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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS, INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

CSUSM maintains relatively low number of coronavirus cases

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the number of coronavirus cases connected to other major universities in San Diego County rises, CSUSM has managed to keep its case numbers low.

CSUSM has had a total of 23 cases since the pandemic started, but there are no known active cases at CSUSM as of Sept. 29. Of the 23 cumulative cases, 20 were on-campus cases, meaning that the individual was in a CSUSM facility when they were considered infectious.

In contrast, San Diego State University (SDSU) reported 1,036 confirmed and 44 probable cases for a total of 1,080 cases as of Sept. 29.

Of the 1,080 SDSU cases, 691 are students living off

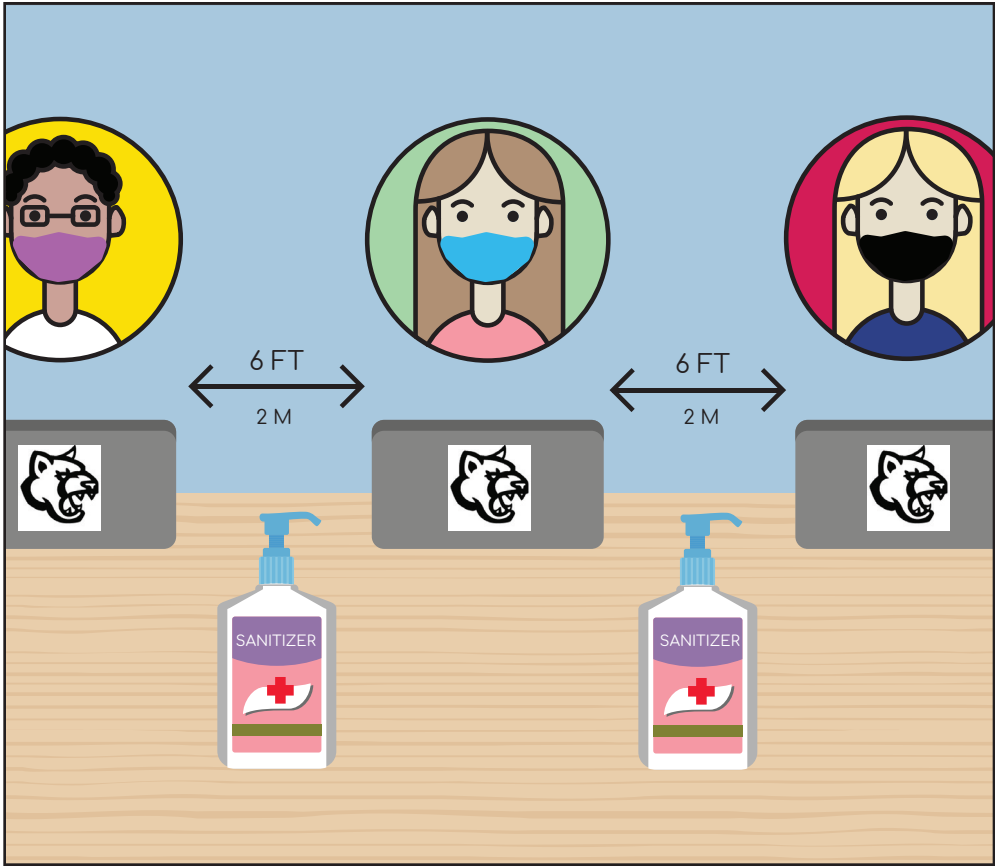


Illustration by Ruben Santana

CSUSM appears to have avoided a coronavirus crisis thus far, with just three active cases as of Sept. 25.



Photo by Life Matters on Pexels

The CSU's new ethnic studies requirement attempts to promote equity towards all races.

CSU implements new ethnic studies requirement

By ARIANA L. KITTS
STAFF WRITER

Starting in the 2023-2024 academic school year, all CSU freshmen will be required to take an ethnic studies course in order to graduate.

Assembly Bill 1460, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom, will require students to take one three-unit ethnic studies course with a focus on African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans or Latinx Americans.

The California Faculty Association (CFA), a union of CSU faculty, actively advocated AB 1460. Black Lives Matter protests and other calls to dismantle systemic racism helped gain traction for the bill, and BLM partnered with the CFA to support the bill.

Dr. Darel Engen, President of the San Marcos CFA Chapter and Associate Vice President of

Chapter Presidents statewide, expressed his support for the bill by pointing out the current climate in the country, tense with racial divisions, inequity and a long history of racism.

"Some people don't understand history, and it leads to ignorance and this idea that there is no need to consider race. The lack of understanding when it comes to systemic racism perpetuates inequality, division and unconscious as well as conscious attempts to deny certain groups of their rights," said Engen, who is also a history professor.

Ethnic studies courses examine institutions, social values and history through a lens focusing on the role ethnicity plays.

Dr. Sharon Elise, Associate Vice President of Racial and Social Justice for CFA statewide and a

Ethnic Studies, continued on page 2

Student homelessness and food insecurity remain concerns

By ADRIANNA ADAME
MANAGING EDITOR

Student homelessness and food insecurity continue to be ongoing issues at CSUSM, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To combat student homelessness, the Cougar Care Network is working to connect students to resources and information that can help them through financial challenges and to be able to at-

tain basic needs. The Cougar Care Network is also continuing to provide resources and support for students facing academic, mental health, personal and family challenges throughout this time.

The Cougar Care Network has been in contact with more students this semester than in previous ones, due to the situation of the pandemic.

"Yes, we have heard from more students because of the

pandemic, who are struggling with housing insecurity. They've lost their places to live [because] they've lost their jobs. They can no longer afford where they are living and need help to find a place that is cheaper or just finding someone to live with," said Bonnie Campbell, the CARE Manager at the Cougar Care Network.

As of summer 2020, CSUSM has offered short-term emergency housing,

because of a grant given to the university by the Staples Foundation. For up to 30 days, students facing housing insecurity will be able to stay in one of the on-campus residences. Students who need to access on-campus emergency housing have to get in contact by emailing or calling the Cougar Care Network.

Homelessness, continued on page 2

CSU Chancellor-select shares goals during live broadcast

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CSU Chancellor-select Joseph I. Castro introduced himself to his constituents and spoke about what he hopes to attain as chancellor during a live broadcast on Sept. 25.

"I am so thrilled to be Chancellor-select for the CSU. It's an amazing leadership opportunity, a chance to make a positive difference for our very talented students and to support our very talented faculty and staff," said Castro.

During his tenure, Castro hopes to increase system-wide graduation rates,

gain a secure funding base and inspire elected officials to prioritize investment in the CSU.

Additionally, Castro would like to see continued innovation, a diversifying of faculty and students in the system and an ongoing dedication to serving students.

The grandson of Mexican immigrant farm workers, Castro grew up in the small town of Hanford in the San Joaquin Valley. After high school, he attended UC Berkeley, aided by a program that the university's chancellor Ira Michael Heyman had designed to raise enrollment numbers among students from the San Joaquin Valley.

"It really is an example of leadership mattering," said Castro about Heyman's program. "Making that decision [to attend UC Berkeley] changed my whole life."

Castro completed a bachelor's degree in political science and then earned a master's degree in public policy, also from UC Berkeley. Recognizing that he had a passion for higher education, he went on to receive a doctorate in higher education policy and leadership from Stanford University.

"It became clear to me that universities are one of those institutions in society that transform lives. It was transforming mine, and

that's what really triggered my own interest in working in universities," said Castro.

Castro has served in a variety of faculty and administration positions, most recently as the president of CSU Fresno since 2013.

Castro emphasized that one of his top priorities as chancellor will be the Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025), a plan that the CSU implemented in 2015 to raise graduation rates and eliminate equity gaps in degree completion.

"I am firmly committed to the GI 2025 goals. I know

Chancellor, continued on page 3



Screenshot by Anneliese Esparza

Chancellor-select Joseph I. Castro will take office on Jan. 4, 2021.

Students receive take-home lab kits

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (CSTEM) distributed over 500 take-home lab kits to students this semester.

