating [LGBTQ+ people] as regular people, it really does help out and prevents more negative action from others; along with donating to LGBTQ+ causes and groups," said Luna.

LGBTQ+ people have definitely gone a long way within their history, but their fight for equal freedom is still around the globe. If you have the time go out and protest for the community, donate to them, and above all support the people around you. Groups to donate and support include IGLA World, The Trevor Project, GLAAD, Outright International, etc.

It's important to fight for what you think is right, it doesn't have to affect every single person to make it a serious issue.

Sources: williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu, equaldex.com, 76crimes.com, nbcnews.com, edsources.org, news.un.org

A female athlete in a black and gold singlet with 'GOGLA' on the back is running on a track. She is in mid-stride, with her right leg forward and arms pumping. The background shows a green field, a building, and spectators.

The San Luis Obispo High School Track and Field team welcomes a dominating force for the 2026 season. Junior Aria Pearce didn't just transfer from Kansas, she arrived with a reputation. With feats such as winning the 2022 Nike Outdoor Nationals 100m dash as a thirteen year old and continuing to compete at collegiate level meets in her youth, Pearce brings elite speed and experience to San Luis Obispo High School, drawing attention as a potential game changer for the team this season.

Expressions: What inspired your move from Kansas to this school?

Junior Aria Pearce: Moving from Kansas to California was my parents' decision, but ultimately, it was one I am so grateful for. Of course, I miss the people from my old towns, and they all supported me in so many ways. But moving to California, though difficult at first, has given me a new experience and way of life. I knew from a young age that I wanted to, somehow, end up here.

Expressions: What was your experience like competing at the national level?

Pearce: My experience competing at the national level was not as jarring a jump as one might think. I am so focused on my own lane, I consider myself a

Source: *letsrun.com*

Surfing has exploded in popularity all across San Luis Obispo county during the hot spring season. San Luis Obispo High School students have been out at the break, but many of them are new surfers.

With so many beginners entering the lineup, experienced surfers are starting to feel crowded out. These new surfers, often called “kooks,” sometimes cut people off or paddle into waves they aren’t ready for, leading many to wonder whether surf culture has expanded too far, too fast.

The conflicts between “kooks” and “core surfers” keep rising as popularity rises throughout San Luis Obispo County.

“I think that beginner surfers should surf in less crowded areas and learn how to stay out of the way for core surfers like myself,” said sophomore Oliver Oates.

Oates emphasized that it’s totally fine for new surfers to be out there, as long as they respect more advanced surfers and don’t interfere with their reps.

“Beginner surfers should start at Avila and work their way up rather than going straight to big waves,” said Oates.

New Surfers also need to learn basic safety and understand ocean conditions before paddling. Strong currents, riptides, and large sets can be dangerous for anyone who isn’t prepared. Working up slowly from smaller, calmer breaks to more challenging ones helps prevent injuries and keeps everyone in the water safer.

Beginner surfers question what the

best surfing equipment is to level their skills. The best surfing equipment is to level their skills.

“The best equipment for beginners has to be foam top long boards because they are easy to stand up on and easier to handle in the water,” said sophomore Wynn Sirisophonwatthanakul.

Beginners should start with boards that are easy to ride, like wave storms, then find boards that suit their surfing style, such as longboards or shortboards. Surfers should start with three fins because they offer the most stability when first learning to stand up on the board.

“It is important to understand which surf spots are best for your skill,” said sophomore Gabe Wilkes.

The best surf spots for advanced surfers in San Luis Obispo County are Hazards (Montana de Oro), Morro Rock, and Cayucos on bigger days. The most recommended spots for new surfers are Pismo Beach, Avila Beach, and Shell Beach. These are best for beginners because they offer soft breaks, small surf, and are very easy to paddle out at.

As surfing continues to grow across SLO County, the tension between newcomers and experienced surfers highlights the importance of shared responsibility in the lineup. Surfing is very fun when everyone understands their place in the progression: beginners taking time to learn basic safety rules, such as ocean currents, and starting with mellow breaks like Avila or Cayucos. Have fun on the waves, Tigers!

