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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS, INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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InterVarsity derecognized as student organization due to student leader requirements

Religious groups cannot specify faith as criteria for leadership

By KATLIN SWEENEY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Christian based organization InterVarsity has been derecognized as a student org. on all 23 CSU system campuses based on their constitution's mandate that a student must be of the Christian faith in order to become a chapter leader.

InterVarsity is a student Christian group that originates in late nineteenth century England and became prevalent in the United States as of the late 1930s. It is present on multiple college campuses, working to lead small group Bible studies, introducing students to the Christian faith and collaborating with other student organizations to support various social justice causes. InterVarsity has been present for decades on various CSU campuses, having been at CSU Fresno for 40

years prior to derecognition.

On Dec. 21, 2011, former CSU System Chancellor Charles B. Reed signed Executive Order 1068, a memorandum that prohibits campus recognition of student orgs. that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation or disability.

"No campus shall recognize any fraternity, sorority, living group, honor society, or other student organization unless its membership and leadership are open to all currently enrolled students at that campus," the memorandum said. "Except that a social fraternity or sorority or other university living group may impose a gender limitation as permitted by Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 41500."

Under Executive Order 1068, student organizations

are permitted to require that potential leaders have been members of the group for a certain period of time and/or be elected into these positions. If a group did not comply with these guidelines, their respective campus would review their constitution and possibly derecognize them as a student org.

In InterVarsity's constitution, which is utilized by the CSUSM chapter, Article V Section 3 requires the Christian faith as part of the criteria for the student leader position.

"Leadership of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at California State University San Marcos involves significant spiritual commitment," the InterVarsity Chapter Constitution said. "Chapter leaders are expected to indicate their agreement with InterVarsity's Doctrine and Purpose Statements and exemplify

Christ-like character, conduct and leadership (c.f. the following relevant passages: 1 Peter 5:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Galatians 5:19-26; and 1 Corinthians 6:7-11)."

Due to the faith-based requirements for student leaders, InterVarsity was officially derecognized as a student org. back in 2012. However, Chancellor Timothy P. White, who became the California State University System Chancellor in Oct. 2012, granted InterVarsity a moratorium for the 2013 to 2014 academic year. This allowed religious orgs. to resubmit their constitutions and bylaws with adjusted language for review. If orgs. did not adjust their requirements to reflect Executive Order 1068's mandate for nondiscriminatory practices, they would officially be derecognized.

While they reviewed their constitution during this time frame, the CSUSM InterVar-



Photo by Cody Cook

Members of the CSUSM intervarsity organization meet up on Monday and gather around under a tree.

sity chapter decided against revising the section of their constitution that presented problems with the memorandum passed by Reed. This prompted a derecognition letter from CSUSM's Student Life & Leader-

ship program on Oct. 8.

InterVarsity Chapter President at CSUSM, Garrett Hatch, said that while

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CSUSM students work to raise awareness of student homelessness

Call for Cougars' advocacy

By JASMINE DEMERS
COMMUNITY NEWS EDITOR

A film screening was held in the USU Ballroom to raise awareness for an often overlooked dilemma affecting college students across the state, including on this very campus.

"Inocente," a 2012 Academy Award winning film, tells the story of a young Latina artist who was homeless and living on the streets of San Diego.

The event was organized by a faculty focus group in partnership with the Casa Cornelia Law Firm and was also sponsored by several CSUSM organizations. Casa Cornelia works closely with unaccompanied minor refugees and gave organizers

permission to play the film.

Guest speaker, Karen GuzmXn, shared her own experience with becoming homeless as a college student and her hopes for change on campus.

"Homelessness is actually a huge issue in North and San Diego County. This event was able to highlight the issue of homelessness through another avenue," GuzmXn said.

According to GuzmXn, students have the option of indicating whether or not they are, or have ever been, homeless on their FAFSA application. This makes it so that the University is aware of the amount of students that are affected by homelessness. However, GuzmXn says that problems may arise in the accuracy of these num-



Photo by Chris Morales

CSUSM students have the option to make the financial aid office aware of their living accommodations. This includes whether or not they are homeless.

bers when students choose not to identify as homeless because they don't understand the qualifications.

"I think it's important to highlight homelessness on our campus because then

students have an idea of what resources are available on campus, more students who would classify as homeless would realize that they qualify, and most importantly, more resources

and funds are set aside for students in such circumstances," GuzmXn said.

GuzmXn explains that the University should not only recognize the prevalence of homelessness on campus, but

explore ways to fix the issue.

"The reason I began organizing around campus issues in general was because I personally felt like this university failed me in many ways. I think that it's important and necessary for students and faculty to be able to honestly acknowledge that our university hasn't always responded to situations appropriately," GuzmXn said. "See, by not acknowledging it, we are part of the problem. You have to acknowledge the problems so that we can work together and improve our university until it's really able to live up to its core principles."

During her speech at the screening event, GuzmXn

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ASI passes resolution in support of Student Access Initiative

Student government endorses possible shift in class scheduling

By KATLIN SWEENEY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The ASI Board of Directors has moved forward with endorsing the implementation of the Student Access Initiative’s proposed scheduling changes, as long as U-hour is preserved in the revised time blocks. The Student Access Initiative (SAI) proposes moving some three unit classes from twice a week, 75 minute blocks to 50 minute blocks, three times a week. The proposal has been a subject of contention this semester as more members of the campus community became aware of the way it will potentially impact their schedules. The

affected courses would vary based upon how department chairs choose to allot time slots based on subject matter, as well as professor and classroom availability. Some students and professors have argued that the revised time blocks could potentially create scheduling conflicts for lecturers teaching at multiple campuses, force them to spend more money in gas and parking permits to be on campus extra days each week, increase professor workload and affect the pedagogical structuring of some courses. Others have argued that the SAI will decrease class conflicts, help solve space problems that have occurred

with a growing campus and accelerate graduation rates. On Nov. 21, ASI BoD passed the “Resolution in Support of the Student Access Initiative with the Preservation of University Hour.” The decision was made after viewing a presentation about the SAI by Vice Provost Kamel Hadadd, discussing questions and concerns with students interested in learning more about the initiative and reviewing the Q&A posted by the Office of Communications to the student body on Nov. 21. “Kamel came to present at our first Board of Directors meeting in September, because we were concerned that he was going to get rid

of University Hour,” ASI Executive Committee President and CEO, Haley Perko, said. “That was our main concern at the time. The Student Affairs Dept. was able to work with him and find an alternate way to put the schedule together so that both more classroom space was utilized and U-hour was preserved. This was the main purpose when writing the resolution in support of this initiative.” Since these discussions with the BoD, the SAI now proposes retaining U-hour, but moving it from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. to the new time slot of 12:50 p.m. to 1:50 p.m. In their resolution, ASI requested that if U-hour were to be moved again, it

should remain within the high-impact time of 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., when most students are on campus. The resolution said that the preservation of U-hour is an integral part of ensuring that Student Life and Campus Climate, which are two of the five institutional strategic priorities included in the University Strategic Plan, remain primary issues at CSUSM. It cites the one hour time block as an important way of preserving time for students to organize meetings, attend events and engage in peer collaboration. While ASI BoD have decided to support the SAI, the resolution calls for more discussion about the proposal

and how it will benefit, or hinder, the campus community. “We did have discussion at our board meeting and decided with an ever so evolving campus we need to learn to adapt so that the students are not hurt by our rapid growth,” Perko said. “So we saw some flaws in this initiative, but in the long run it is there to help offer more classroom space, to hopefully offer more class sections and ultimately hopefully facilitate a faster graduation rate.” Students that are interested in expressing their opinions can contact the ASI Board of Directors or submit comments to the SAI FAQ form at the Planning and Academic Resources web page.

Diversity mapping project reveals campus makeup

By SYDNEY SCHABACKER
STAFF WRITER

Recently, CSUSM President Karen Haynes was recognized in a U-T San Diego Local Reports article as leading a university population where “more than half of the student body identifies as being a minority.” In order to further ensure that students who belong to these minorities may feel properly represented, CSUSM routinely hires Hualani and Associates (H&A) to run a Diversity Mapping Project at the University. These programs are designed to map current diversity, inclusion efforts, equality, initiatives and courses on university campuses. With this information, the administration can better understand the current demographics being taught, and learn how CSUSM can

properly tailor services for all of the student population. According to the project’s page on the CSUSM website, diversity efforts are defined as including “campus activities, programs, initiatives, processes, policies, mission statements, and/or events related to diversity, culture, inclusion, and social justice.” These efforts are based on detailed study of demographic factors such as “race, ethnicity, age, gender, generation, sexual orientation, nationality, regional identity, linguistic background, disability, political ideology, veteran’s status, religion [and] socioeconomic status.” One key goal H&A has with diversity mapping is to determine the actual level of engagement with diversity issues. Diversity mapping digs beneath projected or assumed engagement in diversity issues, checking for a more than superficial commitment.