The kits corresponded to labs in several disciplines including biology, chemistry, physics, engineering and computer science and enabled students to have a hands-on learning experience despite being at home.

“In order to run labs virtually, [students] still have to have supplies, and they’re not supplies that necessarily they can get on their own,” said Courtney Nance-Sotelo, a Lab Coordinator in the biology department.

Nance-Sotelo and her colleagues assembled the kits over the summer. “Professors would give us a list of everything they wanted in the kit, we would attempt to order it, then box it up and have it ready for them to pick up, and if they lived out of the area, then we would ship it to them,” said Nance-Sotelo.

Preparing the kits proved challenging due to a nationwide shortage of lab materials. Getting equipment for electronics courses was especially difficult.

“There’s pretty much one company that makes [the electronics course equipment], and so every university across the country was trying to get those,” said Janine Smock, a Lab Coordinator in the physics department.

Another struggle was the affordability of giving each student their own equipment. To cut costs, students in some labs will have a microscope for half the semester. They will return the microscopes to CSTEM at the semester’s midpoint so they can be sanitized and handed out to other students in the class.



Photo courtesy of CSTEM

CSTEM gave out over 500 lab kits to students enrolled in virtual lab courses.

CSTEM distributed the kits after the add/drop date, to make sure that everyone who received a kit was planning on completing the course.

“You don’t want to give out a microscope and have the student drop,” said Nance-Sotelo.

Distribution of the kits was spread over several days and CSTEM worked with many campus departments beforehand, including Event Planning, University Police, Parking Services, Integrated Risk Management and Safety, Health & Sustainability.

“We required [students] to bring three things: their ID, their own pen and a mask,” said Jeani Cressy, a Lab Coordinator in biological sciences and biotechnology. Students signed paperwork to verify they had received the correct materials and to assume responsibility of the kit.

CSTEM did not charge a fee for the kits.

“If it didn’t come back to us then they would be charged for it, but assuming they took care of it and returned it, then there would be no cost for that, so that they could have the best experience in that class without adding extra

cost,” said Smock.

The kits offer a compromise between hands-on learning and staying safe, said Cressy. “Ideally, it’s always face-to-face with no restrictions. Of course that’s always the best way to learn anything,” she said.

“... [Students receiving kits] have the best of both worlds, where they’re safe ... and also getting a good lesson in the lab,” said Cressy.

An advantage of kits is that students can work on them on their own time. “Although I wouldn’t choose kits over in-person if there wasn’t a pandemic, there is one small silver lining ... they have [the kit] there whenever they have a moment, if it’s a weekend, that they have it there and can continue to tinker with it and learn,” said Smock.

Zameer Karim, a senior pre-law political science major, has found the kit he received for his electrical engineering course effective.

“It is a little more difficult than in person, but with the extra tutoring, open lab hours and office hours with video conferencing software ... it is definitely not that bad. I have been learning a lot, and as I

get more familiar with the tools provided by the school, the class is getting easier and I am completing the labs more rapidly,” wrote Karim in a message to The Cougar Chronicle.

Karim, who said his kit contained about \$1,000 worth of equipment, appreciates that the school provided the expensive equipment instead of making students purchase it.

The Lab Coordinators said it was rewarding to see students receive the kits that they had prepared all summer.

“It actually was fun ... we wanted to make it a celebration of being able to study, to keep going forward. At least you can take it home if you can’t be here, we’re here for you to support you. And I feel like the response we got back from the students picking up, that’s what they felt,” said Cressy.

“The amount of time it took to put together these kits was all summer ... it was so nice even for that one moment that we got to see them,” said Smock.

CSTEM is on Instagram @cstem_csusm.



Ethnic Studies: continued from page 1

member of the San Marcos CFA Chapter Executive Board, explained that ethnic studies explores the cultural contributions, perspectives, and histories of four major ethnicities in the United States, particularly focusing on their relationships with the United States government and oppression.

“The majority of CSU students are people of color, and a curriculum laced with white supremacy won’t serve these students. 7 of 10 people in the world are not white.

We need to end the dominant norm that normalizes white power and fails to acknowledge what is best for students of color,” said Elise.

New professors will need to be hired at CSUSM to fulfill this requirement.

“The hiring of new faculty of color is necessary

even without this new requirement. Our student body is diverse, and faculty should be too,” said Engen.

In addition to hiring more diverse faculty, Elise suggested that ethnic studies should be considered a foundational discipline.

“When primarily white faculty are in charge they are unfamiliar with culture and experience, and often do not deem it as valuable,” said Elise.

Prior to the bill passing in August, the university system proposed a social justice and diversity grad-

uation requirement that would have included social justice courses that explore the history and culture of a range of communities that experience oppression, such as the LGBTQ+ community, but students would still be able to graduate without a course focused on the perspectives and experiences of people of color in the United States.

However, the CSU proposal was opposed by CFA, because it would dilute the spirit of ethnic studies. The CFA did not want a requirement that would allow students to graduate without taking a course that includes the stories and lived

“Some people don’t understand history, and it leads to ignorance and this idea that there is no need to consider race.”

— Dr. Darel Engen

experiences of racialized people of color.

“The focus on the four groups in the United States is central to ethnic studies, and other curriculum proposals wouldn’t focus on them as much,” said Engen.

Engen hopes that with California taking the lead, a required education in ethnic studies will help to foster a more equitable society.

Elise pointed out that the CSUs are sometimes referred to as the “people’s university” because they represent the majority of Americans. “I love that the majority of students are people of color and working-class. We want to work with and support them!” she said.



Homelessness: continued from page 1

“Along with that, then we’ll assist students with connecting to other agencies and we work with them and the local agencies assist us with obtaining permanent housing,” said Campbell.

There are also quite a few on-campus resources that can help assist students who are financially struggling.

Fresh Market Mondays, one of CSUSM’s food distribution programs, is starting back up on Oct. 6. On the first Monday of the month, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Campus Way Circle, the distribution will run similarly to a mobile drive-thru.

The Cougar Pantry is another food distribution program run on campus by ASI that does a drive-thru distribution from 10 a.m. to 12



Photo by Pixabay on Pexels

Student homeless and food insecurity at CSUSM are now bigger concerns because of the pandemic.

p.m. on Wednesdays at Campus Way Circle. For both Fresh Market Mondays and the Cougar Pantry, students need to have their student ID on them for when they go to pick up their food.

The ASI Student Emergency Fund (SEF) is another resource that students who are

facing an unexpected financial emergency can look into. The SEF is useful in situations such as if a student was laid off due to COVID-19, or if there are any unexpected medical bills that a student doesn’t have the financial ability to take care of.

The Career Center also

“provides employment opportunities as they list any job opportunities on-campus, but also off-campus. They too offer assistance to students who may need to apply for unemployment or have questions about unemployment and [if] they can apply,” said Campbell.

Several off-campus resources are also able to help CSUSM students who are struggling to fill their basic needs.

The Oceanside and Escondido-based YMCA Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Academy assists young people between the ages of 15 to 24 who are homeless. Since the Cougar Care Network has a relationship with the TAY Academy, they can directly refer students to this organization.

North County Lifeline, located in Vista, offers assistance to students experiencing homelessness as well. Students up to the age of 24 are eligible for this program.

Students older than 24 can locate off-campus programs by calling 2-1-1, the San Diego non-profit organization hotline which connects individuals to services that can

further help them attain basic needs.

Some students may be hesitant about reaching out to the Cougar Care Network and other organizations, because of the stigma of homelessness and food insecurity.

“I’d just let students know that there are so many things out of their hands or out of their control that can happen, that can cause them to lose financial stability and become homeless. It can happen to anyone and is nothing to be ashamed of,” said Campbell. “Know that we are here to support you, no one will judge you or think differently of you because this has happened.”

For further information, visit www.csusm.edu/ccn/index.html.



Coronavirus: continued from page 1

campus while 389 are students living on campus. The outbreak necessitated SDSU to order a four-week pause on in-person instruction earlier this month.

UC San Diego (UCSD), which began instruction on Sept. 28, reports cases cumulatively, which includes both active and recovered cases. UCSD has had 292 cumulative cases as of Sept. 29, with most cases being health employees.