Source: pesosinmypocket.com

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SLOHS Expands Opportunities with New Medical Class



San Luis Obispo High School students putting their skills to practice in Sports Med. Photo collage courtesy of Sports Medicine and Biology teacher Danny Prodoehl.

REPORTER RUBY BLACKBURN

As this school year begins to wrap up, San Luis Obispo High School introduces a new, exciting medical class for next year: advanced patient care.

“This class is going to be a deeper dive into a lot of the skills you would need going into secondary colleges geared towards health care, in careers such as nursing, radiology, and phlebotomy, any of the positions that are healthcare that don’t require you going to a four year school right away,” said Sports Medicine and Biology teacher Danny Prodoehl.

This class will open many different opportunities for students. Instead of the only medical-centered class at SLOHS being Sports Medicine, Advanced Patient Care will allow students to experience a wider range of medicine.

“I took Sports Med. this year and enjoyed it; I hope this new class will give me a broader range of skills other than taping,” said junior Fiona Sweeney.

This new medical class will focus on a lot of skills revolving around patients, such as patient assessments, reading EKGs and heart rhythms, dealing with mass traumas, brain injury assessments, and much more.

possible careers.

“I think this class will show students different ways they can have a career in medicine that they may have never known existed,” said junior Ava Connolly.

These are all skills that will help a student later in their life if they want to be a nurse, paramedic, doctor, or anything healthcare-related.

“In this new class, I’m hoping to get more experience and knowledge about it’s important for students to receive knowledge on possible careers in order for them to plan for their future. Mr. Prodoehl is making this possible through the Advanced Patient Care class, as well as through hands-on experience.

“I hope to get a HOSA chapter started, which is a national student organization for students interested in healthcare careers. As well as getting opportunities to visit different facilities and bringing in guest speakers to speak about their career,” said Prodoehl.

The HOSA chapter will open opportunities for students to meet others sharing their passion for medicine, as well as gain experience for a career in medicine.

Make sure to sign up for this class, especially if you’re thinking about pursuing a career in medicine.

Is an Injury More Mentally or Physically Challenging?

REPORTER LORELEI HUTCHINSON

Under immense physical strain, many San Luis Obispo High School student-athletes experience injuries during their sports seasons. These injuries are extremely physically taxing during competition and are insanely difficult to deal with mentally.

The constant struggle to rest during an injury is experienced by many talented athletes. Athletes find ways to deal with the mental impact of an injury, by conversing with other injured athletes.

“I just talk to people who have been injured before, and they tell me what helped them. I’m just trying to get through it and recover,” said sophomore Alina Stellmacher.

While facing an injury, athletes need to take

time off to reconnect with themselves. It’s easy for an athlete to become absorbed in performance, constant training, and competition.

“When your whole life revolves around your sports, it is really challenging for your mental health to be injured,” said senior Carly Meeks.

Athletes are constantly visiting the trainer hoping for a magical way to fix their injury, when the only real way is rest. It can be hard to know when to push through an injury; it’s important to listen to your body.

With an injury like a broken arm or sprained ankle, it’s easier to know when to stop training; but with a chronic or overuse injury, athletes may experience soreness or some pain for a while before it becomes too painful to play.

“I just waited until I was able to go back. It was nice to see friends, so I guess I just tried to stay as busy as possible,” said Meeks.

Student-athletes need to prioritize rest especially during injuries. Icing and elevating are key elements to healing but only when paired with proper rest.

“Not seeing progression and everyone else getting ahead was hard to see for my mental health, but recovering quickly and taking time off is helpful, too,” said sophomore Kelton Sullivan.

Feeling as if you aren’t progressing is common during injuries, but it is actually just a different form of progression. Although it is hard to rest during injuries, it is important for athletes to learn when they need to rest and when to push through.

Making Waves: SLO Boys Swim is Dominating the Pool

REPORTER RAFAEL CHAVEZ

San Luis Obispo High School sports have started off strong for the 2026 spring season. The Boys Swim team has had an exceptional start to this season. Following the success of last year, this big question is: will they be able to pull off a league, CIF, or even state win?