In addition, rather than allowing an institution to focus on just one or a few successful diversity programs, the mapping analyzes all of them. It goes beyond the bits and pieces of various approaches for particular groups to take a holistic approach to all of the diversity elements on campus, framing the various efforts into a more comprehensive overview. For greater clarity on the status of university-wide diversity efforts, the Mapping Project examines four years of data on diversity programs, curricular components, and resource allocations. H&A collects this data in four days of individual interviews and focus groups. They also scan the CSUSM website, and review documents and information from key departments and employees campus-wide. The Office of Diversity, Educational Equity, Inclu-

sion, and Ombud Services is responsible for the Mapping Project. The Advisory Coordinating Committee for Diversity Mapping is the liaison between H&A, the university, and various constituencies on campus. Dr. Laurie Stowell is the Committee’s Co-Chair, and she has high hopes for the mapping’s outcome. “We have just finished

the data collection phase and next semester will be more active and more important,” Stowell said. The Mapping Project is a tool the Committee wants to use to identify strengths, current resources, opportunities and areas needing improvement. Interpretation of the data will allow them to recommend strategies and next step actions.

“It will be up to the different constituents of the campus community to determine the impact...what we do with the report is the where the rubber meets the road,” Stowell concludes. Students interested in participating in the project or the various diversity events associated with the program are advised to contact the Advisory for Diversity Mapping.

CSUSM students present posters, projects at showcase

By SONNI SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

To a student, university life may seem to center around work and grading, with little opportunity to show off one’s creative skills to an audience. Fortunately, students who wish to share their creative accomplishments with other students and faculty members got their wish at the Student Poster Showcase, held on Dec. 2 at The Clarke Field House. “The purpose of the poster showcase is to give both undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to present their research in a non-competitive environment,” said Lauren Stewart, office assistant for The Office of Graduate Studies and Research. “The Student Poster Showcase is the only event on-campus that ad-

resses research from across all university disciplines.” The Student Poster Showcase was hosted by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, in collaboration with the Committee for Undergraduate Research, and sponsored by Instructional & Information Technology Services (IITS). Like most on-campus events, admission was also free. The Committee for Undergraduate Research is an on-campus organization dedicated to, according to its website, equipping students with the proper research so they are “better prepared to rise to contemporary challenges.” In this case, taking the form of an outlet for student creative expression and exposition. Held twice a year, the event offers a wide range of poster

and digital presentations from students, done in order to showcase their research and creative accomplishments. The event is also often used as a way for students to network with faculty, and is regarded as an important event to add to resumes for future employment or graduate school applications. “The Showcase gives students the opportunity to interact with faculty, peers and community,” Stewart said. It is also an opportunity for CSUSM students to support one another and witness the incredible accomplishments made by their peers. The Student Poster Showcase took place at The Clarke Field House during U-hour on Dec. 2, but will return in the spring semester. Family members are always encouraged to attend.

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CALM Project aims to reduce course material costs

Innovative solution to contribute to students' success

By JASMINE DEMERS
COMMUNITY NEWS EDITOR

CSUSM faculty are spreading awareness for a program that will boost the educational success of the student body while providing them with affordable learning sources. The Cougars Affordable Learning Materials Project (CALM) is creating a strong presence for affordable learning material on campus. It is a program that replaces high-cost textbooks and other instructional material with affordable alternatives such as open educational resources. After attending a meeting for the CSU System's Affordable Learning Solutions program, CSUSM IITS wrote a proposal that granted funds to faculty in order to replace more expensive textbooks with more affordable learning materials. This proposal was accepted and the campus received a grant of \$25,000 in the spring of 2013. A plan of action was developed in the summer of 2013 and a resolution was passed by the Academic Senate in the spring of 2014 that supports the CALM Initiative.

Susan Wilson, a CSUSM

Instructional Developer, explained how the CALM Program works and her hopes for growth in the future. "CALM is a program that discovers instructional material that is at low or no cost," Wilson said. "We solicit proposals from faculty on ways that they can reduce course materials and there are levels of awards based on the amount of work it takes to reduce, the number of students, and the savings." Wilson reported that there are 32 courses that have been CALMed since the program began and this has resulted in an approximate savings of \$413,000. "We are just scratching the surface right now. We have so far only hit 32 courses. There is still a lot of room for improvement and change," she said. Dr. Natalie Wilson, CALM Faculty Fellow and Women's Studies lecturer, explained how she has been involved in this improvement and the expansion of the CALM Project. "This year, I have begun to meet with the ASI Board of Directors in order to get their input on how we can collaborate with them to spread the word about CALM to

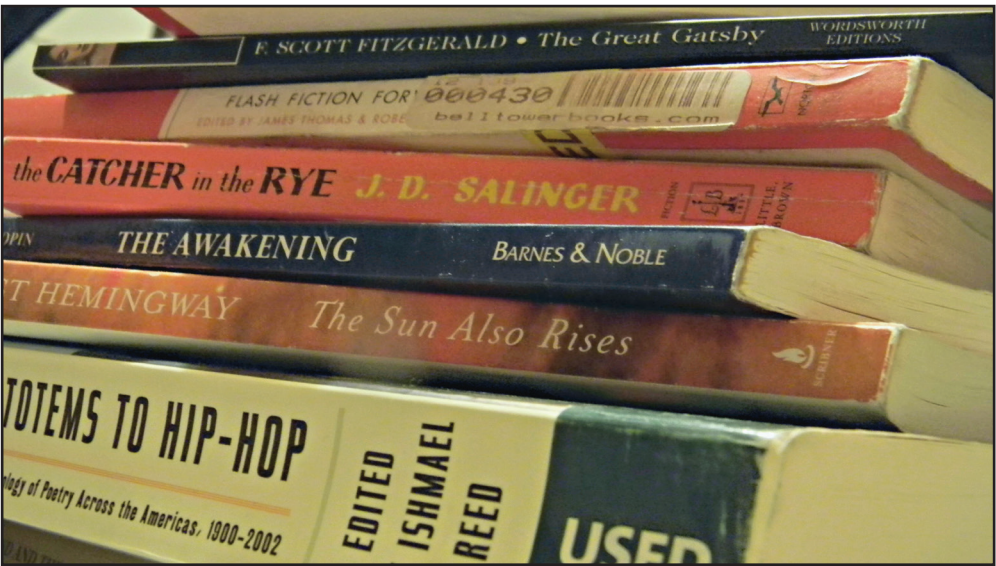


Photo by Noelle Friedberg

Rising cost of text books and supplies stacks up over the course of an academic career.

students," Wilson said. "I am also working with Jane Sim, IITS staff, to build a CALM presence on social media." Dr. Wilson also explained how important this program has been in regards to students and their learning outcomes. "CALMing a course usually means reading requirements are streamlined, and students are thus not spending large amounts of money for a text they will only read a portion of," Wilson said. "Further, streamlining required materials often means honing in on essential texts and readings, which re-

sults in a higher percentage of students completing the necessary work before coming to class. This makes for a more productive and engaging classroom, and what faculty member wouldn't appreciate this outcome?" Currently, CALM ambassadors are working to spread awareness of the program to the faculty and student body. Bill Ward, Interim CIO and Dean of IITS, says that the process of finding supplemental material is far from easy and it takes a lot of support from everyone involved. "There are lots of road

blocks to finding supplemental material. It can be very difficult and time consuming," Ward said. "We are hoping to hire on more people to help make this happen more efficiently. What's really important here is that we have the administration behind this program." According to the CALM website, textbooks prices are continuing to increase and these costs are reported to be one of the most prominent reasons that students drop out. Dr. Wilson explains that most students cannot afford all of their course mate-

rial for the semester, which has a negative effect on how well they do in a class. "As a consequence, students struggle to get a hold of used copies online or wait for long periods in the library for their turn with reserved material," Wilson said. "Others are forced to forego having access to all needed course materials. All of these factors have a negative impact on student success generally and on their grades specifically." Susan Wilson also points out that students often times are so upset by textbook prices and don't necessarily understand that the faculty are not at fault. "It's important for students to know that the faculty does care, but most of them are actually unaware of the price of these textbooks," she said. "But students do have a voice and they can communicate their concerns." The CALM program provides affordable learning materials for students and allows them to be more successful in their journey to higher education. Students and faculty are encouraged to participate in this program and submit any proposal they might have to CALM down more courses.

Continued from page 1

InterVarsity derecognized as student organization

leaders are required to be members of the Christian faith, membership is open to anyone that is interested in learning more about Christianity or wanting to join a close-knit student org. "I make the comparison that we require the President to have a certain background, and in certain levels, they are allowed to discriminate," Hatch, said. "It's a Biblical requirement that our leaders be Christian, so I don't think that it should be considered discriminatory if it is a faith background." The CSUSM chapter of

InterVarsity has been extremely active on campus for the past 18 years, serving students in a multidimensional fashion. The org. offers a diverse range of small group Bible studies, ranging from Latino to athletes to Greek system based. In addition to establishing worship services and a variety of outreach programs, InterVarsity also works with the general campus community. They regularly partner with other student orgs. to sponsor events pertaining to social justice, feed hundreds of incoming freshmen at a free,

start-of-the-semester barbeque and set up a welcome stand to pass out snow cones to hundreds of students during the first week of school. InterVarsity Area Director for North County, Ramiro Marchena, said that the constitution is not intended to be discriminatory but rather to provide leaders that are well-versed in the Bible and Christian faith in order to answer questions that other members may have. InterVarsity also chose not to utilize the election based system for their leadership orgs. in order to remain true to their values.