Point Loma Nazarene University has one active case as of Sept. 29 while the University of San Diego has had 80 cumulative cases since Aug. 16.

One likely factor explaining CSUSM’s low number

of cases is that the university has fewer students living in residential housing and off-campus apartments than other local universities have, said Interim Medical Director Dr. James Chun in an email to The Cougar Chronicle.

There are only 253 students in CSUSM’s residential housing for the fall semester, which is a little over 16 percent of the full capacity of 1,547.

For comparison, SDSU is housing 2,249 students on campus, which is almost 30 percent of their full capacity of 7,500. A large number of SDSU students also live in

off campus housing near the school.

“... [U]nlike SDSU which has a sizeable population of non-university operated

student housing in areas immediately off-campus and a very robust Greek life, CSUSM is primarily a commuter school, with relatively fewer numbers of students residing immediately off campus, thus opportunities to congregate in large num-

bers are less likely,” wrote Chun.

Chun said that another factor appears to be a diligence in following procedures that

mitigate COVID-19 risk on campus.

“... [S]ince the beginning of the semester, there have been no documented cases of coronavirus transmission (aside from Housing) within any of our campus buildings, which is a testament to

the efforts of dedicated staff members on our campus to ensure that building spaces are reconfigured to maximize physical distancing and unidirectional foot traffic, along with students and faculty being compliant on masking, distancing protocols and being diligent in completing the daily screen and not coming to campus if symptomatic or had a known recent exposure with a positive case of COVID-19,” wrote Chun.

Chun noted that the number of coronavirus cases at CSUSM may be higher than the figures show, as the CSUSM data does not include employees working remotely or those who live off campus and do not participate in any campus

activities. Those individuals are not obligated to report a positive case.

The university reports case numbers at csusm.edu/csusmasone/contact/report-case.html. The page is updated whenever the data changes.

Student Health and Counseling Services does not currently offer COVID-19 testing, but the university does host a county-operated, walk-up testing site in the Vi-asat Engineering Pavillion.

The test is free and open to students, faculty, staff and members of the public. The site operates from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week. There is free parking available in Lot F.

For more information on the testing center, visit csusm.edu/csusmasone/faq/sd-covid-testing.html.

Lab Kits: continued from page 2



Photos courtesy of CSTEM

CSTEM distributed lab kits to students over a span of several days.

Chancellor: continued from page 1

all the [CSU] presidents are, and the campus communities are behind these as well. So we are going to stay focused on that ... it’s just so vitally important,” said Castro.

Castro hopes to foster personal relationships with elected officials and to encourage them to support the CSU. He was encouraged by his recent virtual meeting with Governor Gavin Newsom.

“It was a conversation about the success of our students, about COVID and how faculty and staff are

navigating that ... we had a very productive conversation, and [Newsom] committed his continued support to the CSU,” said Castro.

Castro acknowledged that the current virtual modality is a challenge but remains hopeful for the future. “I just see incredible potential for us in the coming years. And it will be difficult in the short term, certainly, but I think that we will persevere through that, and we’ll be much stronger after having gone through this experience,” he said.

Castro praised his predecessor, Timothy P. White, for his success as chancellor

over the last seven years. “I want to express my gratitude to Chancellor White, who’s done a magnificent job, and I want to credit him for where we’re at today. We’ve got a much more powerful, effective CSU than we did when he started, and that’s my desire, is to build from that, with our CSU team,” he said.

“I’m hopeful that I can inspire the very best in everybody so that we can go down that path and elevate the CSU to new heights of greatness,” said Castro.

A recording of the broadcast can be found on the CSU’s YouTube channel.

- Campus Notes -

No update available on ASI fund mismanagement

Last semester, ASI reported that a former professional staff member allegedly misused \$80,000 in funds for personal gain.

At the time, ASI stated that there was a criminal investigation underway. In addition, ASI filed an insurance claim with CSU Risk Management Authority in Jan. 2019 to recover the losses.

In an email to The Cougar Chronicle, Chief Communications Officer Margaret Chantung said there are no further updates at this time.

“As the investigation is still ongoing by the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office no updates are available. In addition, there are no further updates related to the insurance claim. CSUSM and ASI look forward to the resolution of the investigation in due time, and continue to cooperate fully with investigators as needed,” Chantung wrote.

CSUSM to host polling place

CSUSM will host an on-campus polling place at the Clarke Field House, which is located near the Sports Center and the softball field. There will be parking available in Lot L and Parking Structure 1.

The polling place will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2. On Nov. 3 (Election Day), the polling place will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information on the 2020 election, visit csusm.edu/election2020/.

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THE CHRONICLE ENTERTAINMENT RUNDOWN

By JAELYN DECENA, KAT PARRA, MARIA JUNGERS | A&E Editor, Staff Writer, Assistant Opinion Editor

Podcast: "The Saddest Podcast on Earth"



Photo by Tuxyso on Wikimedia Commons
"The Saddest Podcast on Earth" helps Disney lovers cope during the park's closure.

Many people are attempting to adapt to the new COVID-19 normalcy, which includes no longer being able to do many of the things people loved. Many Disneyland lovers are stuck watching ride videos on repeat and imagining what could have been. This is the exact problem the hosts of "The Saddest Podcast on Earth," Ryan Bergara, Byron Marin and Amanda Pham, are facing. To compensate for the Disneyland withdrawals, this podcast focuses on the sights, sounds and smells of Disneyland Park. Combining comedy with nostalgia, "The Saddest Podcast on Earth" is the perfect solution for Disneyland lovers.

TV Show: Bob's Burgers



Photo by Gage Skidmore on Wikimedia Commons
H. Jon Benjamin plays Bob Belcher on Bob's Burgers.

Fox's most popular animated sitcom *Bob's Burgers* has been renewed for its 12th and 13th seasons. *Bob's Burgers* follows the lives of the dysfunctional Belcher family. The show focuses on the small wins of working at a family-owned restaurant, such as paying bills in time, having meals together and having loyal customers become lifelong friends. Starring H. Jon Benjamin, Kristen Schaal, John Roberts, Dan Mintz and Eugene Mirman, *Bob's Burgers* leaves its audience with a warm feeling. *Bob's Burgers* premiered its 11th season on Fox and Hulu on Sept. 27.

Movie: The Frozen Ground



Photo from Wikipedia, property of Lionsgate
The Frozen Ground is available to stream on Netflix.

Director Scott Walker delivers a suspense-drenched film that manifests fear and urgency as an escapee becomes a breakthrough in a detective's cold case. Jack Halcombe (Nicholas Cage) and Cindy Paulson (Vanessa Hudgens) join forces to incarcerate a double-life serial killer who's been hunting young women for nearly 13 years. This film is based on the 1970s Alaskan serial killer Robert Hansen. Because the film was shot in the same town of the real-life murders, *The Frozen Ground's* setting is dark and unsettling. Available on Netflix, this is a film you won't want to watch alone.

Album: Alicia

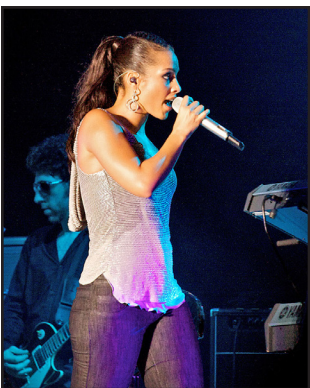


Photo by LuxTonnerre on Wikimedia Commons
Alicia Keys' new album *Alicia* was released on Sept. 18.

With over 42 million albums sold worldwide and on top of becoming the most certified female R&B artist of the millennium, Alicia Keys released her newest self-titled album *Alicia* on Sept. 18. This album highlights her piano-based roots, featuring songs about struggling to step into one's power. Other artists such as Jill Scott, Khalid and Miguel are featured in her 15-track album, contributing to the intimate and inviting sound of neo-soul intertwined with R&B. Keys' music opens up a safe space for listeners to embrace the beauty and love that is discovered in each of us.



Photo from Wikipedia, property of Lotte Entertainment
Zombie-comedy *#Alive* is available to stream on Netflix.

