

DAILY NEXUS

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A week in UC student news

Michelle Cisneros
Lead News Editor

UCLA professor named in Epstein files

Mark Tramo, an associate adjunct neurology professor at UC Los Angeles, corresponded with convicted child sex offender, serial rapist and human trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, according to United States Department of Justice documents. As reported by the Daily Bruin, Tramo discussed neuroscience, research funding and other subjects with Epstein via email. One email correspondence included Tramo saying he would see whether students seeking research advice were "cute" after Epstein asked him.

Their interactions appeared in the files released on Jan. 30 and included a \$100,000 check from one of Epstein's charities, Gratitude America Ltd., to a research institution that Tramo founded and is a director of.

Tramo said he has "not committed any crime and was not involved with Epstein's sickness" in an emailed statement to the Daily Bruin.

"His philanthropy helped [me], my colleagues, and some of my student's careers," Tramo's statement continued. "I am both horrified and angry that a patron of our well-intentioned non-profit foundation hurt so many females!"

Tramo's profile on the university's media guide was removed sometime between Feb. 4 and the afternoon of Feb. 5.

Federal investigations into UC Berkeley continue

The Daily Californian reported that UC Berkeley is currently facing at least six different federal investigations.

The investigations include two by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for alleged antisemitism and campus support of The PhD Project, a nonprofit organization.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is also investigating alleged diversity, equity and inclusion discrimination within the University of California's (UC's) admission process. Language from UC Berkeley's hiring initiatives, which aimed to "support student and faculty diversity," could be part of the DOJ's investigation.

The DOJ's Civil Rights Division is also

investigating how the University handled the cancellation of an event in 2017 that featured conservative speakers. The lawsuit was brought by Harmeet Dhillon, who sued the campus on behalf of two student groups before later becoming the U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Joint Terrorism Task Force is also investigating "Antifa," which is short for anti-fascist, after a UCB protest outside of a Turning Point event. In September 2025, President Donald Trump published a memorandum that named the largely-decentralized Antifa movement as a terrorist organization.

The Department of Education also began investigating alleged violations of the Clery Act by the University. The act requires institutions of higher education to disclose data on campus crime.

Donated UCSD cadavers used for IDF medical training following deal with USC

Cadavers that were donated to UC San Diego and moved to the University of Southern California were later used for Israel Defense Forces (IDF) training, according to an investigation by Annenberg Media.

The bodies were first donated to UCSD through the UCSD Body Donation Program, according to the UCSD Guardian. According to the program's website, it provides "human remains for scientific studies essential to education and research."

In the past seven years, the U.S. Navy has given USC over \$860,000 in funding for 89 bodies used for military training. According to contract records, 32 of those bodies were used for surgical training exercises for the IDF, which took place at the Los Angeles General Medical Center. It is unknown how much money USC paid UCSD for the bodies.

A UCSD spokesperson told the UCSD Guardian that it may loan donated materials to other organizations under "strict parameters" and that requests are reviewed for their merit.

According to its website, Navy Medicine hosts IDF surgical teams to "teach and reinforce medical procedures to one of [its] key military allies in the Middle East."

Vista Point: Weekly goings-on in, around Isla Vista

Jack Dindia
Lead News Editor

Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education hosts 'Seeds for Healthy Relationships'

Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education is hosting "Seeds for Healthy Relationships" on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 1-2 p.m. at the Student Resource Building (SRB) Multipurpose Room (MPR).

"Join us for a hands-on, interactive workshop focused on healthy relationships, communication, boundaries, consent, respect, and care. Through guided discussion, participants will reflect on how these dynamics show up in their own lives and explore how individuals and communities can prevent harm through bystander intervention," the Shoreline description reads.

Costco pizza and refreshments will be provided for attendees.

Women's Center hosts 'Feminist Book Club'

The Women's Center is hosting "Feminist Book Club" on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 3-4 p.m. at the Women's Center Community Room in Room 1220 of the SRB.

"The Women's Center is thrilled to partner with UCSB Reads this winter for our Feminist Book Club! Join us as we dive into Michelle Zauner's poignant memoir, *Crying in H Mart*—a powerful exploration of grief, identity, and the deep bonds between mothers and daughters," the Shoreline description reads.