"We would be intentionally voting for people that are Christian to become leaders. We probably wouldn't vote in a non-Christian and that would be working the system," Marchena said. Due to their derecognition, InterVarsity will not have the same access to resources that they did as a student org. They cannot have a table at student org. fairs, partner with other orgs. in the same capacity that they previously did or promote the group in spaces other than on public bulletin boards. In addition, not being a student org.

impacts the costs and time it takes to reserve a room on campus for meetings. InterVarsity is open to working further with the Chancellor's Office to reach a consensus on how the matter should be resolved. However, they maintain that they would like to be reinstated as a student org., and should be allowed to select student leaders that are of the Christian faith. "We are going through a process of grieving for the institution where the place we call home isn't home anymore," Marchena said. "We

don't hate the CSU system and we understand their policy, but we think that there is a better way to go about this. This is creating a space for no diversity where you can't believe in anything and can't have requirements for leaders. Our desire is that they will create a space for people of faith. As a religious org., we can have a president who is Muslim or Christian. We're just asking for that space to be true to ourselves, having been able to do that for decades on these campuses."

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Fans encouraged Cougars to take down #1 team

Men’s basketball pulls off homecoming victory

By RESTY GREY
SPORTS EDITOR

Students fueled a fired-up Cougars Men’s Basketball team into a second half rally against No. 1 Vanguard in its homecoming event on Saturday, November 22. CSUSM students arrived in a spirit bus provided in their admission. The crowd was given headbands and foam paws to help draw attention to themselves, both encouraging the Cougars and helping to deter Vanguard’s plans to upset the homecoming event. The momentum helped to rally Cougars from a seven point deficit after the first half, outscoring Vanguard by eight in the second. “It’s incredible to have this kind of support and what an incredible atmosphere it was for homecoming,” Coach Jim Saia said. “Beat-

ing the Number 1 team in the country at home court.” Since then, Cougars went on the road to win in two games in Fullerton and two games in Salt Lake City, Utah, making them 10-0 on the season. Cougars are averaging 8 three-pointers a game and shooting just under 400 percent from the field. Guard Blake Nash leads all Cougars in scoring, averaging above 20 points and 4 assists per game and playing more than 30 minutes a game. Guard Akachi Okugo is shooting just below 500 percent from the three, tying his teammate, guard Tyson Kygar, who has 21 three pointers on the season. Despite boasting a smaller stat line than his other fellow starters, Forward Wade Collie manages to contin-



Photo by Bruce Sherwood

Fans and cheerleaders rally in support of homecoming victory. ue to see the court for his contributions away from the stat sheet. Collie is utilized as a two-way athlete, flourishes in his role as a stretch forward and often being able to cause gaps in the opponent’s defense. Center Declan Daly leads CSUSM in rebounding, averaging 8 rebounds per game. His defensive presence causes a significant amount of trouble for opponents’ offense in the front court. Cougars are averaging above 80 points a game while holding opponents to just below an average 75 points a game. Cougars will play one more game on the road Tuesday, Dec. 2 against Azusa Pacific before hosting Bethesda on Saturday, Dec. 13 at MiraCosta College.

CSUSM Events Calendar Dec. 3 through Dec. 13

By MACKENZIE CLARK
SPORTS ASSISTANT

Men’s Basketball: 7-0

7:30 p.m. on 12/13/2014,
Opponent: Bethesda

7:30 p.m. on 12/16/2014,
Opponent: Trinity Western

Women’s Basketball: 1-4

7:30 p.m. on 12/4/2014,
Opponent: Vanguard

HEART BEAT

Meningitis threatens college population

CDC warns of silent, potentially deadly threat

By ALEXIS SAUCEDO
SPORTS COLUMNIST

As our journey into college and life begins, an overwhelming feeling of excitement consumes us. For many of us, college life is our first taste of freedom. New experiences like living in the dorms or falling in love, come with a new sense of adventure and excitement. Now we feel invincible, plunging headfirst into the unknown. Students are so drunk with the excitement of sharing a new apartment or dorm

with friends and significant others, they are not thinking about potential risks. Students are now living in closer quarters than ever before and while that life can create a sense of community and independence, it can also carry the risk of infectious diseases. For example, Meningococcal disease is a common disease among first-year college students living in the dorm. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that Meningococcal disease is caused by the bacterium meningococcus and around 10 percent of the population has been previously exposed to the bacteria and are harboring it in the back of their nose and throat. These individuals are asymptomatic and receive the title ‘carrier.’ According to the CDC, a common outcome of a meningococcal infection is meningitis. A meningococcal meningitis infection results in the swelling of the meninges, which are the protective membrane coverings of the brain and spinal cord (CDC, 2014). Symptoms of meningitis typically appear within three

to seven days of exposure (CDC, 2014). The CDC states that the symptoms of meningitis are fever, headache and a stiff neck. More severe symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, photophobia and an altered mental status. Meningococcal disease can be diagnosed with a blood draw or a lumbar puncture. Individuals who may have been exposed to the disease are treated with antibiotics in order to prevent them from acquiring or further spreading the disease. According to the CDC, “antibiotic treatment should

reduce the risk of dying but sometimes the infection has caused too much damage to the body for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems.” About 11 to 19 percent of individuals who have survived meningococcal disease will have long-term disabilities. These long-term disabilities can include the loss of limb, deafness, brain or nervous system damage. It is vital that students on college campuses are aware of this disease and take precautions in preventing it. CSUSM currently provides

all first year housing students with meningitis information in their housing contracts. These students are required to read and return a response stating they have understood the information provided to the Campus Housing Office. A vaccination does exist that protects against the bacterium that causes meningococcal disease, however it is not required in order to be a CSUSM student or to live in the dorms (though encouraged). The CDC states that a vaccine is the best defense against meningococcal disease.

Andrea Leonard coaches players to athletic, personal victory

By BURLAND DIXON
STAFF WRITER

There are some athletic teams in collegiate sports who struggle to win with little to no excuses every time they step on the field or court. There are other teams that have the talent, but still do not receive the results they expect or want. For the CSUSM Women’s Volleyball team, neither of those scenarios is the case and Head Coach Andrea Leonard is the one to thank due to her beliefs, systems and overall fervor for coaching. “Talent can only take you to a certain place, so in order to win, you must have a system,” Coach Leonard said. Imagine a well-conditioned and orderly community and you will get an idea of the sys-

tem Coach Leonard goes by. “My philosophy is that if we can build and maintain a solid foundation of values, morals, positive culture and respect, then the winning follows that,” Leonard said. “You need to know how to

112-46 record during her four-year tenure be the proof to that philosophy, then it is clear that we have discovered a modern day Socrates. Coach Leonard’s systems and beliefs were not created overnight as you can tell.

They were conceived when the love started then manifested when she was given the opportunity, so it is as if she assisted herself for a spike towards a successful coaching career. Not only does she coach her players to victory, but she cares greatly for her athletes. “When it all comes together and you see them achieve something they never thought possible,” Leonard said. “You have helped them open a door inside themselves that will continue to create greatness throughout their lifetime.”



Photo by Chris Morales

Andrea Leonard is satisfied with her team’s playoff performance.

By PIERSON CEPEDA
STAFF WRITER

Holidays are a time of joy, excitement, togetherness and all-around happiness. Thanksgiving is the holiday for eating. There’s a huge turkey, stuffing you can’t get enough of, mashed potatoes that do not seem to end and the gravy to accompany the meal. That is all before you even get to the dessert. Immediately following Thanksgiving, Christmas is another holiday known just for the treats like gingerbread pastries, fruit cake and candy canes. That said, everyone is thinking about how they can stay in top form once the season of happiness comes to an end. People tend to think that

working out has to be some kind of dreadful affair made of early morning alarms and gruesome workout sessions which take hours on end. For those who think this is the case, there is good news, staying in shape is as simple as walking around the block. According to the Institute of Medicine, walking a mere 5,000 steps every day, or 2.5 miles, is a simple way to keep your weight down. Walking 2.5 miles may sound daunting and time-consuming to some but if you reserve 30 minutes a day, you will eventually develop a healthy routine that is quick and easy. If you are inclined to take on a bigger challenge try to reserve an hour for yourself and double the distance for a more strenuous workout that will burn, on average, 300 to 500 calories each day.

Before you start your walk, remember another important aspect of working out that many people forget, stretching. Stretch your calves, hamstrings and quads. Also consider your walking form. It’s simple, head up looking forward with your neck, shoulder and back relaxed. Slightly bend your arms when swinging and keep your stomach muscles tightened with a straight back. Lastly, walk while rolling from heel to toe. This holiday, like many others, will be full of fun and happiness and the last thing people want to do is think about exercise. The simple solution to this is to keep it simple. Take 30 minutes and take a walk, either alone or with others, the more the merrier.

Walk off holiday pounds

Staying in shape this holiday season

Faculty Spotlight

Professor Berman reflects on career as filmmaker

Teaching the art of filmmaking to CSUSM students

BY ANTHONY TREVINO
STAFF WRITER

Professor Jonathan Berman is a well-known independent filmmaker that divides his time between helping foster the creativity of his film students and working tirelessly on his own films that focus on taking the viewer on a journey to places the average person may never see.

Professor Berman started his film education early and drew inspiration from his childhood.

“As kids we had bands when we were like 13, and around the same time we were also making movies,” Professor Berman said. “Home movies on super 8 film, which was all the rage back then, and you’d get the little three minute reel and we’d shoot Karate epics or gangster films.”