#Alive mimics real life quarantine with a side of zombies

REVIEW

By DIANA BEAS SOTO
Staff Writer

Spending the days aimlessly scrolling through the internet while trapped at home is a story that is all too familiar. This concept is played on in the South Korean zombie apocalypse film *#Alive*. The feature debut of director Cho Il-hyung, *#Alive* was recently released globally via Netflix bringing everything one would expect of a zombie movie: gore, thrill and an aloof yet charismatic protagonist. The story follows Oh Joon-woo, played by Yoo Ah-in, who is a popular video game streamer that wakes up amidst a zombie apocalypse. As someone who spends his days shooting the liv-

ing dead only from a pixelated screen, Joon-woo proves to be incapable when it comes to survival skills. Il-hyung's decision of excluding a backstory, with little to no exposition, makes this zombie movie much more fast-paced and riveting than most. Instead of focusing on how the virus came to be and narrating its origin, the film seamlessly skips past this aspect, allowing its audience to focus on the fear factor. Given Joon-woo's comedic relief, such as playing video games while hoards of zombies are roaming the streets, *#Alive* is a new twist on action-packed zombie films. An interesting feature of the film is the singular set-

#Alive, continued on page 6

Mulan offers a fresh take on the classic tale

REVIEW

By ANGELICA CERVANTES
Staff Writer

The new live-action remake of *Mulan* breaks waves in the cinematic universe of Disney. With a slightly different story to tell, this film honors the 1998 original while producing new ways of appreciating Chinese culture. Although the new film lacked certain memorable aspects of the original, *Mulan* gives its audience a fresh experience of a young woman who overcomes the societal barriers of her time and culture. Traditions of the film include serving tea and match-making. Playing off of the original animated film, the new *Mulan* gives more context and explanation of these practices. Disney's approach with this film is to give historical reverence to Chinese culture, which is why the film was formatted realistically. Played by Liu Yifei, the title character is renamed Hua Mulan in order to maintain historical accuracy. Yifei delivers in her role by giving a devoted and athletic performance. Jet Li fans will also be excited to know that he returns to the screen playing the Emperor. Being a long-time action star, it comes as a sur-



Photo from Wikipedia, property of Disney
Disney's live-action *Mulan* brings a new story to a Disney classic.

prise that he steps into a large role once again. The story begins with Hua Mulan as an independent and non-conforming young girl within her small village. She is expressed as having high levels of "chi" - a term used in Chinese philosophy and medicine to explain one's energy force. Her "chi" is a recurring symbol that explains her rebellious nature and her ability to join the Imperial Army. Another important symbol throughout the film is a phoenix. A representation of power and female members of a royal family, the phoenix guides Mulan throughout her journey by encouraging her and giving her strength. Aside from battling northern invaders, Hua Mulan must come head to head with a witch known as Xian Lang who has the ability to morph into a hawk. This dynamic between Hua Mulan and Xian Lang shows the two sides of powerful women. Mulan chooses to fight for her country and bring honor to her family, whereas Xian Lang uses her power to seek revenge. It is no secret that this film lacked certain elements of the original film that fans loved. Though we did not have the comedic relief of Mushu or the catchy songs from the original film, *Mulan* brings a new take on an original film to the table. This film gives the audience a new perspective into Chinese culture and brings honor to the iconic figure Hua Mulan. ♦

Japanese internment survivor speaks about childhood experience

By BAILEY HEFFERNAN
STAFF WRITER

Many people know George Takei from his work in the Star Trek franchise, but until recently, many were unaware of a monumental part of Takei's childhood.

After Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, sending the National Guard to remove any Americans of Japanese descent from their homes and take them to concentration camps.

Among the 120,000 Japanese imprisoned in the United States was five-year-old George Takei and his family. Takei has recently written a graphic novel about living in internment entitled *They Called Us Enemy*.

Takei spoke at the "One Book One San Diego" event on Sept. 22 about his past experiences and adapting that into his novel.

They Called Us Enemy follows the true story of a young George Takei and his family being sent from Los Angeles to an internment camp in Arkansas and then a segregation camp in Northern California.

Takei said the segregation camp at Tule Lake, California was the "most notorious and cruel of all internment."

The novel follows the family through the duration of the war, and also highlights some key historical events such as the loyalty questionnaire. This was a questionnaire that all imprisoned Japanese-Americans over 17 were required to take, pledging their allegiance to America and indicating that they would fight for the nation. When Takei's parents refused to answer questions, they were sent to the segre-

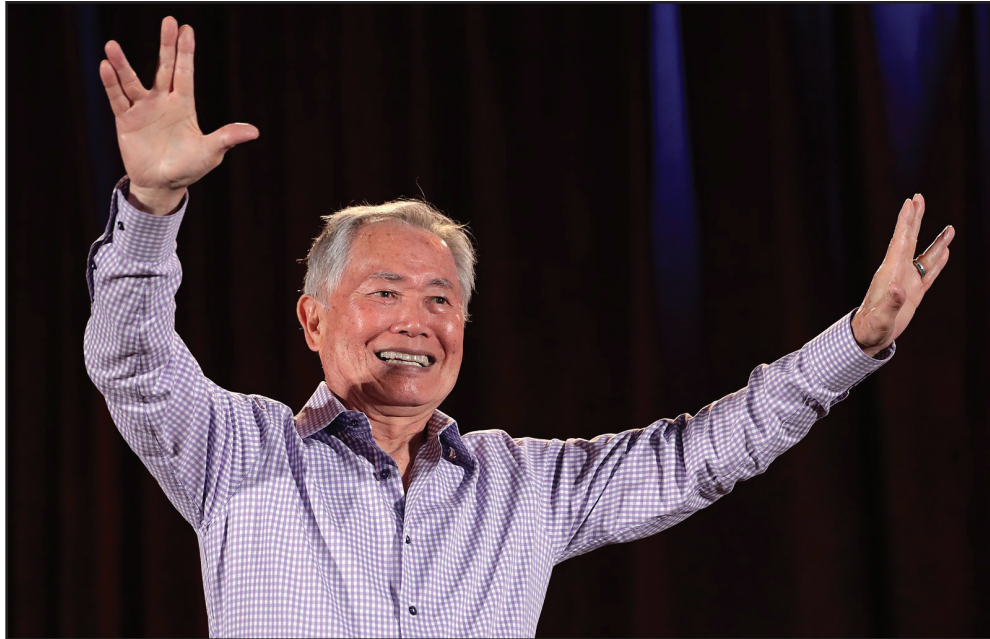


Photo by Gage Skidmore on Wikimedia Commons

Japanese internment survivor George Takei spoke at the "One Book One San Diego" event on Sept. 22.

gation camp.

KPBS hosts "One Book One San Diego" annually and picks three novels to feature. This year, the selection committee chose to feature George Takei's graphic novel *They Called Us Enemy* in two categories: teen/adult and Spanish-speaking. This is a first in the fourteen-year history of the event.

Due to the pandemic, the event for this year was moved to a virtual platform. A Facebook live video featured not only Takei's words about his novel, but some aspects of local Japanese culture as well.

The event began with a performance by Genbu Dai-ko, who performs and teaches Taiko, a type of Japanese drumming. Next, San Diego City College professor Susan Hasegawa gave a brief overview of the history of Japanese-Americans in San Diego County, including the impact Executive Order 9066 had on Japanese-Americans in the region. Finally, Takei was interviewed by

reporter Beth Accomando about his new graphic novel.

Takei says it has been his life goal to share his experiences of these events with all Americans.

"It's been my life's mission to raise the awareness of this sad and dark chapter in American history," said Takei, which is why he wrote *They Called Us Enemy* in collaboration with artist Harmony Becker.

Takei noted that he likes how Becker's illustrations have an "anime-like style" and that he chose the graphic novel format because he loved comic books as a kid.

"Graphic novels are ... a way of giving young people a visual," said Takei.

Takei also spoke of how it felt to be rounded up and forced into the camps.

"I wasn't an enemy, I was a five-year-old kid ... I wasn't an alien. I was born in LA ... it was totally irrational," said Takei.