The Boys Swim team is a valuable sport at SLOHS and many athletes are able to achieve college scholarships out of the program. Although this season’s athletes have been doing exceptionally well, they’re always looking for more swimmers.

“If you’re looking into it and if you want to be a swimmer, it’s a great experience and all the people are nice, no one’s going to be mean to you,” said sophomore Mattox Siebenlist.

Another major part of SLOHS’ Swim team is its divers. The diving program has new people joining each year, and has become a strength of the program.

“The dive team is really fun. I just joined this year for fun and it has been really fun. Every practice we get to hang out with our friends and joke around and have fun. Overall, it’s a really fun time and I think if you’re looking for a sport to try, try diving,” said junior Russel Issa.

The team has traveled to multiple swim meets statewide, and are currently ranked 26 in California as of April 14.

The team is performing incredibly well this season and improving every meet. In the Clovis Invitational meet, sophomore Beckett Horstman took fourth place for the school record in the 100 back.



Boys Swim seniors smiling after a big win! Photo courtesy of SLOHS Boys Swim Instagram page.

This incredible feat demonstrates the success and work ethic everyone in the program possesses.

“It’s hard to pinpoint a specific thing I enjoy about swimming because of how much the sport has given me, but the great community

I’m surrounded by is definitely a highlight,” said Horstman.

This strong season is now rolling into CIF this week. So keep an eye out for that title, Tigers!

The Superhero Everyone Has Been Waiting for: Season Four of “Invincible” is Here to Save the Day

HEALTH & SPORTS CO-EDITOR SOPHIA CHAVES

Dropping every Wednesday, the new season of “Invincible,” which premiered in March, has taken social media and San Luis Obispo High School students by storm, with fans sharing clips, theories, and reactions faster than any superhero can fly. The animated series continues to dominate online conversations, proving its latest season is nothing short of a cultural event.

The first “Invincible” comic book was published in 2003, and had a reign of 144 issues which ceased production in 2018. The art styles of both Ryan Ottley and Corey Walker were heavily praised by readers, and so when Robert Kirkman began to release animated episodes on Prime Video in 2021, fans were extremely excited.

“I just don’t think there are many other shows doing what Invincible is doing. It’s a unique, raw, and creative universe,” said freshman Mathias Bany.

Season four continues to raise the stakes, creating buzz across fans on campus and on



social media fan spaces alike.

“The previous season was a lot slower, I feel like they were really trying to build Mark’s character. This season where he becomes a lot more violent now and he’s more like his dad is a really big character change for him. It’s also them speeding up how the show is going along with the comics,” said junior Silo Villani.

For many students, that faster pace is exactly what makes the new season so engaging. So many character arcs and storylines have been being built, are all coming to a peak.

“Every episode feels bigger than the last. I think there could be some work to do with Eve’s character, because they kind of made her a side piece to Mark. You start to see how complicated the other characters are though, especially Mark,” said Villani.

Others are drawn to the sense of community the show creates, with weekly releases, the anticipation only builds between each episode. Social media

theories and edits roar during the week, and everyone holds their breath until the next Wednesday. If fans not caught up, their trying to avoid spoilers all day. It feels like everyone is watching the show together, even if it’s on their own time.

“One of the most viral moments was probably the end of episode five. Social media definitely made it way more popular, it was downright shocking. A lot of people complain about the animation, but I don’t mind it, if they have to make the boring scenes with some crappy animation, to make the fight scenes super epic, I’d gladly take that sacrifice,” said freshman Mason Kaufman.

A lot of shows are predictable, but “Invincible” isn’t afraid to take risks, and the end of episode five really showed that aspect.

As the season continues, “Invincible” shows no signs of slowing down. With its intense storytelling, evolving characters, and weekly conversation, the series has become a shared experience among students. Judging by the constant buzz both online and on campus, it’s clear that fans will be counting down the days until season five is released.

Obsessive Micromanagers or Genius Architects?: Here’s Why Students Play the Sims Years After Launch

CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF VYOLET BURRUS

In their free time, San Luis Obispo High School students find themselves enjoying many hobbies and pastimes, including various video games like the “Sims.” The “Sims” franchise has always held a large fanbase, but in recent years the game has grown in popularity amongst teens and young adults.