TSC hosts 'Candy Gram Making'

The Transfer Student Center (TSC) is hosting "Candy Gram Making" on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. at Kerr Hall 1120.

"Join the TSC in making Valentine's Grams for your friends and loved ones!" the Shoreline description reads.

IHC hosts free screenings of 'Wicked: For Good'

The Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC) is hosting two free screenings of "Wicked: For Good" on Thursday, Feb. 12, at 7 p.m. and

9:30 p.m. at Isla Vista Theater.

"Audiences love this installment of *Wicked!* NPR says, 'This is a movie musical lover's movie.' See it on the big screen at UCSB for free," the Shoreline description reads.

UCSB Library hosts 'Douglass Day Birthday Party and Transcribe-a-Thon'

The UCSB Library is hosting "Douglass Day Birthday Party and Transcribe-a-Thon" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the MultiCultural Center.

"Celebrate Douglass Day and Black History Month by participating in a national transcribe-a-thon. You'll learn how to bring 19th century Black history to life by transforming digitized documents from the Colored Conventions Project into legible text. This groundbreaking archive documents how nineteenth-century African Americans organized around critical issues such as voting rights, citizenship, education, labor, racial equality, and more," the Shoreline description reads.

No previous transcription experience is required, and it is recommended that students bring a laptop to participate in the transcribe-a-thon.

RCSGD hosts 'Sexual Responsibility Fair'

The Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (RCSGD) is hosting a "Sexual Responsibility Fair" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 1-4 p.m. outside of Embarcadero Hall.

"Join us in celebrating the end of Sexual Responsibility week at our Sexual Responsibility Fair. We will be providing HIV/STI testing in collaboration with the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinic's Mobile Testing Unit," the Shoreline description reads.

Food will be provided for attendees.

RCSGD hosts 'Sapphic Scrapbooking - Love!'

RCSGD is hosting "Sapphic Scrapbooking - Love!" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 2:30-4 p.m. at the 1st Floor Conference Room of the SRB.

"Bring your scraps from home or come ready to create your own masterpiece with our supplies! This space is open to all folks who want to engage with and uplift lesbian, bi, pan, and wlw experiences, we can't wait to see you soon! Celebrating love in all its forms, from friends and significant others to self-love and love of special interests. Join us to talk all about love!" the Shoreline description reads.

Gauche Gaming hosts 'Cozy Snowmance'

Gauche Gaming is hosting "Cozy Snowmance" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 6-9 p.m. at the Arts Building room 1353.

"We'll have cardmaking supplies available if you'd like to make a card for your loved ones this Valentine's Day, alongside casual freeplay setups to satisfy your party game needs!" the Shoreline description reads.

Hot chocolate and cookies will be provided for attendees.

Health & Wellness hosts 'Palentine's: Choose Your Craft'

Health & Wellness is hosting "Palentine's: Choose Your Craft" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 6:30-8 p.m. at the SRB MPR.

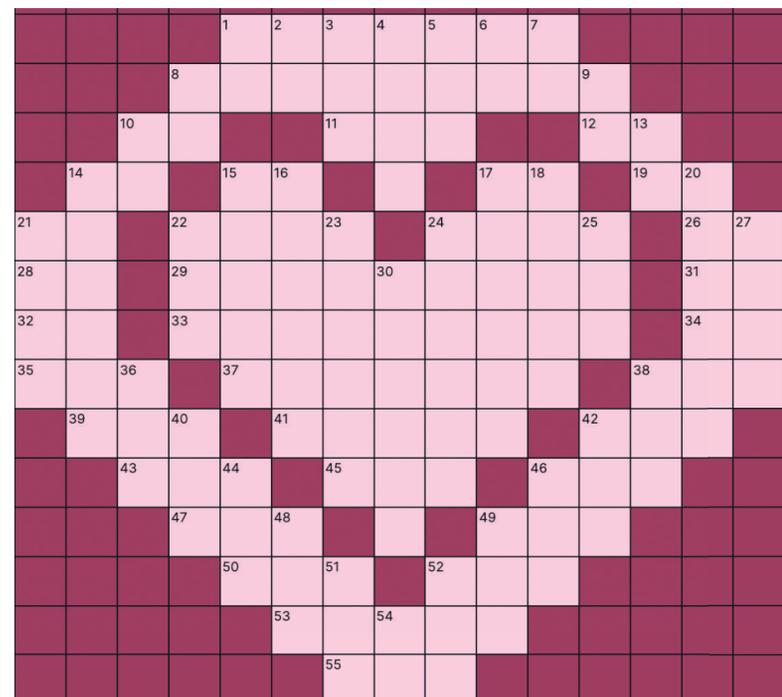
"Join us for some crafting this Palentine's Day! Learn different art skills with Health and Wellness, meet new people, and enjoy some snacks. Make a creation to take home with you! Supplies will be provided, but please feel free to bring your own as well," the Shoreline description reads.