Takei emphasized how unconstitutional this executive order was, and how the

American government still attempted to justify this act in the Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. United States*, which upheld in favor of the United States.

The event ended with some audience questions. One audience member asked, "Is this something that America is at risk of repeating in our current political climate?"

Takei responded that it is already happening with the ICE detention centers, and that luckily when he was in a concentration camp, parents and children were kept together.

Takei's final message was hope for the future. "Our democracy is dependent on us to participate ... we need to vote and vote intelligently," he said.

He concluded by saying that in our "participatory democracy," the people have the power to change things for the better.

You can read *They Called Us Enemy* on the CSUSM library website.

◆

The Cougar Corner

Drown

By Magali Castillo

All we know is yesterday, today and tomorrow.
All we do is sleep, eat and repeat.
All we do is stay in a web of technology.

What does love even mean now?
What does talking one on one even feel now?
What does a life even mean?

It's like we are swimming in the filth we brought upon ourselves
Our heads come up for a second to catch some air
Then it goes back down to drown.

And the solution is very clear
If the people in charge really stopped for a second to critically think and analyze the before, now and after
We wouldn't drown.

It only takes one person to change the world
But no leader is found in the pandemic of a new millenium.

...

Writer Bio: My name is Magali Castillo and I am a junior at CSUSM majoring in Literature and Writing Studies with a minor in Global Studies. My story as a writer begins at the age of eight years old when lyrics inspired my mind to grab a pencil and notepad to write what I was feeling. Poetry is something that found me when I was in middle school, which made me ask my mom to buy notebooks (thanks Mom) to fill them up with words. Writing is a form of art that allows me to better express myself in comparison to when I talk. I also have taken it as a niche to write in my first language, Spanish. I feel that I can never stop growing when it comes to developing my skills as a writer whether it is poetry, short stories or articles.

Are you a creative writer, visual artist or photographer? Show off your work on The Cougar Corner!

Message us at cougarchron.arts@gmail.com with your name, a short bio and either a short piece of writing or a photo of your work.

CHABSS hosts monthly creative contest, announces September winners

By JAEALYN DECENA
A&E EDITOR

The College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (CHABSS) is hosting a monthly creative works contest called CHABSS Voices.

The intent behind these monthly competitions is to not only encourage student creativity given that classes are online, but to also "help engage and inspire our CHABSS community to come together to emphasize anti-racism, inclusive excellence, social justice, social responsibility, ethics and global culture," according to the CHABSS website.

Each month, there will be two winning entries: a CHABSS Dean's Pick and



Photo courtesy of CHABSS

CHABSS announced the September winners for their monthly contest.

CHABSS Staff Pick. The student winners will receive an Amazon gift card and their work published to CHABSS's social media and website.

September's theme was "Get Out the Vote." Hon-

oring National Voter Registration Month, the theme focuses on the importance of voting as Election Day quickly approaches.

The September Staff Pick winner was an untitled work by AMD 204 student Alexia

Lamparelli.

The September Dean's Pick winner was an anonymous poem titled "November 3rd." The work highlights the drastic measures that America faces in the 2020 election. One section of

the poem in bold and italics references George Floyd's last words "I can't breathe." Through highlighting the racial injustice and unrest in America, both works encapsulate the importance of exercising the right to vote.

The contest will be held every month until May 2021, excluding December. Each month leading up to May 2021 will highlight a different theme.

The monthly themes can be found on the CHABSS Department's website. CHABSS faculty and CHABSS majors, minors or students enrolled in at least one CHABSS-focused course are encouraged to push their creative boundaries by entering the CHABSS Voices contest.

October's theme is "Life in a Pandemic" and the deadline for submissions is Oct. 26th by 5 p.m.

◆

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“Alma” highlights the struggles and relationships of Mexican Americans

REVIEW

By BAILEY HEFFERNAN
STAFF WRITER

The CSUSM theater department's first virtual show, titled “Alma,” premiered on YouTube on Sept. 24. More than 80 audience members streamed the first live performance.

“Alma” tells the story of a Mexican immigrant mother, Alma, and her 17-year-old daughter, Angel. The story takes place towards the end of 2016, just after President Trump had been elected president. Alma is undocumented, and the show discusses the fears that she and Angel have for the coming presidency.

The show also includes some important information about the citizenship process in the United States. Angel speaks about how she will be able to sponsor her mother for citizenship when she turns 21. Alma also knows that it may take up to 10 years for her citizenship process to be over. Despite these struggles, Alma is optimistic about becoming an American, and studies for her citizenship test often.

“Alma” is not only a show

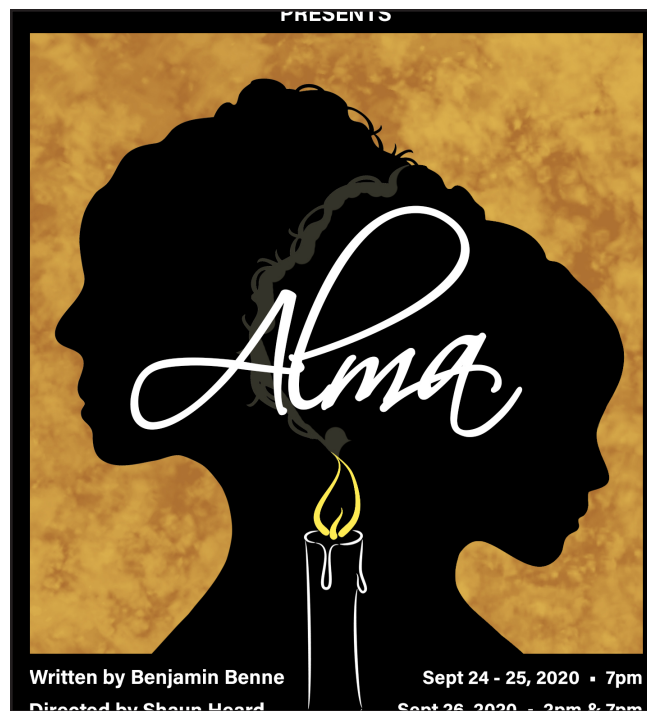


Photo courtesy of the School of Arts

CSUSM's theater department hosted the first virtual play of the semester, “Alma,” via YouTube.

about political tensions, but also one about the dynamic between a teenage daughter and mother. The show begins with Angel stumbling home drunk from a friend's house. Alma is furious, especially because Angel is supposed to take the SAT the next day.

One of the main conflicts of the show is whether or not Angel should even take the SAT. She tries to convince her mother that communi-

ty college is a better option, but Alma insists that Angel should stick to her dreams of attending a four-year college.

Despite their struggles, Alma and Angel find common ground. They agree that they should never be apart and that one day they will own a home of their own. Although their fighting can be seen as typical between mother and daughter, tensions are especially high, as

Alma works three jobs to try to send Angel to UC Davis.

Actresses Anyelid Mene-ses (Alma) and Victoria Diaz (Angel) expressed deep emotions and stayed in character despite acting from their own homes.

There were moments of intense feeling from both women, and director Shaun Heard picked up on this. “So proud of my actors! The emotions are so deep,” he said.

The ultimate message of the play is family members sticking together even through the hard times. It seems Alma and Angel will have tough times ahead, but they are determined to always be together and achieve their goals in life.

The show is both funny and saddening at times, but “Alma” highlights the importance of staying positive through times of uncertainty. As long as this mother and daughter reach for their goals, they will come out happy and successful in the end.

All live recordings of the show are available for playback through the theater department's YouTube channel.



#Alive: continued from page 4

ting. Rather than the genre's usual extensive high-budget settings, the eerie nature of a zombie apocalypse happening right outside the comfort of Joon-woo's home, with his neighbors ripping each other apart, challenges the audience's comfort levels.

Visually, the film focuses on graphic, gory scenes that zombie-film lovers will enjoy, all while tugging at the heart strings of the audience as Joo-woo's whole life falls apart.

There is less dialogue found within the first half of the film as Joon-woo is isolated in his apartment. Excluding the scenes of

Joon-woo talking to himself or crying himself to sleep, the film's reliance on silence off-puttingly mimics what many have been living through during the pandemic.