After graduating from McGill University in Montreal with his BA, Professor Berman began working as an Assistant Film Editor for various independent film companies such as Troma Entertainment, best

known for such flicks as *The Toxic Avenger* (1984) and *Terror Firmer* (1999).

Following his early work at Troma, Professor Berman went on to direct three documentary films: *The Shvitz* (1993), *My Friend Paul* (1999) and *Commune* (2005).

Professor Berman came to CSUSM in 2004 after answering an ad for a job in the Communications department.

“I liked the idea of being able to teach at a public school,” Professor Berman said.

In between a busy sched-

ule as one of the university’s Associate Professors, he’s nearing completion on his fourth film *People of Earth*, which is an in-depth look at the influence George Van Tassel, his mysterious death and the infamous Integratron—a machine that supposedly functions as both a healing device and time machine—have had on the residents of Joshua Tree.

Professor Berman’s films are about taking the audience to places that exist in reality but still allowing them to feel as if they’re watching a traditional narrative.

“I want them to go on a ride and feel like they watched a fiction film,” Professor Berman said.

When asked if he had any advice for young filmmakers and students, Professor Berman answered with a very thoughtful and inspiring piece of advice:

“If you want to make stuff, learn how to effectively use storytelling to prove a point, to persuade people,” he said. “Express your emotional disposition, your belief system and be a modern citizen who has the power to use media to make change.”



Photo provided by Anthony Trevino
Professor Berman takes a break outside his office.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

Catholic Club displays faith and God’s love through its members

Catholic Cougars share word of God to CSUSM community

BY SHANICE DAVIS
STAFF WRITER

The Catholic Club here at CSUSM hopes to spread the word of God through its members.

Melinda Lopez, president of the Catholic Club, talked about the possibilities one can experience by simply having faith in God. Lopez said that faith is a strong component of the club.

“We are a group of students who meet and seek to grow in communion with God, our faith and each other,” Lopez said. “As a club, we seek to provide a safe environment for students to encounter Christ.”

Lopez explained that celebration and appreciation of God is a large aspect of the faith in Catholic tradition.

“Four Sundays before we celebrate the coming of Jesus in the Season of Advent, we prepare our hearts, souls and minds



Photo provided by Catholic Club

CSUSM Catholic Club recognizes their similarities when focusing on a common goal.

for the coming of Jesus,” Lopez said. “We celebrate the Christmas season beginning Dec. 24 with the birth of Christ, until the coming of the three Magi on Jan. 6.”

“Students can take away

that they are unconditionally loved by God and that they are called to do amazing things,” Lopez said. “Sometimes we are caught up in the business of life and feel alone, insignificant

and lost, but being Catholic allows you to be apart of something that is universal, while we are all human and realize we are not perfect, we strive to know deeply who our Lord and Savior is.”

In addition to receiving and exposing the love of God to others, the Catholic Club also strongly believes in giving back and helping others in need. Their main goal of focus is donating as much as they possibly can to people in need and being a light for Christ on campus as they try to reflect Gospel messages in their everyday lives.

The Catholic Club raised over \$150 for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) as part of their water project to provide clean water supply for developing communities.

The club is also working on another community project for the holiday season. Future plans include sponsoring some families in need for Christmas. Currently the organization is accepting collections of gently used clothing and new blankets for homeless high school aged students as part of a fundraiser.

With the semester coming

to an end soon, the Catholic Club has only a few more events left. For their last meeting, the club is hosting a Christmas social party from 7 p.m. on Dec. 3 at The Clarke in room 110.

Next semester, the organization will be holding meetings from 7 p.m. every Wednesday at The Clarke. The meetings will include social nights, guest speakers, Bible studies and Mass.

Lopez encourages anyone interested in building or strengthening their relationship with God to join the club at any of their weekly meetings on campus.

For more information visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CsusmCatholicClub>.

“Each and every one of us is at a different point in our faith journey and the mission of our club is to offer opportunity for anyone to share and grow in their faith,” Lopez said.

Forthcoming student organization, Latter Day Saint Student Association

Building community that serves God

BY SHANICE DAVIS
STAFF WRITER

Students on campus may or may not have heard of the Latter Day Saint Student Association as they are an up and coming organization here on campus.

The official name of the LDS church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Kathleen Scott, faculty advisor of the organization, gives a snippet of insight on the LDS

and of what is to come for the future of the LDSSA.

“Our mission is to integrate the intellectual and spiritual aspects of student life at the university by providing opportunities for students to serve, socialize and learn doctrine,” Scott said. “We want our members to round out their education with a foundation of faith to move on into the world as useful members of society.”

“LDS believe that God is

our Heavenly Father--He knows us each individually and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to make up for our mistakes so that we can learn and grow and eventually return to him,” Scott said. “We believe that God answers prayers, often in subtle ways and He is by our side to guide us through the craziness of life.”

Serving the Lord is just a piece of what being part of the LDS community is about. In

addition, the LDS community also serves others in need.

“Mormons serve throughout the world, especially during crises such as the Haitian earthquake and Katrina, wearing yellow T-shirts with the Helping Hands logo,” Scott said.

Locally they have an annual service day in which members clean up parks and communities; for example, one group raked and cleaned Kit Carson Park in

Escondido. The org. also provides services on an individual level that is usually private and not advertised.

The LDSSA is about serving those in need and striving to live life as Christ would see justifiable.

Next semester when LDSSA is official, they’ll have meetings every Tuesday and Thursday during U-hour. Getting to know one another, planning for the future of the organization, along

with discussing doctrine and church history will be among some of the topics discussed during the meetings.

Scott said that if anyone is interested in joining LDSSA, to feel free and email her at kscott@csusm.edu.

“We hope that students take from this experience a confidence that there is deep meaning and purpose in life and that there is divinity in each of us,” Scott said.

Muslim Student Association celebrates Eid in America

Group maintains tradition, culture within larger community

By NADA SEWIDAN
FEATURES EDITOR

Traditions may not be built on the same belief but they are often celebrated in the same way--with families, friends, parties and community--as an expression of culture. Amber Mahmood and other MSA members discussed celebrating Eid, an aspect of Islamic culture, in America. Eid is a Muslim holiday that occurs twice a year, once after Ramadan and once after Hajj (pilgrimage) and lasts three days. Similar to other religious celebrations, the importance of Eid lies in its history. The holiday includes sacrific-

ing a goat or lamb as a reminder of Abraham's own sacrifice and love for God. "The importance of Eid is gratefulness and having a remembrance of God," Mahmood said. "It's a time for family to come and celebrate together." The small Eid is celebrated following Ramadan--a month of fasting from sun up until sun down. The start of the Eid celebration is marked by the end of Ramadan month where families join one another for a three day long feast. "The month of fasting is about pushing your limits and testing yourself," Mahmood said. "It's about trying to break bad habits and

about self-improvement." "[It's] a month of Soul Purification and a month to strengthen connections with God," MSA member, Kiren Khan, said. Other characteristics of Eid celebrations include traditional clothing, parties, food and family gatherings where gifts such as money, toys and clothing are handed out to family members. Amber Mahmood and other MSA members are firm believers in integrating one's own culture and merging a piece of their own beliefs and traditions within the larger community. However, some MSA members find that it's sometimes difficult to maintain the tradition.

"When you celebrate Eid here it is different than celebrating in an Islamic Country," MSA member, Leena El-Maleh, said. "It's sometimes difficult coordinating work and school in order to maintain the tradition because we don't get it off as a holiday," Mahmood said. Mahmood talked about how vital community members are to the holiday. "My favorite part of Eid is the community aspect and seeing everybody praying and spending time with family," she said. "We are so busy in our everyday lives so it's nice to have a day to get together and celebrate; it's unifying."



Photo provided by MSA Club
MSA shares their love of a traditional Muslim holiday with their peers and fellow students.

MSA believes it's about co-existence within a larger community, a community that respects each other's beliefs and a community where individuals can celebrate their culture whether it's Christmas, Hanukah or Eid. Mahmood said that although it is difficult at times, her family continues to maintain their religion within their hearts, home and alongside the community.

Celebrity paintball tournament hosted by PEACE Fund

Organization offers creative platform to raise money for charity



Photo provided by ItGirl Public Relations, Inc. on behalf of PEACEFund.

By ANNE HALL
AD MANAGER

PEACEFund is bringing together professional paintball stars with star-studded actors and actresses to help earn money for a nonprofit awareness campaign that provides support for youths struggling through matters of life. The non-profit organization, created by Adrian Paul, is designed to help children in need through raising awareness and money by hosting charity events such as this one. Not only is PEACEFund working to earn money for their organization, but the event is also designed to al-

low the honored guests to represent their own charities. Winners of each event will be able to choose where the proceeds go. Existing celebrities registered for participating in the event include: Adrian Paul of Highlander, Robbie Jones from Tyler Perry's Temptation, Bret Lockett (formerly played for New England Patriots), Wesley Jonathan of What I Like About You, Kyle Massey of Dancing with the Stars, Walter Jones of the Power Rangers, Jacqueline Toboni of Grimm and many more. CSUSM students, staff and faculty members are encouraged to attend and par-

ticipate in community events such as this in order to help raise money and awareness for local charities in need. Weekend tickets can be purchased and daily tickets are just \$25 per day with a \$15 parking fee. For a one-of-a-kind experience, \$1,000 allows teams of up to seven to register together to team up with one pro and one celebrity as part of their group. The two day event will take place on Saturday, Dec. 6 and Sunday, Dec. 7 at the Camp Pendleton Paintball Park in Oceanside. Tickets can be purchased online or at the event location: 1700 Vandergrift Blvd, Oceanside, CA 92057.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. while the celebrity tournament will start at 10 a.m. The organization hopes to host the world's largest paintball battle on Sunday as everyone will come together for a day long war to challenge stamina and wit. Camp Pendleton has a restriction against automatic paintball guns, but bring your rags and microfiber cloths, auto-feed hopper, double triggers, extra pods and semi-automatic paintball guns if you've got them. Of course, loads of water, Gatorade and snacks would be wise accessories. Keep in mind that the entire weekend is intended to be days full of fun.