IHC hosts 'Rocky Horror Picture Show'

IHC is hosting "The Rocky Horror Picture Show: with live shadow cast" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 9-11 p.m. at IV Theater.

"Enjoy Magic Lantern Films' quarterly screening of 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show' starring Richard O'Brian, Susan Sarandon, Barry Bostwick and Tim Curry. It's a musical, a horror film, and sci-fi all wrapped or warped into one film!" the Shoreline description reads.

Crossword: Love is in the air!



Sanchita Koppa
Assistant Games Editor

ACROSS

- In preparation for 27 down
- Sweet treat; with 11 across
- Studying the outdoors, abbreviated

- Container; with 8 across
- "I ___"; at the altar
- Haley, of Five Feet Apart fame
- Health reduced to zero in a video game, abbreviated
- Flash memory card, often in cameras
- Who you call when the dorm bathroom

DOWN

- Hormone signaling progesterone and testosterone production, abbreviated
- Used when IV access isn't possible by going through the bone marrow, briefly
- Foundation of most electronics where

- components are connected by conductive pathways, briefly
- Wordy home of a worm
- Alex, minus a vowel
- 2028 Summer Olympics venue
- Mountain, briefly
- Computer science, briefly
- Singer Sheeran
- Blue flag, gold stars
- Either's partner
- "We're..." "___" "No Ilya, that's gross."
- Rulers
- French surprise
- The points of towers
- A person eating; a casual restaurant
- Appreciate, in a high regard
- If you like it, put a ___ on it
- ___ Maria; opera
- A people immediately south of Saudi Arabia
- A no-bedroom apartment
- Spiderman's sidekick (Tom Holland's edition)
- Up for debate at the end of a first date
- "___", no grade"; by a handwriting-weary teacher
- And the rest, briefly
- Jazzy brass woodwind, abbreviated
- Smoked ham on ___; common combo
- "Get that ___"; money-wise
- "A long time ___ in a galaxy far, far away ..."
- Palindromic exclamation!
- Medicine available without a prescription, abbreviated
- Paternal figure
- Irish bar
- To chirp
54. 3.14159 ...



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"Drip too hard."

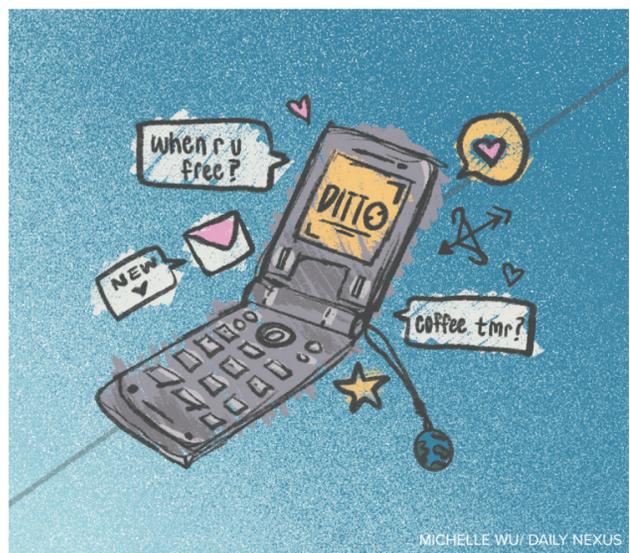
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Artificial intelligence aims to bring real connections to college campuses



Ditto is a dating app that was created by two UC Berkeley dropouts and utilizes AI features to set users up on dates.