With no contact with the outside world and losing his only resource of sanity, the internet, Joon-woo's desperation and hopelessness is felt through the screen.

The film's second protagonist is Kim Yoo-bin, played by Park Shin-hye. Also with no backstory, the audience learns that Yoo-bin has been watching Joon-woo while hiding in the apartment complex across from him.

Yoo-bin's refreshing approach to the apocalypse in comparison to Joon-woo's

sets the tone for dominance between the two of them. Even with the lack of dialogue between the two characters, the simplicity of forming a human bond during dark times shines a light of hope between the two characters.

However, *#Alive* stumbles upon its own faults and clichés.

The characters together form a surprisingly good dynamic duo, yet individually there is little to no character development. The plot can become predictable at times.

Regardless, having a zombie film that keeps its audience on the edge of their seats is commendable. The relatability of what the main characters live through and

what many during the pandemic lived through blurs the line between reality and fiction.

Having a film that can perfectly capture the anxiety and panic many felt during the COVID-19 pandemic is quite interesting. The emotional performances between the two main characters motivated by the same goal, to make it out alive, is what drives the story and keeps the audience rooting for them.

#Alive is an exciting watch and overall an enjoyable way to spend 90 minutes of your time. This might be on your watch list if your interests include gruesome zombies, occasional jump scares and quarantine flashbacks.



Say good riddance to creative burnout with these tips

By SASHA ANAND
FEATURES EDITOR

Here are a few ways to help combat it.

Many people are turning to different methods of relaxation to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of you may be channeling your creative sides. This is a good way to help relieve stress but after a while you may find yourself getting bored with those outlets you once found enjoyable. This is known as creative burnout

Don't hide away: Even though it may be tempting to just give up and abandon the creative project you're working on, it's important not to just go and isolate yourself away from everything. Spend time with people that make you happy to lift your spirits and spur your motivation.

Take breaks: Don't over-

do it with whatever creative project you're working on. Make sure to schedule time to get away from the project to clear your head a bit. Instead, go for a walk, read a book or take a nap.

Get inspired: Find inspiration in the things around you. Look at other books, TV shows, paintings and movies and see if anything sparks your creativity. Find artists that are doing the same type of projects you enjoy doing

and gain new ideas from them.

Change your environment: With the current situation of the world, it's hard to travel, but a simple change in your environment can help you get motivated again. If you do your work in your bedroom or office, try moving to the kitchen or living room. Or, try working outside for a change.

Experiment: Find something new that you have al-

ways wanted to do yet have never had time to do. Switching your creative outlet may make you more motivated to do what you are truly passionate about or you may find a whole new creative outlet altogether.

Work as a team: Find other friends that like the same things you do and host a virtual Zoom or socially distanced meeting with your friends and brainstorm ideas for a new creative project or

work on your projects together. This is a good way to feed off of the energy of others to inspire you.

Even though the current situation is hard, there are still ways to be creative and express your feelings to the world.



Writing Center tutor shares helpful advice

By SASHA ANAND
FEATURES EDITOR

CSUSM has a lot of resources for students and faculty to use to make the transition to virtual instruction easier.

The Writing Center hosted a Takeover Tuesday on their Instagram account led by one of their tutors, Vanessa Arboleda, on Sept. 22. Students were able to ask questions during the livestream.

At the start of the Instagram story, Arboleda introduced herself and told viewers that she was going to do her morning routine and clean her room. Then, she returned to say that she had finished with that and was going to eat a bagel with egg, ham, bacon and mayo.

The next slide of the story was a picture of the bagel that related the different pieces of the bagel to parts of an essay. The bread at the bottom of the bagel was the thesis, the ham represented the argument and the egg was an example to complement the argument.

The bacon stood for the “elaboration, [it] makes the egg make sense” and the mayo stood for the significance: it “ties the meaning of the sandwich together,” said Arboleda. Lastly, the bagel top stood for the conclusion, it “sets everything together,” she said.

In the Q&A portion of the story, which was anon-



Screenshot by Sasha Anand

Vanessa Arboleda took over the Writing Center’s Instagram to answer students’ questions.

ymous, a student asked for APA formatting tips.

“We have handouts on the Writing Center website for all the formatting types. I always reference our APA Trifold [for in-text and reference page citations] and our APA format handout [for essay formatting] when [I have questions about it.] You can find these handouts by going to the Writing Center website, expanding the ‘Writer’s Resources’ tab, then clicking on ‘WC Handouts,’” Arboleda said.

Another student asked if you need appointments for

the Writing Center or if you can simply walk in.

“We have a Quick Help channel on Microsoft Teams, which is like a virtual ‘walk-in’ for quick questions. However, I would recommend making an appointment for any concerns dealing with an assignment in its entirety or more in-depth concerns,” Arboleda said.

Appointments can be made through the Writing Center website. Go to the “Make an Appointment” tab on the front page.

When asked about tips on how to stay productive, Ar-

boleda said, “[I stay productive by] including blocks of time for exercise, meditation, rest and even just time to be unproductive. This is super helpful because it motivates me to complete my tasks and stops me from feeling super overwhelmed.”

To access the Quick Help channel, visit the Writing Center website at csusm.edu/writingcenter. Then, click on the “Quick Help” section.

For more information on the Writing Center you can go to their Instagram account @csusmwvc or the website.



Small business offers vegan Mexican food

REVIEW

By KRISTIE CASTILLO
STAFF WRITER

This quarantine has given people the opportunity to pursue and achieve their health and lifestyle goals from the comfort of their home and with the plethora of new free time.

For some, this includes testing the waters of vegan eating and Phatties Mexican Restaurant is helping aspiring vegans do just that. Offering vegan alternatives to your favorite Mexican dishes, the Escondido-based restaurant can satisfy your craving without the meat.

When the pandemic started, San Diego County issued an order for all restaurants to limit their food services to take-out and delivery to accommodate both the customer’s cravings and safety. In the restaurant’s March 21 Instagram post, they assured their customers that they will be open and serving their community through pick-up, take-out and delivery.

Since then, Phatties has implemented menu changes and provisional hours. For the time being, the restaurant



Photo courtesy of Phatties via Facebook

If you’re looking for a good Mexican place, try Phatties, a vegan spin on the popular cuisine.

will be closed on Mondays and serve a limited, but still delicious, variety of their original menu.

Their offerings cater to each customer’s needs, from breakfast to dessert. Some of their popular menu items include the Eggless Chorizo con Papas burrito for breakfast, Tacos de Adobada (made from soy meat marinated in a homemade sauce) for lunch or dinner and flan for dessert.

With a rise in organizations and missions for the general public to adopt meatless diets into their lifestyles, Phatties offers customers the opportunity to do so with meatless versions of food items they may still crave.

Additionally, the restaurant also offers various flavors of refreshing aguas frescas to help out their customers in the unprecedented heat. They can choose between Jamaica, cucumber pineapple

lemonade, watermelon and more.

If you feel hungry for some Mexican food and have been considering going meatless, give Phatties in Escondido a try.

Some people may believe that vegan eating is just salads or plain vegetables, but vegan eating is offered in a number of different cuisines and can be just as, if not more, tasty than the original.



Photo by Dzenina Lukak on Pexels

Getting a snack in during a break from classes or something sweet at the end of the day can be a great way to treat yourself.

Quick and easy recipes for a sweet treat

RECIPE

By SASHA ANAND
FEATURES EDITOR

With everything going on in the world right now, sometimes you just need a treat to keep you going. But you don’t always have time to go out and get something to eat. Here are a few easy recipes that you can make quickly between a meeting or a class.

Coffee Cake In a Mug:

This recipe consists of two parts, the cake part and the cinnamon topping. For the cake portion of this recipe, you will need: 3 tbsp almond flour, 1/4 tsp baking powder, 1/16 tsp salt, pinch stevia or 1 tbsp sugar, some flax egg, 2 tsp oil or applesauce (if you want to make it less fat) and 1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract.

For the topping you will need: 1/8 tsp cinnamon, 1 1/4 tsp brown sugar, 1/4 to 1/2 tsp oil or butter, or applesauce (again for less fat), a tiny pinch of salt and 2 pecan or walnut halves (optional).