“I play the ‘Sims’ because I enjoy building and designing houses, and also playing out different lifestyles,” said sophomore Irelynn Zurbach.

Originally created in early 2000, the “Sims” laid the groundwork for many modern simulation games and has amassed half a billion players. Four games have been released in the franchise, the most recent being “Sims 4,” which has been around since 2014. This version of the game alone has 85 million players.

The game allows players to completely customize a Sim with traits as well as a large catalogue of outfits for any season or event. From there, players have full creative freedom not only over the house they build for their Sim, but the life they design.

“I usually log on whenever I have some downtime but wanna stay inside. I used to always watch [‘Sims’] youtubers as a kid and I loved all their wacky challenges and worlds and felt inspired to make them myself. I love to build houses and design characters/pets more than the actual simulation, but both parts are good. The creative aspects can also help visualize certain things I can’t make in real life,” said junior Gianna Marchetti.

Players can choose whether to build the dream suburban life, complete with the perfect nuclear family and white picket fence house, or to detach from reality and play with occults like vampires and mermaids. From the mundane to the mystical, the game has something for everyone.

“We definitely talk more about being relatable than realistic, which means that we do lean more dramatic in our acting and our animation,” said “Sims” executive producer Lyndsay Pearson. “That’s partially because of the way you

play the game: You’re far away [from characters], you need to be able to read it. But also because that supports the world and the stories we’re trying to enable.”

The “Sims 4” is constantly expanding and developing new content to support the needs of its fanbase. The base game is free-to-play and has an abundance of interesting features and content, but the expansion packs add additional layers of gameplay and customization for players. In the last year alone, EA has released multiple expansion packs that add more in-depth content with themes like royalty, fairies, and family living.

While these packs introduce many new aspects of gameplay for Simmers, some players believe this content is unnecessarily paywalled and should have been included with the game originally.

“A lot of the fun features rely on [custom] mods and expansion packs, when you see all the fun stuff people do online and try to recreate it only to find out you need to spend more than sixty dollars over and over again it can get disappointing,” said Marchetti.

Many players choose to customize their game even further, modifying their game with custom content and gameplay mods. There is a large online community of Simmers creating free add-ons that enrich player experiences.

Whether players stick with the base game, spend money on expansions, or scour the web for interesting mods, the “Sims” adapts to the whims of its player.

“The ‘Sims’ is a very casual game that’s still rich in humor and easter eggs. People who are looking for some simple, creative, and funny would love it,” said Marchetti.

The “Sims” is a timeless game perfect for anyone looking for a space to express their creativity and let their imagination run wild, so any interested students should definitely check it out!

Source: *fastcompany.com*

Why Are Teenagers Obsessed with Digital Cameras?

REPORTER SOFIA BALLESTEROS LOPEZ

In recent years, digital cameras have made a return among teenagers, bringing back the early 2000’s aesthetic and changing the way we capture memories.

However, is it really worth it to buy a digital camera? Students at San Luis Obispo High School who own one give their opinion on this trend.

Many students say that they noticed the trend increased through social media.

“Since more people started posting pictures with them, people started buying them more,” said sophomore Yvonne Garcia.

Seeing influencers or celebrities posting cute pictures makes the audience want to know how to have pictures like that. In addition, if they say they used a digital camera to get that result people are going to buy them expecting the same effect.

Social media has played a very important role in the comeback of digital cameras, but are they really popular just because of social media?

“The vintage look of pictures taken by digital cameras is more flattering, people like them more because of its aesthetic,” said sophomore Hannah Murphy.

Some teenagers also argue that you can get the same aesthetic with your phone. There are a lot of tutorials on the internet on how to edit the pictures so they have the digital camera lightning/aesthetic.



Beyond aesthetics, students also feel like capturing memories with a digital camera has more emotional value than iPhone photos.

“Memories feel more appreciated, you capture the moment in a different way. Looking back at pictures taken by my digital camera makes me more nostalgic than the ones taken with my phone,” said senior Lise Heyerdahl.