Religions of the world

How different religions celebrate important holidays

By ALEX MARAVILLAS
STAFF WRITER

While Christmas is among the most celebrated this time of year, there are several other diverse religious traditions to recognize. Hanukkah, a religious Jewish celebration, occurs before Christmas every December; however, this is not the holiest of Jewish events, for that would be Yom Kip-

pur, the Day of Atonement. Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the haven in Jerusalem after it was scoured by the winnow Syrian/Greek affiliation. The haven was left with simply enough oil to light the candles for one night; however, the oil wondrously came to last for eight. That is the reason Hanukkah is celebrated for eight nights, beginning at crepuscule on Dec. 21.

Hanukkah traditions include lighting the menorah and consuming traditional Jewish dishes such as latkes. Eid al-Adha is the Festival of Sacrifice. This Muslim event remembers Abraham's dedication to God when he attempted to sacrifice his only child in lieu of God's command. Eid is one of the two most key events in Islam, which takes place after the Hajj. The Hajj is an Ara-

bic translation and is defined as a pilgrimage to Mecca. Eid celebrations include dressing up in the finest traditional clothing, visiting family members and holding feasts. Yule, a name for the Winter Solstice, is an event celebrated on Dec. 21 and is a pagan religious festival that was considered traditional prior to the existence of Jesus Christ. Animals were butchered and a live tree was brought into

the home as part of tradition. Buddhism is a religion that follows the teachings of Buddha, also known as Siddhartha Gautama. Buddhism teaches that enlightenment can be achieved by acquiring knowledge and abandoning ignorance. Ultimately, Buddhism emphasizes enlightenment as the road to liberty. A Buddhist tradition includes the celebration of the birth and death of Buddha. The

celebration takes place every May during the full moon. Whether it's celebrating the birth of Christ during the Christmas holiday, eating latkes and lighting the Menorah for Hanukkah, remembering Abraham's sacrifice for God during Eid or honoring Buddha on a May full moon, it's important to recognize the diversity of cultures and traditions that make up the religions of the world.

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Cougar Farewell: Nada Sewidan

We say goodbye to graduating co-worker



Photo by Anne Hall

Features Editor Nada Sewidan leaves behind a challenge of large shoes to fill.

BY WILL MCCURDY
RADIO ASSISTANT

At the Cougar Chronicle, we take pride in the tal-

ented journalists that pass through our publication. One such Cougar deserving of recognition is Features Editor, Nada Sewidan.

A hard worker to her core, Sewidan was drawn to us after transferring from Palomar Community College where she was a staff writer at The Telescope, their campus newspaper. Since then, she has been with us since 2013, and in an interview we talked about her experiences not just at the paper, but also as a CSUSM student and the advice she has for future students. In regards to her most enjoyable experiences on campus, Sewidan had rousing praise for her professors saying that they were not only some of the smartest people she'd taken classes with, but also taught her to formulate her own ideologies through incorporation of their ideas as a base. For her fellow students, she spoke happily about the friendships she had garnered dur-

ing her time at the school, believing that they would last beyond her departure. For her time at the paper, she enjoyed editing articles that addressed issues from a different perspective and was proud of those that took these approaches. The same was embodied in her favorite article, "My experience as an Egyptian American" in which she talked about the dual life she experienced as an immigrant to the United States and her struggle to overcome not only language barriers, but those erected by stereotypical notions of Egypt and her ethnicity. As a bit of hindsight on her time at the campus, Sewidan dispensed two great pieces

of advice. The first was a warning against taking six classes in one semester, a situation she lamented forcing upon herself as it culminated to an excess amount of stress being piled on her. The second (and much more uplifting) was that of putting feeling into one's work. It is the mentality of some students to simply see a homework assignment as busy work for which they only need to splatter some words onto a page and call it a day. She argued against this, instead advocating for people to look at the assignments as something that a student can look at and be proud of. Crafting a masterpiece of written words can make peo-

ple passionate for something they may not even have had the slightest care about before. Doing assignments in this way leads to an expansion of intellectual thought and ideas which breathes life into the heart of what school is truly about: learning. Being a fellow journalist at the paper, Sewidan was important to my own evolution at the publication. She was the one that gave me my first article and started me on the path to the level of journalistic professionalism present in my current work. I think I speak for all those at the paper when I say you will be missed and it was a pleasure working with you.

Continued from page 1

Cougars' advocacy

told the audience her story of survival and her experience with homelessness at a very vulnerable time in her life. "At one point, I was a recently 'openly lesbian,' homeless student who had just started a sexual assault case without family support," GuzmXn said. "I know for a fact that I am only here because of my amazing professors, my feminist family and the support of my friends." While higher educations is still working towards providing appropriate resources for students that are homeless or at-risk, some efforts have already been spearheaded by students, faculty and staff in an effort to begin making a change. Film screenings like "Inocente" raise awareness of the need to reach out to homeless students and provide resources. Initiatives like CALM, which seeks to reduce textbook costs, works to make attending college

and affording the necessary materials more of a realistic possibility. In addition, programs like ACE Scholars, which helps former foster youth attend college, provides guidance and support to ensure that they graduate. CSUSM faculty are also hosting other programs that are aimed at helping end homelessness. Dr. Laura de Ghetaldi, Kinesiology Professor and faculty head of the Donate Don't Dump Program, explains how she is helping students reach out to people in the community with the Donate Don't Dump Program. "1 in 5 adults and 1 in 4 children suffer from hunger insecurity. We are trying, with this food distribution to get students involved with this type of community outreach," de Ghetaldi said. Donate Don't Dump is a volunteer-based program that

saves short dated and surplus foods that will essentially get thrown out or go to waste by grocery stores. They take this food and distribute it to people within the community who cannot afford groceries. Students who struggle with hunger or homelessness are of course welcomed and encouraged to take advantage of this resource. It is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every week at 1:30 and located at the Summit Church parking lot next to the new dorms. Organizers and speakers at the "Inocente" film screening are hoping to facilitate change as they continue to spread awareness and educate the community about issues of homelessness on campus. By advocating for these issues, they hope to see an increase in resources for homeless students and an ultimate end to homelessness on campus.

CULINARY CORNER

Potato latkes

Jewish delight for breakfast

BY NOELLE FRIEDBERG
OPINION EDITOR

Potato latkes are a traditional Jewish dish. They are eaten during Hanukkah because the oil they are made with reminds those celebrating this Jewish holiday of the oil in the Temple that lasted for eight days. My father was raised Jewish, and while my family does not practice the religion, we still like to partake in this tradition by eating latkes this time of year. It has become a new family tradition of ours to eat them for breakfast every Christmas morning. Try them with applesauce, sour cream and cinnamon

- on top. Even though that sounds like a weird combination, trust me, it's delicious. Yields: This recipe makes about 16 latkes.
- Ingredients:**
- 4 medium potatoes
 - 1 small onion
 - 3 tablespoons flour
 - 2 eggs
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
- Oil for frying (vegetable oil works well)**
- Directions:**
1. Peel the potatoes.
 2. Grate the potatoes into a large bowl, using the coarse side of the grater, or use an electric food processor to grate the potatoes.

3. Peel the onion, and grate into the bowl.
4. Add the flour, eggs and salt. Mix well.
5. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Drop heaping tablespoons of potato mixture into the oil. Press them into pancake-like thickness.
6. Fry latkes until both sides are crisp and brown.
7. Drain the latkes on paper towels before serving.

Do you have a favorite recipe that you would like to share? Send any recipes or suggestions to Culinary Corner at cougarculinary-corner@gmail.com and you may see your recipe featured in the next issue.

Holiday shopping without breaking bank

Cougars' advice on budgeting for this holiday season

BY SHANICE DAVIS
STAFF WRITER

Christmas is approaching and holiday shopping is becoming more inevitable. For college students, holiday shopping can be quite pricey and can put an enormous dent in one's wallet; however, there are ways one can levy some of those expenses. At CSUSM, many students share the same struggle of digging in couch cushions for coins or miraculously running across 20-dollar bills in jean pockets, and for that, students are no strangers to the notion of cost effective shopping strategies.