Mix together all the dry ingredients for the cake batter portion together and then add in the wet ingredients. Put about half the batter in a mug then add about a third of the topping. Pour the rest of the batter on top of that. Lastly, put on the

rest of the topping.

Put the mug in the microwave for one minute. Microwave times may vary depending on your microwave’s wattage. Top it off with the pecan or walnut halves if you want.

Edible Snickerdoodle

Cookie Dough: For this recipe you will need: 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce, 1/2 cup protein powder of your choice, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 cup flour, 1 tbsp granulated sugar or sweetener of your choice, 1 tbsp milk of your choice

2 tbsp of cashew or almond butter and 1 tbsp of maple syrup.

Combine the protein powder, flour, cinnamon and applesauce in a microwave safe bowl or mug. Then melt the cashew or almond butter with the maple syrup and add it in with the dry ingredients. Add in the milk of your choice until it reaches your desired consistency.

Put the mug in the microwave for one minute. Again, microwave times may vary depending on the wattage.

These recipes are quick and delicious and will be a nice little reward after a long day.



Take a quick break from stress with some dad jokes

By KRISTIE CASTILLO
STAFF WRITER

School can be stressful and more so when it’s online, so take a break with some corny but good dad jokes.

Q: Why don’t eggs tell jokes?
A: They’d crack each other up.

Q: Did you hear the rumor about butter?
A: Well, I’m not going to spread it!

Q: What did the coffee report to the police?
A: A mugging.

Source: <https://www.countryliving.com/life/a27452412/best-dad-jokes/>



Photo by Pixaby on Pexels

Recent wildfires underscore the need to take climate change more seriously.

Climate action starts with you

By MARIA JUNGERS
ASSISTANT OPINION EDITOR

The issue of climate change is becoming more concerning, as wildfires are visibly moving faster along the west coast.

Just this year in the states of California, Oregon and Washington, there have been five million acres of land burned, thousands of people who were forced to evacuate their homes and 35 devastating deaths. The rise in temperature in addition to dry land is a hotbed for these wildfires and warmer climates to thrive.

On the opposite end, there are some states like Colorado that have been experiencing bipolar weather. For instance, they experienced a heat wave of 93 degrees, followed by a dramatic drop of temperature and experienced unusual September snowfall.

These extreme conditions have not only contributed to the difficulties for people during a deadly respiratory pandemic, but have also brought to the surface an underlying problem that is larger than the roaring fires: the fact that the government has not made an attempt to tame or extinguish the reoccurring issue of climate change.

Just recently, President Donald Trump downplayed the concern over climate change during a briefing in California stating, "It will start getting cooler, you just watch."

This comment from our president reflects that not only does he continue to essentially sweep the real problem under the rug, but

also reveals his indifference towards this issue as a whole. The government cannot be fully immersed in tackling this issue without a leader who encourages people to make simple and necessary changes in their daily lives.

I think with social media as a strong source where many people obtain information, there could be a way to expose people to the roots of climate change and how it is affecting our community.

Choosing to sit and wait for changes to occur is the easy thing to do, but actively gaining knowledge about this topic is the only way that we can inform ourselves and be willing to make small necessary changes.

According to the Container Recycling Institute, approximately 60 million water bottles are wasted per day in the United States. This waste contributes to air pollution. Although it may seem like a small act, we can limit our carbon footprint by either recycling plastic bottles or drinking from reusable water bottles.

By simply being more mindful in reducing toxic waste in our daily products, we can pave the way towards saving our planet.

With the presence of government involvement or the lack thereof, at the end of the day it is not too late to choose how we treat our planet in the present day and teach future generations to practice the same habits.



Students raise concerns about tuition during pandemic

By ARIEL LOPEZ
ASSISTANT A&E EDITOR

Despite not being able to use most of the on-campus facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CSUSM students are still required to pay the full cost of tuition, much to the dismay of many students.

CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White sent out an email to students and staff on Sept. 10, announcing that the CSU system will continue to learn remotely for spring 2021. With that in mind, students would have paid their full tuition without even having stepped foot on campus for an entire year.

This raises some questions: should students pay the full cost of tuition, regardless of whether they are on campus or not? What would the benefits be if we reduce tuition? What would the disadvantages be if we do reduce tuition cost?

Students are not using resources on campus like they would have if they were in person, as they are being provided an education that is fully online.

It would make sense to reduce the cost, since many students aren't able to take advantage of the on-campus facilities like they would if



Photo by Alexander Mills on Pexels

Students are becoming concerned about tuition costs for next spring.

they were actually present. However, this topic isn't as black and white as it seems.

Reducing the cost of tuition might be more complicated. Reducing the cost while the semester has already started seems like it might be too late, but we don't know about spring semester's tuition and fees.

Brendan Hartsook, a student at CSUSM, said, "I don't think students should pay full price, but I don't think it should be cut down drastically either. At the end of the day, all I'm paying for

right now is the classes and that's it. I'm not using the school's cafeteria, parking lot, library or anything so why pay full tuition when here aren't resources being used?"

"There's been online schools that cost cheaper long before the pandemic ... Even if it's more expensive I get it, you're paying for an education," said Hartsook.

Personally, I don't think the cost of tuition should be cut drastically. However, if we aren't using on-campus resources, I don't see the point

of continuing to pay full price. However, if we move more of these resources online, *maybe* it would make sense to not cut the cost.

We shouldn't forget about faculty and staff, who are stressed about this issue as well since they had to move all of their lectures online, especially since some of them have never taught online before. Faculty and staff are struggling with this transition, but are working hard and diligently to provide students a worthwhile education.

Social media influences magnitude of social issues during pandemic

By ALYA BURNAND
STAFF WRITER

The pandemic has played an unusual role in amplifying social justice issues through social media.

Stripping away all the distractions and noise - like, for many, physical school, jobs and socialization - has revealed the truth of and alternatives to what we actually do. It revealed who corporations consider to be "essential workers," showing the varying degrees to which businesses value the individual.

It has also revealed how much people value human life and how the government and president view the importance of the common person.

Sweeping away the "noise" has brought forward issues that had previously been suppressed. The badly handled pandemic, the stripping of basic human rights and the general violence have all thrown gas on the flames. Now, people refuse to be silenced.

Another contributor to the rise in awareness of social problems was the widespread isolation during quarantine, as isolation breeds boredom.

Now we suddenly have the opportunity to do everything

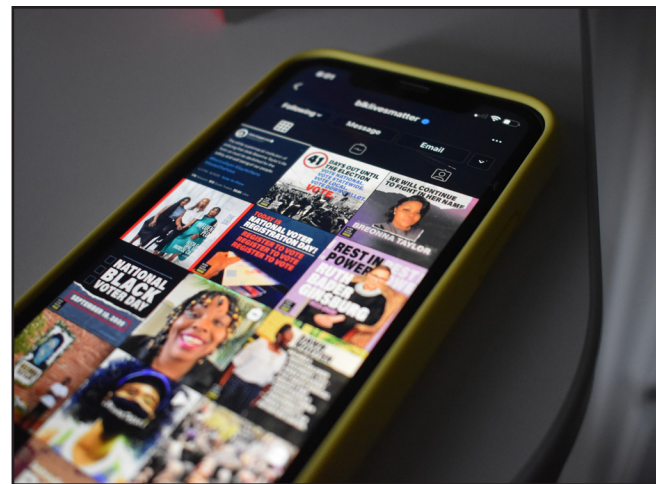


Photo by Tania Ortiz

Social media has become a platform for activists during this pandemic.

we've previously set aside because we "didn't have the time". This includes getting more involved in social justice issues, delving more deeply into social media and reading the news.

As people have been increasingly consuming important material, public awareness of these issues has grown.

Social media provides us with a fairly unrestrained spread of information, which means that no matter how hard a corporation, government agency or individual may try to stifle or misdirect information, people will still uncover it. Of course, that's both a benefit and a problem.

While information is more

available than ever, misinformation spreads like wildfire- and the president is only adding to that.