“Even though a picture taken with friends is going

to make you feel nostalgic no matter the device, overall pictures taken with digital cameras have a better vibe,” said Garcia.

Most of the students who own a digital camera say that their favorite pictures are the ones taken with friends. A friend’s group picture will make anyone feel nostalgic no matter the device it was taken with, because pictures like that have a lot of sentimental value and memories behind.

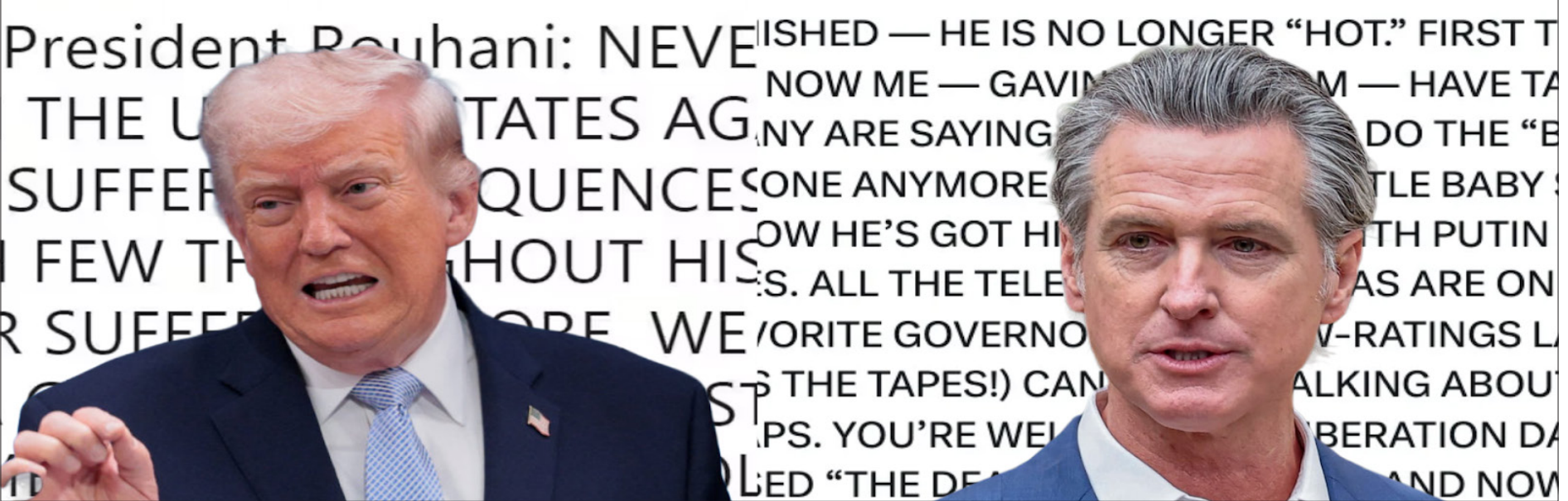
As with every other trend, some might have questions about if digital cameras are just a phase or if they came to stay.

The truth is, somebody that likes taking pictures and enjoys capturing little moments is going to keep using them no matter what.

“Many people might just use them because of the hype but usually when you buy one you won’t stop using it. There’s always going to be one friend in the friend group that has a digital camera,” said Heyerdahl.

Whether the trend of digital cameras is driven by aesthetics, nostalgia or social media, they allow teenagers to capture moments in a more personal and authentic way. Even if the digital camera trend fades, the memories captured by them won’t.

Future Voters of SLOHS Reflect on Gavin Newsom’s “Fight Fire with Fire” Social Media Campaign



Governor Gavin Newsom has adopted president Trump's less-than-diplomatic social media strategy. Collage courtesy of reporter Wesley Bisheff.