One way to prevent overspending this Christmas is to take a good look at your accounts and weigh the amount of money earned versus necessary future expenses. It's important to set a realistic expectation and admit how much you can spend. It's then that you can decide what stores you are realistically able to shop. "I think you can set limits for yourself and just know how much you have and what you're able to spend," CSUSM student, Troy Stephens, said. Another similar option is to abandon credit and debit cards at home and only withdraw enough money

to cover the items you specifically want to buy. "In order for me to go holiday shopping without breaking the budget, I leave my debit cards or credit cards at home and take out the amount of money I could use," CSUSM student Stephanie Cervantes said. "I think knowing how much money I'm trying to spend on each person is a good idea." A similar option is budget out how much you want to devote to each person on your holiday list and withdraw cash accordingly. "What I'll do is have a certain amount that I will be spending on each person," CSUSM student Diana Gar-

cia said. "For example, I have three people in my family besides myself and let's say that I'm going to spend 50 dollars on each person, I'll only take out 150 dollars from my bank account and make sure I carry it in cash so that I don't use my cards." Additionally, prior research of local deals and pricing is a good idea. "I look for discounts on groupings and such," CSUSM student, Heath Brown, said. Regardless of how everyone is going about their holiday shopping, don't forget to rack up on deals to get more bang for your buck. Happy Spending and Happy Holidays Cougars.

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Don't tolerate intolerance

The true meanings of "diversity," "tolerance"

By CALEB HOGLAND
STAFF WRITER

Diversity is a word that people love to throw around. Schools, teams and workplaces pride themselves in having diversity. But what does it really mean?

Diversity is simply the condition of something being composed of differing elements. But how do we deal with diversity when it comes to the passion-filled topic of religion?

Anyone who is somewhat educated in religion, and not only makes the blanket statement that all religions teach the same essential things, knows that there are many differing and contradictory claims amongst religions.

Therefore, not all religions can be valid. Some must be wrong if others are to be right. Of course, they can all be wrong; however, they cannot all be right. So how do we coexist with the people whose core beliefs are different than our own?

First, we need to understand what "tolerance" is. Second, we need to exercise it.

Tolerance is possibly one of the most misunderstood words in today's culture. To tolerate something or someone does NOT mean to support or accept them.

To tolerate something means to allow or endure what is difficult or disagreeable. We do not tolerate people we agree with. How could we? We agree with them. We can only tol-



Photo by Cody Cook

Discrepancies over religious dogma amongst different faiths often leads to more exclusion than inclusion.

erate the people and beliefs we dislike or disagree with.

When it comes to religion and moral convictions, there are those who voice their opinions and

those who do not like to hear particular views. Simply because someone disagrees with the religious or moral conviction does not mean they are intolerant.

By using correct reasoning, and of course proper manners and behavior, we can even be tolerant when claiming one person is right and the other is wrong about their beliefs. The person who is INTOLERANT is the one who does not allow someone to voice his or her opinion at all.

Everyone has a right to their beliefs and convictions and they have a right to voice them. Everyone is biased in one-way or another, but they still have a right to engage in discussions about life, morals and religion.

To insult someone for their beliefs, to call them names such as intolerant or bigot, and push them off the floor without allowing them to express their view is not tolerance. It is still

not tolerant even if these personal attacks are done in defense of another view, which may not be your own.

CSUSM is a place for higher learning; it is not a place for indoctrination. All people and their differing cultures are welcomed to come to this safe place and express their diverse religious views. The only way any environment can truly be safe for religious diversity and serious questions of life and morality is if people are actually tolerant. (Or "if people actually understand tolerance.")

So, endure with dignity. Endure with respect. Disagree as you like, and learn tolerance if you have not already, because around here, we don't tolerate people who are intolerant.

Mindfulness: Decreasing stress, increasing happiness

By COLLIN VAZ
FEATURES ASSISTANT

Mindfulness meditation is a popular Buddhist teaching used to bring balance to one's life and merge mind and body.

Buddhism can be considered more of a way of life than a dogmatic religion. Its lessons can be studied and put to use by anyone regardless of age or religious views. Here are four steps that I use and recommend to decrease stress and increase happiness:

1. Mindful Breathing

This simple action can be utilized at any time in order to quickly bring about mindfulness. At a time of heightened stress, a friend or parent may have suggested that you "count to ten." In essence, this is a breathing meditation. In our daily lives, we are often so caught up in our thoughts and responsibilities that we forget to establish a connection between our minds and bodies. Whether you are in class, driving to work, doing homework, or

just browsing social media, this exercise can improve your attitude and mindset.

Begin by exhaling completely, clearing your mind of any particular thoughts. Then inhale through the nose, mentally following your inbreath and feeling the air surge into your body. This is important because it reminds your psyche that you have a body. After a relaxed inhale, follow the outbreath back out of your nose, feeling your chest move as the air is released from your body. Repeat as needed.

2. Mindful Walking

If time permits, mindful walking is a great way to clear your mind. We walk a lot each day and these walks all have one thing in common: they have a destination. Constantly thinking about what is next on the to-do list places our thoughts in the future. Although it is important to remain responsible for tasks we must complete, letting our mind relax and settle into the present moment can lead to less fatigue throughout the day.

Start by choosing a nice, quiet area for your walk. Not much space is required, as the object of your walk is to slow down. Instead of walking with the intention of reaching a destination, fully enjoy each step. Take note of your environment, the breeze on your skin, the sounds of the birds chirping and the smell of the outdoors. Breathe in and out slowly with each step following your in and out breath as previously described. Buddhist monk and author, Thich Nhat Hanh, suggests practitioners recite the phrase "I'm home" with every step, before exhaling. This will remind you that your destination has already been reached and keep your mind relaxed and in the moment.

3. Mindful Eating

Americans are unique in many ways, especially in the way that we consume food. Due to our over-worked lifestyles; we tend to eat food as quickly as possible. The practice of eating mindfully not only brings us back to the present moment, but im-

proves our health as well.

Next time you get a break to sit down with lunch or dinner, try this technique. Use your fork and take a bite as you would normally.

Now before you target that next mouthful, put the fork down. Bring your attention away from the next bite and focus on the food you are chewing. Notice the consistency and flavor (a good opportunity to assess whether or not the source of your food is wholesome). After swallowing, pick the fork up again and repeat the process, remembering to stop and appreciate your food fully before going in for more. While very simple, this allows our bodies to digest our food at a natural rate while simultaneously allowing us to be more aware of the food we consume.

4. Sitting Meditation

Closely related to breathing meditation, sitting meditation is an excellent daily activity that can improve your overall quality of life. If you are new to meditation, I would recommend



Photo by Cody Cook

Chris Morales reducing stress in the reflection lounge, located in the USU.

starting with ten-minute sessions each day, preferably in the morning in order to boost energy levels and focus throughout the day. Find a comfortable seated position, such as a chair, cushion, edge of the bed, etc. Begin by initiating an inbreath and an outbreath, feeling the air rush in and out of your body. Take a moment to become aware of your surroundings, letting your senses pick up any smells or sounds.

If you feel your mind racing with thoughts, bring your attention back to your breath.

Count one on the inhale and two on the exhale, proceeding all the way up to ten. A helpful way to describe sitting meditation is the cloud analogy. Imagine your thoughts are clouds in the sky. Focus on the blue sky of the present moment. When a cloud presents itself, you do not want to force yourself to ignore it, but rather acknowledge its existence and let it pass. This can be hard on days when we have a lot on our minds, but with consistent practice, mindfulness will become easier and easier to achieve.

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Christmas Traditions

How we celebrate in Bulgaria

BY ANNA MARIA PETROV
STAFF WRITER

Christmas is just around the corner, and people are starting to plan where they will spend the holidays and when will be the right time to go shopping for presents. Feelings of cheerfulness arise when we listen to Christmas songs on the radio, when we decorate the Christmas tree, hang the lights and garlands or just drink steamy hot chocolate. And the most important is our family's long lasting traditions that they passed down to us and we will pass down to our kids someday. Coming from a different country – Bulgaria – was not always easy and that is all due to the fact that when I and my family arrived to this new and unfamiliar land, there was some struggle. But eventually we adapted and to this day enjoy and really appreciate being a part of this country. Dur-

ing the holidays we bring our own traditions and share them with other people. On Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, my family and I prepare a whole day to celebrate, and it all starts with me and mom preparing the different dishes. The two main dishes are the cabbage rolls and homemade bread, and each symbolizes the birth of Jesus Christ. Meaning that the bread, being made of wheat, symbolizes fertility and growth, and the cabbage rolls are a symbol of baby Jesus being wrapped in a baby blanket. Also, inside the bread there is a quarter. Whoever gets it in one of the bread rolls will have good fortune for themselves and for their family, and the oldest family member must split the bread and pass it around. The same goes for having a full table of food, and that means that we will have a prosperous year. There is also some bean casserole and a variety of dried fruits because

during winter in our country we don't have any fresh fruits. We also have hard-shelled nuts which symbolize good health and strength. After we prepare all the dishes, which need to be vegetarian because it's the end of the religious lent, we set the table with the nuts and dried fruits. We get ready to go to church at night and we go again on Christmas morning, and after dinner we leave the dishes and food out and in that way we leave it for the Virgin Mary, so she can eat to replenish her energy. Another and last tradition my family follows is that when the clock strikes midnight we open our presents, which has always been my favorite part. Besides decorating and waiting anxiously to open presents, the most important and precious thing that is close to my heart is family and tradition. During the holidays we should all share our traditions with either our family or friends.