For instance, he admitted that he knowingly downplayed the severity of the pandemic because he didn't want to cause a "public panic," yet fear-mongering and breeding mistrust is his MO. Fact-checkers must be exhausted by now.

This has caused people to increasingly distrust sources of information, especially certain news outlets and social media accounts. This is dangerous because, without objective fact-reporting, people emerge with different "truths" which breeds more conflict.

Public events like peaceful protests can be framed to demonize protestors, and footage can be selected to manipulate viewers by reframing their perception of reality.

The fast spread of misinformation, rumors and propaganda is a dangerous consequence of social media. With unverified claims taken as truth, the power that anonymity provides and the boom in "fake news," we must be more skeptical about what we consume.

Bailey Poland, author of *Haters: Harassment, Abuse, and Violence Online*, said that "One of the biggest challenges will be finding an appropriate balance between protecting anonymity and enforcing consequences for the abusive behavior ... [in] online discussions."

As with all technological advancements, there are two sides to every coin.

Social media provides something crucial: accountability.

We can see the unfiltered footage of atrocities that would have otherwise been buried, and before those responsible can formally order that the footage be deleted, it has already spread to

Social Media, continued on page 9

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Cancel culture gives a toxic power to people on the internet

By TANIA ORTIZ
OPINION EDITOR

Social media has become a tool for activism, socialization and self-expression. Over the past several years, it has become the ideal platform for cancel culture’s growth.

We have witnessed cancel culture affect people’s lives, from celebrities to regular people like you and me. This trend on social media has evolved into a weapon with the potential to ruin lives.

How did cancel culture become so destructive and toxic?

Cancel culture began in 2015 on Twitter as a joke, a reaction to someone who acted in a way that others disapproved of.

Fast forward five years and cancel culture has evolved into a toxic trend on social media designed to bring down celebrities, brands and shows from their pedestal in pop culture for acting in a way that is offensive to the masses or supporting a particular ideology.

When this trend involves celebrities, what usually occurs is that tweets, photos and videos resurface, either from the celebrity’s past or more recently.



Cancel culture gives a toxic power to social media users from behind a screen.

Photo by Christina Morillo on Pexels

Typically, what they find is the celebrity in question is caught saying derogatory comments that are insensitive to particular groups. Fans and other social media users take it upon themselves to comment their thoughts on the actions done by the celebrity or brand, leading to boycotting their work and products and unfollowing them from all platforms. Consequently, this hurts their careers and the brands they have built.

It happened recently with *Harry Potter* series author J.K. Rowling, who has come under fire for her comments towards transgender folks.

Rowling’s behavior caused an uproar amongst her fans, who were in shock upon reading the comments made by the author, who created a world they can identify themselves with.

In this case, canceling Rowling is hard because her series became a pop culture phenomenon, but social media knew it needed to be done. Now, when we think of anything remotely to Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling has become dissociated from the series.

In another instance, *Guardians of the Galaxy* director James Gunn faced scrutiny in 2018 for offensive tweets

that resurfaced, leading to fans canceling him. His role as director of *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* was jeopardized and he was fired by Disney.

Cancel culture worked in bringing James Gunn down from his pedestal but also failed in keeping it that way; almost a year later, Gunn was reinstated as the director of *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*.

Cancel culture promotes a mob mentality that is often toxic because it gives people online a power they have never experienced before. The power they possess is informal since social media users

can unfollow and choose to ignore the person whom they are canceling.

This power can lead to messy endings and vicious searches into people’s personal lives. All someone has to do is tweet, “Twitter, do your thing,” and minutes later someone is canceled.

This happened to Amy Cooper, who called the cops on Christian Cooper, a bird-watcher in Central Park, after asking her nicely to put her dog’s leash back on because it was a park rule.

After the video went viral, people took it upon themselves to dig into the life of Amy Cooper, discovering

where she worked and getting her fired. Christian Cooper, who took and published the video of his interaction with Amy Cooper, stated that he posted the video to serve as a lesson, not to have strangers to get her fired from her job.

One shouldn’t have to go to the depths of finding out someone’s job to have that person canceled and learn a lesson. Yes, I’m aware that what Amy Cooper did was wrong and that she should be reprimanded for her actions, but her penalty should not have been as destructive as it was.

I am not justifying her actions, but we shouldn’t have to act like vigilantes taking down a villain. That is the toxic power that cancel culture gives to people.

As ironic as it might sound, we need to cancel “cancel culture.”

The toxic environment created by this trend has a destructive purpose to end someone’s life. This hurts people personally, even if the act of canceling is done online.



The Oscars have updated their Best Picture policies, but does it even matter?

By JULES APPLETON
STAFF WRITER

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences released new policies for Best Picture eligibility as a part of their Aperture 2025 initiative on Sept. 8.

According to the Oscars’ website, the initiative is a “five-year effort to diversify our organization and expand our definition of the ‘best.’”

Films must meet at least two out of four of these requirements:

1. On-screen, films must have one of the following:

A. One lead or supporting actor must be a person of color (POC)

B. 30% of secondary actors must be members of a marginalized group (women, POC, LGBTQ+, people with cognitive or physical disabilities)

C. Main storyline is about one of these marginalized groups

2. Off-screen, films must have one of the following:

A. Creative team (director, editor, etc): One individual must be a member of a marginalized group, one individual must be a POC

B. Six other crew/team and technical positions (gaffer,



The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has implemented new diversity standards.

Photo by Craig Piersma on Flickr

script supervisor, etc) must be a member of marginalized group

C. Overall crew must be made up of 30% POC

3. Industry Access, films must have:

A. Unpaid/paid interns: One must be a member of a marginalized group, one must be a POC

B. Training/work opportunities for “below-the-line” (foley artists, setpainters, stage hands, etc.) jobs must be offered to members of marginalized groups

4. Studio/Production Company, films must have:

A. Multiple in-house se-

nior executives working in marketing, publicity, and/or distribution must be a member of a marginalized group.

These rules will not be fully enacted until the 2024 Oscars.

For the past few years, I have not viewed the Oscars as an actual judge of quality but merely as a pretty distraction for a few hours.

Most of the time, movies are nominated because of their popularity, politics or pandering to the liberal Hollywood elite. This past year was a bit different though, as the Korean film *Parasite*

won Best Picture.

For the first time in a long time, one of the best films of the year actually won. It was a funny, uncomfortable and unique portrayal of class struggle and familial relationships. It was beautifully shot, well edited and had great production design. But unfortunately, I don’t count on these rules helping brilliant movies like *Parasite*.

The Oscars have a long history of picking films like *Precious* or *Black Panther*, just because they have a diverse cast or story.

This is a bit insulting because it seems as though

these films are only nominated because they have a diverse cast or story, not because they are actually Best Picture worthy. While diversity is important, it is the quality of the art, and those who work on said art, that matters the most.

If anything, I hope that these rules allow for films of both diversity and quality to be nominated. But I’m not holding my breath.

On a critical note, these rules also take away artistic vision and merit. Films like last year’s *The Lighthouse* (which was royally snubbed), an A24 film about two sailors going mad, would likely not be eligible even though it is a great film.

I guess this shows that the Oscars are still all about popularity, politics and pandering to the liberal Hollywood elite. But it doesn’t matter, because they are losing influence.

With many Americans getting rid of cable, this year’s Oscars had the lowest ratings since 1974.

Hopefully, this change will be what returns the Oscars to the limelight, but it equally well might be the final nail in the coffin.



Social Media: continued from page 8

thousands, made headlines and shined a spotlight on systemic and institutional issues.

Social media has also helped large groups of people around the world organize events like marches, protests and meetings because it is now so easy to connect and inform others. Even something as simple as writing a post can begin a larger conversation.

Movements have been started through social media, like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, to spread mass awareness to ongoing and previously silenced issues.

Despite the politics of this country tearing it apart during these last four years, the pandemic has brought many together in a collective sympathy as well as a larger outrage regarding how it was handled. And, despite the opposition’s best efforts, the conversation of social justice and change has boomed with the help of social media.

The cure to willful ignorance and hatred comes through information and understanding, and hopefully, social media can help us do that too.