REPORTER WESLEY BISHEFF

In a political climate where Democrats are often accused of being too lax, governor Gavin Newsom is looking to brashly change the narrative. How are San Luis Obispo High School students reacting? Newsom is in his final year of office as California governor, and is anticipated to run for president in 2028. Recently, he has been mirroring president Trump’s abrasive X (formerly known as Twitter) strategy in an attempt to “fight fire with fire.” Such tweets include distinct elements such as unbridled capitalization, nicknames for his political opponents, and juvenile insults. For SLOHS students, many of whom will be new voters in the 2028 presidential election, reactions are mixed. “I honestly think it’s the only good thing about him and his potential 2028 campaign,” said senior Eve Greenwood. “At this point, Democrats do need to be brash and tough against Republicans because respectability politics obviously isn’t working for

them and just shows how detached they are from the current political climate.” Democrats have lately faced criticism for pursuing little action and promoting polite but frankly boring candidates. This has given Newsom an opportunity to capitalize. “Attention is a sharply limited resource in a crowded race and in a fractured media environment. Newsom is betting that by breaking previously-accepted norms, he’ll be able to dominate attention,” said history teacher Seamus Perry, who worked for former president Barack Obama during his tenure in the White House. Despite the potential for this strategy, it comes with some obvious risks. “Lots of voters (both right and left) are uncomfortable with over-the-top rhetoric and aggressive language,” said Perry. “Newsom risks gaining attention on cable news and online, but turning off the vast middle that actually provides the bulk of the votes.” Discomfort with Newsom’s brashness is felt by some SLOHS students.

“I can appreciate that there is a political figure on the Democratic side that is doing something,” said junior Lucy Beck. “On the other hand, does it really make the Democrats a better party to stoop down to his level? Seeing these two grown men jab back and forth at each other while things fall apart around them is concerning to say the least.” To some, Newsom’s strategy can also feel like a cheap way to respond to criticisms of Democratic apathy without harder-hitting policy action. “I think his social media strategy has just further shown me how shallow his campaign is as of right now,” said Greenwood. “He is willing to utilize his social media to be tough on Trump and MAGA, but won’t meaningfully combat harmful Republican policy.” As 2028 crawls steadily closer and students get ready to vote, we’ll soon see how Newsom’s strategy will pan out.

Sources: *latimes.com*, *pbs.org*

The Sad Downfall of the 2020 Sensation “Among Us”

REPORTER LOGAN HUTCHINSON

The video game “Among Us” peaked in popularity during the mid-2020 quarantine, well-surpassing over two hundred million downloads. Many students at San Luis Obispo High School most likely played it during the lockdown. Unfortunately, due to the game’s basic concept and a small development team, they were unable to release updates fast enough to keep the community intrigued. The fame became short-lived. “Among Us” has only continued to fade, with only around six thousand active players today, compared to their all-time peak of 447,476 concurrent players on September 26, 2020. “Among Us” is an online multiplayer murder mystery type game where four to fifteen players work together on a spaceship, base, or airship while trying to figure out who the imposter is among them. The crewmates must complete simple tasks around the ship, such as fixing wiring and throwing away trash. Their objective is to finish all their tasks to win or vote out all the impostors. The impostors, who pretend to do tasks while actually sabotaging systems and eliminating crewmates, when a body is discovered, players can report it and call a meeting. All players discuss who they think could be the imposter and vote them out. Impostors can shift into other characters and vent throughout the map, manipulating crewmates into voting each other out. With a game that sounds this fun, students from San Luis Obispo High School wonder how it could have died. “It’s very repetitive, and it’s been the same thing. They haven’t really changed

it much, so people got bored,” said sophomore Jude Pearson. The concept of the game started to get boring because they didn’t add unique updates and a variety of game modes to their game. “Playing ‘Among Us’ is only fun if you are playing with a lot of friends and talking on the phone,” said sophomore Kai Castillo. So, without playing with friends, it is harder to communicate with players in your lobby. “There are many other games out there that you can play with a lot of friends, and many of them have better development and more complex mechanics, which creates a lot of competition for people who play ‘Among Us’,” said sophomore Emmett Oates. There are many other games, more versatile and advanced, challenging Among Us’ popularity, such as “Fortnite” and “Fall Guys.” Overall, “Among Us” was a unique and entertaining game at that time, but its popularity faded fast. With slow updates, limited game variety, and a small development team, the game struggled to keep players interested. On top of that, changes to chat systems and the rise of more complex multiplayer games make it harder for “Among Us” to compete. The game became repetitive and less social over time. Its decline shows how games need to stay up to date with the fan base, or they will die off.