Teaching diversity of religion is teaching responsible citizenship

BY PROFESSOR KIMBER QUINNEY
CONTRIBUTOR

If we agree that an important role of the university is to educate students for global and responsible citizenship through awareness of diversity and practicing inclusiveness, I hope we might also agree that CSUSM is doing its part. CSUSM's mission, vision and values statement reflects our institutional commitment to inclusiveness and multicultural diversity. In our celebration of diversity, we do not have to look far to find examples of the varied and constructive ways in which the campus community promotes diversity: Conversations that Matter and Diversity Awareness Month (Office of Diversity, Educational Equity and Inclusion); Engaging Diverse Dialogues (CHABSS initiative); the Diversity Mapping project; and the Civility Campaign (Student Life and Leadership)—all of which, of course, amounts to a partial list of many more campus activities related to diversity. Indeed, CSUSM is the recipient of the 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. In spite of our good work, a crucial issue of diversity exists to which we have devoted insufficient attention—religion. Given the global unrest that exists because of

religious extremism and the potential for violent conflict based on religious difference, our mission to educate students for responsible citizenship demands that we foster interfaith understanding. And yet religion as in issue of diversity is often overlooked at CSUSM. My plea is to correct that oversight. A handful of excellent resources exist to help facilitate conversations about religion at college campuses, but the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC / <http://www.ifyc.org>) founded by Eboo Patel is a forerunner in this respect. Patel and coauthor Cassie Meyer have made a strong argument for the “Civic Relevance of Interfaith Cooperation for Colleges and Universities” in the Journal of College and Character (2011). IFYC conducts campus climate assessments of religion and spirituality, recently releasing Engaging Worldview, a report on national trends in campus religious and spiritual diversity (<http://ifyc.org/worldview>). IFYC has joined with the Council of Independent Colleges to provide faculty with professional development about Teaching Interfaith Understanding (<http://www.cic.edu/meetings-and-events/Faculty-Development/Pages/Interfaith.aspx>). Finally, IFYC is persuaded that raising awareness about religious diversity must be

gin with students. To this end, IFYC's Better Together campaign (<http://www.ifyc.org/better-together>) aims at educating students to become interfaith leaders and to empower change. Even if CSUSM does not take advantage of direct collaboration with IFYC, we can find ways to follow the organization's lead by embracing religion in our many conversations about diversity, thereby promoting religious pluralism. Religious pluralism as defined by IFYC includes respect for people's diverse religious and non-religious identities, mutually inspiring relationships between people of different backgrounds and common action for the common good (<http://www.ifyc.org/about>). If we take seriously our commitment to educate students for global and responsible citizenship through awareness of diversity and practicing inclusiveness, we simply cannot afford to exclude religion. Kimber M. Quinney is Adjunct Faculty in the History Department and Faculty Liaison for Engagement Scholarship in the division of Community Engagement. If you are interested in working to raise awareness about religious diversity and to foster interfaith dialogue at CSUSM, please contact Dr. Quinney at kquinney@csusm.edu.

Why Christmas is my favorite holiday

BY KATIA BRUNSON
OPINION ASSISTANT

The Christmas season has always felt magical to me. It's a time for love, family, traditions and A Christmas Story reruns. Although Christmas in San Diego is never white with snow, we have many other traditions that take place in the slightly cooler weather. One of my favorite Christmas memories was the first year that my extended family and I celebrated on the beach. Early Christmas morning we packed up our beach gear along with BBQ equipment and headed to the bonfire pits at Moonlight Beach. We had so much fun hanging out in the sun and making snowmen with the sand. It was a new twist on Christmas that became a fun tradition in our family. Another Christmas tradition my family has is watching A Christmas Story on Christmas Eve. Although our family has seen that movie dozens of times it never seems to get old. We enjoy the jokes just as much and can quote almost



Photo by Noelle Friedberg

Holiday lights brighten the night sky and often are a good way to share holiday enthusiasm.

every line word-for-word. Many people use the Christmas season to give back to their community and help the less fortunate. Charities and organizations host fundraisers, food drives and toy drives to remind people that they should be grateful for what they have and to spread the wealth among those who don't have the funds for Christmas festivities. Spending time with friends is also one of the perks of the holiday season. One of my favorite things to do is go Christmas caroling door-to-door in my neighborhood with all my musically in-

clined peers. Seeing people's faces light up when they open the door to a Christmas carol is probably one of the most rewarding sights to see. People are so grateful for the gesture and it's a great way to spread holiday cheer. Bonus points if you make the old ladies down the street cry tears of joy. Christmas can hold a religious meaning for some people, but for everyone who celebrates Christmas it is a holiday to remind us of the importance of our loved ones. Christmas celebrates traditions, togetherness and the magic of life.

Finding comfort in prayer

The importance of praying in my life



Photo by Noelle Friedbeg

Finding comfort may also come in forms of appreciating the beauty all around us.

BY TIFFANY TRENT
STAFF WRITER

In today's society there is an abundance of pressure, responsibility and stress in everyday life. Trying to balance work, school, family and friends, I find myself often feeling stressed out, isolated and overwhelmed. The thing that helps me the most whether I am feeling sad or anxious or lonely is to pray. I am a born-again Christian and have been for many years. I believe that God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross and that Christ rose again on the third day; He is the only true path to salvation. I also believe that when I pray God listens and hears me. For me, praying is more than just a method to relieve negative emotions that I might be experiencing. It is getting to spend quality

time with God. I can tell Him about how I am and what my day was like and what I am struggling with. It is such a wonderful feeling to know that I am being listened to no matter what and all the while He is compassionate and merciful. And it is also nice to thank Him for my blessings. It is nearly impossible to be miserable and grateful at the same time. Another reason I like prayer so much is that I do not have to be formal or say certain things or say them in a certain way. Usually when I pray I am scattered and clumsy and unprepared because I pray throughout the day. I will pray while I'm driving, or when I'm at work, or during a test or before falling asleep. God knows everything about me and what I am doing and going through. I can be completely honest and real with Him. Since I can have a real and person-

al relationship with God, I don't have to be fake. There is so much freedom in that. I know even when I am unlovable He loves me for who I am, who He created me to be. And that means more than anything the world can offer. Prayer also helps me slow down and even stop mentally. Whether I am quietly sitting and praying or rushing through life, it brings me peace and restoration. There is a Bible verse that I especially like in Psalm 46:10 that simply states “Be still and know that I am God.” There is so much peace and comfort in that. If I am in the middle of the hustle and bustle of work or school I can still find a small period of time to talk to God and receive His peace. I believe that anyone can experience a personal relationship with God. He created all of us and loves us enough to send His Son to die in our place so that we can know Him. He loves you. He wants to have a relationship with you. And it's free on our part. We just need to have faith. If you have any questions regarding prayer, God, salvation, Christianity, the Bible, etc. please feel free to go to a pastor, someone you know who is a Christian or a Christian organization. There is a wonderful Christian organization at CSUSM called Intersarsity and their email is ivsanmarcos@gmail.com.

CD AND DVD DROPPING

BY ARIEL ROBBINS
RADIO ASSISTANT

Anderson .Paak is “Baak” and better than ever

Christmas came early this year on Oct. 27 because rising musician Anderson .Paak dropped his second album “VENICE” like it was hot—and let me tell you—it is. This Ventura County born singer/songwriter/drummer/producer has “Paak’d” a real punch in the music world, releasing his debut album “Cover Art” late last year. “Cover Art” featured dynamite covers of



“Maps” by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and “Seven Nation Army” by the White Stripes. His new album “VENICE” contains 16 tracks that encompass the true spirit of Venice itself by giving you a whole lot of enjoyment you don’t want to tell your mom about. .Paak will have you

mentally cruisin’ down our California coast with tracks like “Luh You,” “Drugs” and “Miss Right”. His sound two-steps gracefully between genres, mixing some soulful R&B with electronic hip hop and his own unique cadence that will without fail make you want to cadance.

The music world is just beginning to hear about Anderson .Paak. He sings about sex, drugs and women, yet somehow or another you’ll still find yourself wanting to introduce him to your grandmother.

“VENICE” is available on iTunes and Soundcloud, for more information or free

streaming head to anderson-paak.com.

The Release of HTTYD 2 will have you dragon your- self to stores near you

Hiccup and the gang are back with the overwhelmingly anticipated “How to Train Your Dragon 2” that flew into stores just this Tuesday, Nov. 11. The sequel to the beloved franchise grossed a whopping \$176.8 million in the box office and received an honorable 7.8/10 rating from the critics and a 4.4/5 from the fans on Rotten Tomatoes. If you have yet to experience the humbling act of weeping

shamelessly over fantastically animated DreamWorks dragons, this is definitely a film you should invest in. Soaring visuals, stunning scores and a story with so much heart it’s no wonder the movie comes so alive on screen, will leave audiences breathless and spellbound.

The plot follows protagonist Hiccup and his trusty, much loved, dragon Toothless, as they discover an ice cave teeming with hundreds of new dragon species and a “mysterious Dragon Rider.” Hold on folks, the adventure doesn’t stop there. The duo finds them at the heart of an epic battle where



they must come together to fight for peace, and alter the future of humans and dragons completely. This movie is an achievement worth seeing. How to Train Your Dragon 2 is a sequel for the ages that gives us all one more gnawing reason to wish dragons were real.