Iris Guo
Community Outreach
News Editor

While walking around campus, students encounter promotional fliers plastered on every surface, promoting anything from film screenings to internship opportunities. Recently, fliers with text reading “Matthew cheated on me, here’s proof” and “selling my ex’s stuff” with QR codes have popped up at various locations around campus. Despite the scandalous messages, the fliers are actually promoting a new dating app called Ditto.

Ditto is a dating app that utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) features to set users up on dates. The app was launched in early 2025 and was created by two UC Berkeley dropouts, Allen Wang and Eric Liu.

The app is exclusively for college students and requires users to register with an official university or college email address. It is currently being promoted on college campuses across California.

Fourth-year history of art and architecture major Leili Shirvani signed up for Ditto after seeing a promotional poster. Shirvani said that she heard a lot of people talking about the app and decided to try it out as a “joke.”

“The poster [read] something like ‘Jeremy cheated on me,’ and there was a QR code underneath it,” Shirvani said. “I scanned the QR code and it’s for a dating website. I was like, ‘You know what, I have to give them props for this because this is really funny,’ and I was just curious and a bunch of my co-workers were like, ‘Yeah, you should do it.’”

When users sign up for Ditto, they are prompted to fill out a survey gauging their preferences. Next, users are able to message an AI chatbot over iMessage, which pairs the user with someone who matches their interests and preferences by utilizing reasoning and analysis from large language models (LLM).

According to Shirvani, messaging with Ditto’s AI chatbot feels “very chill” because it is programmed to text in a way similar to an average college student, such as using all lowercase letters and casual vernacular.

“I find it interesting because it’s something I’ve never experienced before. I’m not a particularly big

fan of AI, so I feel slightly jaded about the whole thing because I’m like, ‘Wow this is really cool,’” Shirvani said. “It feels like my friends are matching me up with someone random who I’ve never met, but at the same time, it’s literally just an algorithm, so it kind of is a little freaky, so I have mixed emotions.”

Shirvani, who mentioned she is “anti-dating app,” said she finds the user experience that Ditto offers preferable over popular dating apps like Hinge and Tinder. These apps have users swipe on other users’ profiles to “like” and “dislike,” and allows for direct messaging once a match is created.

“I really don’t like the way it’s formatted. I personally don’t like being perceived in that way. I find it very inorganic,” Shirvani said.

Shirvani said she also likes that Ditto tries to foster a more personal connection for users. She said that the user interface and experience on dating apps like Hinge and Tinder makes feelings of judgement more common.

“I’m quite a judgmental person and when I see people on Hinge or Tinder on my friends’ phones, I would see their face and I’d be like ‘Immediately ugly, done — bye,’ I don’t care what they have to say about themselves,” Shirvani said. “I felt like it was a lot more transactional and aggressive whereas Ditto is more done based on emotion and personality. So I feel like I’m perceived as a real human and I have more sensitivity towards other users.”

Once Ditto creates a match, the app creates a poster with user photos and an explanation of why they paired the two. It will also text users a date plan which includes the location, time and details of the potential date. Shirvani mentioned that she likes how Ditto’s method of matching users up preserves privacy and feels more “low stakes.”

“I really liked the fact that this was a really chill survey. You put in your likes and your dislikes, and then they match you,” Shirvani said. “I thought, ‘Oh, it’s different,’ and it’s not like I’m making a profile necessarily since my information isn’t public. It’s only given out to a few specific people if I get matched to them.”

She also said that she enjoyed how Ditto utilizes iMessage to connect users as opposed to an in-app messaging platform, which she said makes the user experience feel more “casual” and “familiar.”

Although Shirvani has not gone on a date from a Ditto match yet, she said she is not opposed to going on one in the future.

“I feel like no matter how much you describe what you want in a person to them, they’re never going to get it quite right,” Shirvani said. “But at the same time, that is also what intrigues me because I think I can be judgmental and I think it’ll give me a different perspective on people I could possibly go on a date with.”



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RCSGD and FSH hold Valentine’s Day Mixer

Lucy Wellons
Staff Writer

The Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity partnered with Family Student Housing to host a Valentine’s Day Mixer on Feb. 5 at the Storke Community Center. Offering food, refreshments and activities, the event aimed to create a community space for those in graduate housing, highlight campus resources and celebrate “all forms of love.”

The Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity (RCSGD) graduate assistant and doctoral candidate in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Karla Larrañaga, helped organize the event in collaboration with resident assistants from Family Student Housing (FSH). Funded by the Associated Students Trans & Queer Commission’s well-being funds, the event is the first of its kind to mix resources from RCSGD and FSH.

About 50 FSH residents, along with their spouses and children, attended the event, which featured pride flags, buttons, stickers and fliers highlighting LGBTQIA+ campus resources. Attendees were offered pizza, cookies, drinks and other snacks while children participated in activities such as coloring.

Larrañaga saw the Valentine’s Day Mixer as an opportunity to create a community space with graduate students in FSH and

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inform them of the resources that RCSGD provides on campus.

“We were just motivated to help people in family student housing, specifically to be connected to the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity,” Larrañaga said. “A lot of undergraduates know that it exists and they utilize a lot of the resources there, but not a lot of graduate students use the space . . . so this is just a way to help graduate students know that things are happening and that things are available on campus.”

Michelle Moreno, an assistant resident director involved in the event, explained the difficulties with connecting to graduate students and conveyed her appreciation for the event.

“With family student housing, sometimes it’s a little harder because our students are not undergrads,” Moreno said. “Sometimes it does feel like they are a little overlooked. So it is nice when folks like [RCSGD] reach out and want to plan something.”

The event was in the Community Center in Storke Family Housing, located near West Campus Family Housing and San Joaquin Villages. The location of the gathering made it easier for graduate students to attend.

“Most of the time we don’t do small stuff, so I think this is fun. It’s nice to invite residents to do something that is not necessarily low effort, but where they get to

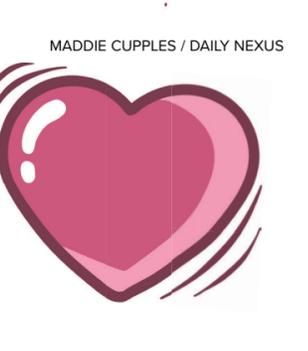
just come and hang out, make a craft and then go back home,” Moreno said. “We know that the student population here is super committed to their work and research, and a lot of them have kids, so it’s nice when folks actually include them and seek their attention.”

Kris Ali, a fifth-year doctoral candidate in the linguistics department, spoke on the inclusivity and accessibility of the event.

“I saw that it was an event for grad students put on by RCSGD, and I’m queer myself, so I was really happy to see that it was an event for grad students, but also what was really good was that it was being held in Storke,” Ali said. “I actually live in Storke, so that felt way more accessible to me because sometimes it’s hard to go to campus. I could just meet here and socialize with others, and it just feels like such a special event in that way.”

Larrañaga emphasized her goal of connecting graduate students to the wider UC Santa Barbara community and campus resources.

“My hope is just that people know that the resource center exists and that students should utilize it whether they’re in the community identifying as LGBTQIA+ or if they’re just allies and they want a space to talk to someone and help them figure out the next steps,” Larrañaga said.



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Roughly 700 people march against I.C.E. on campus

Jack Dindia
Lead News Editor
Levi Kauffman
Assistant News Editor

Folklorico dancers led the way as roughly 700 protestors marched across the UC Santa Barbara campus, demanding the abolition of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Feb. 4. The protest was organized by local activist groups and was held in solidarity with global geopolitical issues.

Since the beginning of President Donald Trump's second term, over 380,000 people have been arrested by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.), with over 1,600 people across Santa Barbara County (SBC), San Luis Obispo County and Ventura County, according to local activist Cesar Vasquez.

Eyewitnesses to detainments have reported that I.C.E. has employed terror tactics such as racial profiling, excessive use of force and attempts to enter homes without judicial warrants. Anti-I.C.E. protests have increased in January following the killings of U.S. citizens Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis.

Students and community members gathered around the Eternal Flame monument at 12 p.m. while organizers handed out masks, signs and flyers that promoted rapid response training, as well as a petition to make UCSB a "sanctuary campus" by not allowing I.C.E. on campus. Organizers burned incense and shouted "UCSB walkout" on megaphones toward surrounding classes throughout the march.



Students and community members gathered around Storke Tower after marching.