Source: *dailyfreepress.com*

A Brand New TikTok Trend has Entered the Villa: The AI Generated Skit “Fruit Love Island” is on the Rise

REPORTER LOUJAYN CHAFROUD

Recently, a new trend has been rising on social media: “Fruit Love Island.” Students around SLOHS have a lot of thoughts about it. “Fruit Love Island” is an AI-generated TikTok skit based on the show “Love Island.” Although it might be addictive, it’s very harmful to the environment, and people are not realizing that they are normalizing AI by watching it. “I think that AI is not safe or developed enough for students to be using it, or watching it, and I think the use of platforms is much too normalized among

teens,” said sophomore Greenlee Anderson. People don’t think that watching a few seconds of a small skit on TikTok could be so harmful. However, no matter how long a video is watched, it results in a consequence. “I think it’s just meaningless and has no content to it. It shows how people don’t really care about how its affecting the environment,” said sophomore Tierra Swain. “Even though only a little bit of water is being used to generate these videos, it still contributes to climate change and takes our water. Little things such as this make big issues even though it doesn’t seem like it”

A lot of people watch it so they can catch up with the new trends around school, be included in more conversations about it, and be able to relate to the videos they watch. “I don’t really think it is entertaining or that it has a good plot. I think people just watch it for the fun of it, they think that AI-generated things are funny, and it’s because AI is a new thing around social media,” said sophomore Sofia Ballesteros. Even though AI videos could be fun to watch and a great topic to laugh about, it is not very healthy or appropriate to watch and it harms the environment.

How Do You Contribute to Global Inequality?: We Are Amongst the Most Privileged on the Planet

CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AIDAN FIELD

San Luis Obispo High School students lead incredibly comfortable lives from a global perspective. Students live on the California Central Coast, widely recognized globally as one of the best places on Earth to live, with nearly perfect weather year round, quality access to natural beauty and recreation, and countless more privileges that come with living in a first world country. How exactly does this compare to people’s lives around the world, where opportunities, education, and freedom, aren’t as certain?

“I feel like we are sort of insulated and privileged in a global context. I know a lot of people who don’t keep track of the news because it doesn’t really affect them,” said senior Eve Greenwood.

In San Luis Obispo, students have many resources at their disposal. Free high quality education through the second year of college gives students incredible opportunities.

“I think that the majority of students have a surface level understanding of the issues people face around the world, if at all. I believe that students have a lot on their plates at the moment and to take the time to truly understand what others are going through isn’t seen as the first priority in the many things they have to do in their lives,” said senior Habiba Abo Ismail.

Fortunate families in countries without a robust secondary education system might spend the equivalent of over \$20 thousand per year to send their child to an American school in their home country, where students learn from an American high school curriculum. For SLOHS students this comes at no cost.

SLCUSD’s median household income for student’s families is \$130 thousand. This is a lot compared to California’s median income of \$100 thousand and the U.S.’s median household income of \$83 thousand. However, put into a global perspective, the amount of money SLO’s families have is staggering.

The global median household income sits at around \$10 thousand per year, meaning that SLOHS families typically earn thirteen times more than Earth’s average family.

Many students drive in cars that are their own which often cost around \$10 thousand, meaning that students at SLOHS drive vehicles worth an average family’s annual income.

That’s just the average, countries like Madagascar have a median household income of around \$1 thousand.

Other metrics that judge SLO’s prosperity paint a similar picture. The Human Development Index (HDI) judges a population based on life expectancy, literacy, access to essential services, education, income and more. The global average HDI is around 700, San Luis Obispo sits at over 940, placing it as one of the most developed regions on the planet.

These statistics are a reflection of staggering differences in how people around the world live their lives. In SLO, many basic things are taken for granted. Higher incomes mean families here can afford to send their children to college, in fact, it’s expected. Rather than anticipating college decisions, teenagers might be preparing to work in a factory or a farm, earning much less pay and living their entire lives in the same place they were born.