The Book of Life or “How Bull-Killing, Skeletons are Kid Friendly”



BY WILL MCCURDY
RADIO ASSISTANT

It’s not often that a movie involving Meso-American culture makes it to the American mainstream, even less so when it involves La Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), and narrowed further still when the day in said medium is portrayed as anything other than a Halloween themed spooky episode.

“The Book of Life” manages to accomplish this while adding in a whiplashing festive and dark atmosphere, combined with comedy at the speed of bullets to make for a truly unique film.

The movie begins on the aforementioned holiday with three young children, Manolo Sanchez (Diego Luna), Joaquin (Channing Tatum) and Maria Posada

(Zoe Saldana) with Manolo and Joaquin quarrelling over who will win Maria’s heart. While they bicker, two spirits named La Muerte (Kate del Castillo) and Xibalba (Ron Perlman) make a wager on who shall win Maria’s heart and place the fate of the souls of the dead as the price.

The film deals with three large issues of which two are glanced over while one is given quite a bit of attention. The first to be brought up is that of Joaquin living in the shadow of his father, a courageous war hero who was killed in a fight with the massive bandit leader Chakal (Dan Navarro). The second is mainly present when Maria returns from Europe in that while men simply see her as an object to marry off, she is a strong woman and does not respond well to the chauvinistic advances of those who presume that they can simply have her as a possession. While an excellent theme for sure, it’s exceedingly common in modern pieces and is ultimately brushed under the rug during the later parts of the movie.

The third and arguably most important issue dealt with in the movie is living up to the family legacy and it wouldn’t be mentioned if not for the vehicle through which it conveys the problem: matador bull killing. Killing bulls and fighting in the ring by itself are held as controversial topics today for reasons of animal cruelty for sport much akin to killing racing horses with broken legs. It is given center stage with the main protagonist Manolo who comes from a family of bull fighters going back to the days of the tribes of the central Americas, all of whom saw nothing wrong with what they were doing. By being forced to follow in the footsteps of his family, Manolo must decide whether or not his wishes to be an artist are more important than the pride of his family.

Other than that, the movie is quite lighthearted for the subject and gives an interesting spin on Hispanic lore and traditions. If you’re alright with seeing what is considered a kids film, it’s worth the time to view.

A & E Commentary Little holiday film worth watching



BY SYDNEY SCHABACKER
STAFF WRITER

It’s that time of year again to get through the short, dark cooler days of winter and enjoy holiday festivities, including your favorite decorations, books and movies. For me, this means a marathon of Christmas movies.

Every year, the one I start with is the 1968 version of “The Little Drummer Boy.” It’s only 25 minutes long, so I watch it a number of times during December. The movie was made using a technique called claymation, a painstaking process that has become rare in our digital age. It uses pliable clay figures to tell the story which

each fraction of movement of every character is posed and photographed to create seamless motion. The process alone is astonishing.

I’ve been watching this movie every year from my earliest memories. My VHS copy is surprisingly durable but I did upgrade to a DVD. I can’t watch this movie passively and in fact I usually still am brought to tears by the end. Maybe I have just conditioned my response over the years, yet I still see this movie with fresh eyes. The movie packed its 25 minutes with messages regardless of Christian teaching or level of religious adherence.

One of these messages is that while we don’t have much, we can still find something to give. When the little boy Aaron plays his song, it is transcendent and (if you have missed this classic to date, here’s a spoiler) his gift of music is valued beyond the exotic and expensive gifts of the Three Kings. This idea holds a lot of truth for me. A product of talent, the simplicity of

love, or even to take on vast meaning to those receiving these as gifts means everyone is capable of making a difference in someone’s life.

Another message is more subtle than the usual religious versions of forgiveness. Some things cannot be forgiven and should not be forgiven; genocide is just one of our world’s examples. When terrible things happen in a person’s life, any of us can become lost in endless hatred and bitterness. This story is not about forgiveness but about the power of love. Infinitely more doable is its message, regardless of love, of the healing of simply letting go of hatred and bitterness. Every year I have watched this movie since I became aware of the world beyond childhood, I have been able to think of current events that call for this timeless truth. No matter what has happened in a person’s life, letting go of the poison of habitual negativity will make that person’s life better and that’s something worth remembering year-round.

MOVIE REVIEW 5 / 5 PAWS

Odds in Favor for “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1”

BY LEXY PEREZ
A&E ASSISTANT

It’s the time of the year, where moviegoers are once again enthralled in the world of Panem, a society where it’s fun to kill young citizens but they trick us into thinking they are just fighting for food to alleviate their hunger.

In case you were like me and failed to recall every detail of the last film before taking your seat in the theater, only one detail is imperative to know. At the end of “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire,” Katniss Everdeen’s (Jennifer Lawrence) act of

shattering the force field of the Hunger Games arena sparked an uproar in her society. Her act was perceived as rebellious, prompting citizens to finally stand against the control of President Snow (Donald Sutherland).

After the last film, this third installment begins in a time period where Katniss’ previous home, District 12, is now destroyed, though her family and handsome best friend Gale (Liam Hemsworth) were able to escape. Katniss has now been prompted by District 13 President, Alma Coin (Julianne Moore) to be the poster child of the rebellion.

The film centralizes on the onset of a Panem rebellion as Katniss transitions from being the winner of the Hunger Games to now being involved in the uprising revolution. Katniss has become a beacon of hope for everyone, all the while struggling with the aftermath of the hardships she endured in the games and worrying over Peeta (Josh Hutcherson), her partner that was captured by the Capital in the last film.

While this film lacks a great amount of action as shown in the previous installments, this film proves that Hollywood glitz and glam isn’t everything to make a film

what it is. Sometimes it is the raw emotion conveyed that can enrapture an audience.

What I found interesting about this film was its’ contradictory symbol of the term “hero.” A “hero” can be assumed to be someone that is strong, empowered and a leader, but this film shows that sometimes that isn’t always what consolidates one.

The film shows Katniss consistently emotional, powerless and struggling with keeping herself composed from the turmoil and backlash of the government. While Katniss is considered their hero, in reality she is simply a symbol. It is the cit-

izens themselves that are the real heroes to be freed from the government’s control, something that fuels Katniss to be the hope that not only they need, but she does too.

In true franchise fashion, the film also depicts an emerged love triangle, with Katniss juggling her feelings for Peeta and the affection and love from her loyal, best friend Gale. While it can be confusing whom her heart truly wants, after all this girl is enduring the same amount of emotions that we felt after watching Simba cry over his dying father, it can be assumed that we will soon see the love story evolve

in the next installment.

Although the film seems to embody a tense and serious tone, the humor and charm from Effie (Elizabeth Banks) and Haymitch (Woody Harrelson), provide a dim light in the film’s dark tunnel.

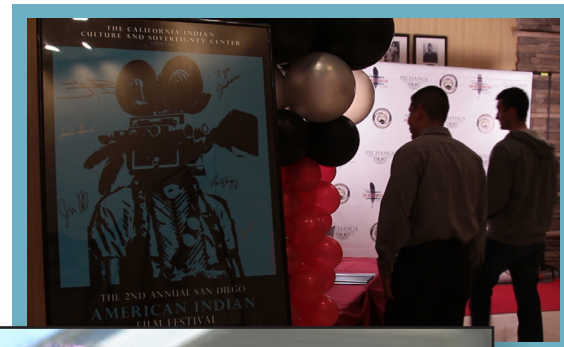
Earning \$123 million in its opening weekend, “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1” proves that “fangirl” mania has not subsided.

It’s clear that the odds are always in the favor of this franchise and for that I will always volunteer to be there front row when the next installment is released.

Photo Submission

Photos by: Anne Hall & Matthew Kuhlman

NATIVE AMERICAN FESTIVAL



Native American dance group performs in the courtyard in front of the CSUSM Student Union on November 4 in celebration of Native American Heritage Month.

New Year's Eve Party 2015

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School of Art celebrates end of semester with performances



Photo by Chris Morales

School of Art will feature piano performances from student musicians.

By BEULAH SUPRIYA
STAFF WRITER

As the semester comes to an end, the Tukwut voices and the University Vocal Ensemble are practicing for their final performance on the first of December.

They are directed by Ron Jessee. A number of the students participating are Music or VPA majors, but everyone's talent and hard work is evident at their practice. The night's program consists of not only songs by the ensemble but piano solos as well. Both director Jessee and his accompanist Dr. Sydney Yin

have instrumental pieces planned. Right from familiar songs with a new take on them to old renaissance era songs, all are covered.

As 'tis the season to be jolly, the choir have made it a point to add a Christmas number as well. The innovativeness of the smaller group Tukwut Voices can be seen as they render "Adoramus te" as if in a Cathedral by using the ARTS 11 lobby room to open the performance. The concert is at 7 p.m. on Dec. 1 in Arts 111.

The Javanese Gamelan ensemble is performing as well, which is directed by

Mr. Randy Griswold. He has been teaching music here at CSUSM for the past 15 years. It is to be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3 in Academic Hall ACD 102. At 7 p.m. on Dec. 4, we have the Tukwut Jazz Ensemble performing at Arts 111. This is directed by Dr. Mtafiti Imara, a Saxophonist and Composer, who teaches music at the college as well.

With the first week of December lined up with such mesmerizing melodies, there could be no better way to usher in the holiday season. All performances are free to attend so go and support the School of Art.

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