Vasquez, founder of La Cultura Del Mundo, a national youth-led movement "advancing immigrant protection, visibility, and justice," began the protest with a chant of "Chinga La Migra," which translates to "Fuck I.C.E." Vasquez then led a moment of silence for those detained by I.C.E. and their families before playing the song "Hasta la Piel" by Carla Morrison, which he listens to whenever someone is taken by I.C.E.

"I witnessed 12 kidnappings as of today in the streets of Santa Barbara County, and after every kidnapping, I listen to this song to mourn these lives. I've listened to this song more than 1,600 times," Vasquez said. "I'd like for you all to listen to it with me for the person that was taken this morning in Santa Maria."

Next, Vasquez shared stories of individuals taken by I.C.E. The first story was of the first I.C.E. kidnapping Vasquez witnessed, where I.C.E. officers took a father, then taunted his daughter with information about where he was being taken. The second story was of two teenage siblings in Ventura who live alone after their guardian was taken by I.C.E. The last story shared was of a father who witnessed his daughter, son and pregnant wife get taken in front of him.

"These are the stories. These are the families. They're not the criminals the government is trying to say they are, but they're our community," Vasquez said. "We must stand for our community."

Vasquez said that those who don't get involved with anti-I.C.E. activism have "no excuse" and shouldn't be "give[n] grace." He called anti-I.C.E. activism "revolutionary work" that is "taking a

step towards liberation for all."

"This walkout is not enough. A protest will never be enough. You must go out there. You must defend your community. You must fight for those that can't," Vasquez said. "We must stand together and we must understand that the system has not been built for us."

Vasquez thanked protestors for attending and ended his speech with chants of "Se puede o no se puede? Si se puede" and "El pueblo unido hamas sera vencido," which translate to "Can it, or can it not be done? Yes it can be [done]" and "The community united, will never be divided" respectively.

The next speaker outlined guidelines for protestors to remain peaceful, stay safe and "move together with intention."

Protestors then marched to Cheadle Hall, which houses UCSB administration. Along the way, protestors chanted "From Palestine to Mexico, all these walls have got to go," "No justice no peace, no I.C.E. in our streets" and "Money for jobs and education, not for war and deportations," among others.

At Cheadle Hall, protestors directed their chants at the administration inside the building. Another protestor spoke about the power of mass activism.

"Mass activism is the most necessary component to winning any political demands," she said. "It was what won higher minimum wage in Missouri and Nebraska. It is what won the Black studies department here at UCSB."

She then went over the protestors' demands for administration, such as making UCSB a sanctuary campus.

"No student should fear for the deportation of themselves or of their families while on this campus," she said. "We will not stop until I.C.E. gets off this campus."

The next speaker shared that their father had been deported about three weeks before. They continued to call on the UCSB administration to resist I.C.E.

"Those people in that building have more money than all of us combined and they will not use it for us," the speaker said. "They will not use it to protect other human beings whose human right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is being violated as of this moment."

Protestors held up a banner made



Participants held up signs and chanted various messages on their march around campus.

of American flags on the awning that read, "Mexicans aren't going anywhere." From Cheadle Hall, the protest continued marching through the Arbor walkway, eventually ending at Storke Plaza. Here, one speaker shared a poem about the racial injustices that people of color have faced and continue to face throughout history.

"History does not repeat itself, it's been this way the whole time. The only difference is that now I run the block, money, weed, murder on my mind, colonized, segregated, mis-educated at the back of the free lunch line," the speaker read.

As more and more people began dispersing, protestors began sharing their personal feelings against I.C.E. One student spoke about the organizing power that young people have.

"I know sometimes we forget. We're young, we're silent before everything. We're silent so much. We just got to remember that we're young and we have a stride. We have the power, not the regents, not the president, not the fucking government," he said.

In an interview with the Daily Nexus, Vasquez spoke about how Trump's presidency and immigration enforcement actions have affected him throughout his life. He said he witnessed "eight kidnappings across six days," along with his own family members being taken by I.C.E.

Vasquez said he chose to pursue activism as opposed to attending college this year. In regard to whether people should choose activism over career choices, Vasquez said, "There would be no classes to attend if every professor was deported or dead."

"A lot of people think about right now, we'll miss my midterm right now, we'll miss this class, this assignment, this hangout with a friend. But people that weren't here today are failing to realize that it is not about today, it is about tomorrow. It is about the future and their future," Vasquez said.