Huge differences in HDI mean that unlike SLO, many people around the world do not have access to quality healthcare. The result is that by chance of where someone is born they might expect to live twenty years less than their Californian counterparts.

“We take for granted our housing availability. We take for granted indoor plumbing, access to healthcare, streets and roads that are functional, and a functioning justice system. Things that a lot of people don’t have,” said economics teacher Gregory Ross.

This reality is a consequence of history and international policy.

Colonization by American and European powers allowed these economies to develop rapidly. Wealth from countries in South America, Africa, and Asia funded infrastructure and institutions which built prosperous economies in countries like the United States. Meanwhile, it left other countries depleted.

It is difficult to paint a picture of the west’s sprawling economies without seeing it as a by-product of colonialism and imperialism. The prosperity that is seen in San Luis Obispo is a consequence of this history.

By the twentieth century, however, this system fell apart. Independence movements across Africa and Asia gradually ended massive colonial empires.

The process, however, that generates inequality is still alive and well.

Since WWII, global inequality has gradually declined. Countries like India and China have been able to develop, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty. Additionally, global life expectancy has risen by almost twenty years, and more dramatically in some places.

Global quality of life is gradually improving. Much of this is also due to huge advances in medicine and programs funded by countries like the United States.

“The US has some interesting motives for why it does foreign aid, which is about expanding its global influence. But there are so many people that do really tangibly rely on it,” said Greenwood.

USAID was a program designed to support global health, aid in emergencies, and aid in foreign policy. The result was one of the best institutions in the modern world. Millions of lives were saved and improved through this program. The result was that the U.S.’s massive economic privilege was used to help billions of people around the world, paving a way for a world healthier and more equal.

This was until it was dismantled last year by the Trump administration.

“The new administration not only shuttered this work, they fired the staff of the entire agency, terminated 86 percent of its programs, and kneecapped the rest – all against Congressional directives. They

dismantled the US’s largest civilian force advancing global stability, peace, economic growth, and survival,” said former assistant administrator for global health at USAID Atul Gawande, MD, MPH.

It is estimated by epidemiologists at Boston University that in just a year over six hundred thousand people have lost their lives already due to the loss of this program. Two thirds of them are children.

Starvation is still a reality throughout much of the world, but people here may not realize how many people still go days between meals.

Conservatives in the lead up to the 2024 election vilified this agency. This also may have been due to the lack of awareness of global issues.

The average American might not have any idea of how big an issue preventable infectious diseases are around the world when we don’t have to worry about tuberculosis, malaria, and

polio. Starvation is still a reality throughout much of the world, but people here may not realize how many people still go days between meals.

This reality contributes to making horrible decisions like dismantling USAID. This should be the time where privileged countries are expanding these programs.

USAID is just one example of how U.S. tax dollars have real global consequences.

In Israel, U.S. military aid has helped enable what human rights groups have labeled ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Slowly, awareness about these issues has begun to create pushback against these types of decisions, however, it is often too little or too late.

Awareness of these issues and recognizing the privilege that people have is the only way to combat this.

“Knowing allows us to change things. We should understand how they are living so we can change how they are living for the better and understand what our government is funding and doing. Knowing

more about how other people live also humanizes them so many people see people in other countries as just numbers but understanding their lives allows people to see them as fully human just like us,” said Abo Ismail.

In SLO, people generally don’t feel privileged. Life isn’t easy in SLO, and residents still have to deal with a high cost of living and other issues. However, the truth is that by almost all metrics, lives in SLO are generally better than the vast majority of people on

Earth.

“We have a pretty good area. There’s not a lot of crime, it’s relatively wealthy, that’s a privilege in itself. But, when you compare it to an international scale, it gets even starker how privileged we are just by being in SLO,” said Greenwood.

It shouldn’t be a source of shame, but it also shouldn’t be a source of ignorance.

Sources: nces.ed.gov, measureofamerica.org, news.gallup.com, hsph.harvard.edu, un.org

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