Regarding the high turnout, Vasquez said it was "amazing" and cited a saying of a close friend of his: "Within thousands there are thousands."

"Every day I.C.E. from San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura County are taking on average 10 people a day. And so if we think about 700, and 10 people are being taken every day, if they looked like me or my family, this entire protest, this entire walk out, every student would be gone in 70 days. 70 days, 700 people can completely disappear, and that's terrifying to think about," Vasquez said.

Second-year history of policy, law and governance major Meadow Stevens served as the media coordinator for the protest and said she felt the protest was "beautiful."

In regard to how the University is addressing immigration issues, she said "they are definitely not doing enough," and "if anything, they are abiding with I.C.E." As far as next steps protestors can take, Stevens recommends people get involved with local anti-I.C.E. organizations such as 805UndocuFund, Union del Barrio and SB Resiste.

"There are not as many of us, but if there [are] more — even just a few people from the rally today who decide that they want to help their community — then that is a lot more of us in liberation," Stevens said.

Coastal Commission grants emergency permit to install cameras by lagoon

Wynne Bendell
University News Editor

The California Coastal Commission has granted UC Santa Barbara a temporary emergency permit to install cameras near the lagoon as a violent crime "deterrent." This will be followed by a permanent lighting proposal, with tentative approval by the end of the academic year.

The emergency permit will last 90 days, after which the UCSB Director of Capital & Physical Planning, Josh Rohmer and the Associate Director of Campus Planning & Design, Shari Hammond, will submit an impending development permit for permanent lighting structures. The California Coastal Commission (CCC), which regulates and approves all development on the California coast, will have 30 days to review the proposal, and if approved, the installation of lighting will begin.

Following a reported sexual assault near the lagoon on Oct. 9, 2025, students took action to advocate for increased safety measures in the area, including the installation of lights along the unlit paths. For decades, the lagoon has been a hotspot for violent crimes on campus, including sexual assault, attempted abductions and robberies.

Previous Daily Nexus coverage has found that this will be the first lighting proposal submitted to the CCC by the University, despite the decades of reported violent crimes in the area.

When the UC Police Department (UCPD) held its

annual lighting and safety walk on Nov. 5, they added a route around the lagoon, marking the locations where attendees wanted lights installed. These locations were decided through community input and shared with campus planners for the eventual lighting design.

Following this, Associated Students Internal Vice President and fourth-year history and global studies double major Enri Lala, and Senator and second-year political science major Evan Sussman testified before the CCC in Sacramento on Nov. 7. Sussman urged them to approve any future lighting proposals.

From conversations with CCC representatives, Sussman said that lighting approval is "very likely" and he is hopeful that construction will begin as early as this summer.

Funding for the lights has not yet been discussed, but Sussman said A.S. will pay if they have to, because "that's simply what student government is meant to do, it's to improve the lives and safety of all students on campus."

"These lights are not only a symbolic gesture of bringing safety and light onto campus, but it's a matter of students feeling safe in the place that they call home for four years," Sussman said.

Sussman has also confirmed that the motion sensor cameras will only be used as a crime deterrent and to record any violent crimes, and UCPD will not use recordings as evidence to punish petty crimes such as smoking.



The California Coastal Commission will have 30 days to review the proposal and if approved, the installation of lighting will begin.

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Newly-released report states UCSB freshman fell three stories from residence hall



Liz Hamel pictured at Lao Wang on Feb. 14 about an hour before she was found unconscious outside San Rafael Residence Hall.

found unconscious outside of San Rafael with severe injuries. Seven days later, she was pronounced dead at 18 years old. On Dec. 5, the University of California Police Department (UCPD) released a statement saying that after an "exhaustive investigation," they concluded it was an "accidental fall."

News-Press's article also mentioned Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Raquel Zick said their office considers "the case closed."

Following UCPD's statement, a joint statement from the Hamel family's attorney, Tyrone Maho, and private investigator, Michael Claytor, disagreed that "there can be a conclusion made in connection with Ms. Hamel's death" and that they would continue their independent investigation.

The night of the incident, Hamel was seen leaving with a young male at the restaurant

Lao Wang in Isla Vista. According to Maho, she was seen with him "for a large part of that evening," and was seen leaving Lao Wang with him. 21 minutes later, she was found unconscious outside San Rafael Residence Hall.

The name of the man has never been released by authorities. According to News-Press, which obtained the Coroner's Bureau report, a UCPD officer told the coroner's investigator that he had witnessed her climb the railing and fall.

The report stated "her death could not definitively be the result of an accident, intentional or due to the acts of another." Additional details that were brought to light from the report include Hamel's fingernails appearing "dirty and damaged," and an accompanying toxicology report said her blood alcohol concentration was 0.246.

According to a statement from Maho acquired by journalist John Palminteri, Maho reiterated that he believes UCPD's investigation in this case is an "inherent conflict of interest." The statement continued by stating that Maho believes the incident should be investigated further.

"Does someone who was with Liz and claims to have simply been a witness to her fall not call 911, but flee the scene? Clearly, a deeper and more thorough investigation is necessary from law enforcement," the statement read. "As a civil attorney, I am limited in what I can do civilly, and the Hamel family desperately needs answers."

Maho's statement concluded by urging anyone who knows the person who was last with Hamel to "come forward and help the Hamel family" by reaching out to Claytor at (805) 335-3851.

Jack Dindia
Lead News Editor

The man who was last seen with Liz Hamel, the UC Santa Barbara student who died after a balcony fall last year,

claimed he saw her climb the San Rafael Residence Hall railing and fall three stories, according to a Santa Barbara County Coroner's Bureau report obtained by News-Press. On Feb. 14, 2025, Hamel was

Senate discusses student fees, IVSCD takes first steps to achieve cityhood

Wynne Bendell
University News Editor
Elijah Obando
Staff Writer

The 76th Associated Students Senate discussed student fee waste and solutions at its Feb. 4 meeting. The Isla Vista Community Services District requested funding for the first step of achieving cityhood.

Legislation passed

The Senate adopted a resolution that will introduce an Associated Students (A.S.) legal code amendment to democratize the Boards, Commissions and Units (BCU) fee proposal process. This amendment will be voted on in the spring election.

According to the resolution, any BCU that wants to propose a new lock-in fee must obtain 2,000 undergraduate signatures or 1,000 signatures for a non-lock-in fee. The signatures must be obtained with an electronic system administered by A.S. staff.

Next, the Senate adopted a resolution formally supporting the UC Student Association (UCSA) Racial Justice Now campaign. The Racial Justice Now campaign aims to uplift the concerns of marginalized students through policy change and advocacy.

Legislation proposed

Senator and third-year economics and philosophy double major Noah Luken presented a bill to create a textbook grant support program that would offer students financial assistance for purchasing textbooks. The bill will give the A.S. Book Bank Commission oversight of textbook grant requests and was referred to the advocacy committee.

Next, Senator and fourth-year history and global studies double major Neo Harter proposed a bill to update legal code on BCU autonomy. This bill gives the Senate the power to issue binding financial directives to BCUs, which they must comply with, as there will be a possible consequence of position removal for noncompliance. The bill was referred to the executive committee with concerns that it is an overreach of the Senate's power.

Two resolutions were then proposed to cancel the lock-in fees for the United States Student Association and the Community Volunteer Foundation, as both groups have been inactive without boards for multiple years. Both resolutions were referred to the executive committee.

Lastly, Senator and first-year

physics major Alec GeoSimonian presented a legislative reform amendment that would add midterm A.S. elections and reduce the size of the senate from 27 senators to 20. The amendment was referred to the executive committee.

Public forum

Fourth-year political science major Lily Mejia and fourth-year environmental science major Mathew Schoen requested \$10,000 to update the Eternal Flame monument that sits between Buchanan Hall and the Library. The monument was built in 1963 during the height of the civil rights movement and serves as a symbol of community and activism. The flame was recently used as a gathering place for a student-led anti Immigration and Customs Enforcement walkout on Feb. 4.

Mejia explained that the Eternal Flame actively produces greenhouse gasses, which goes against the University of California carbon neutrality initiative. According to Mejia, the project will be in collaboration with the Department of Black Studies and Department of Environmental Studies, among others. They believe that the monument does not adequately honor UC Santa Barbara's Black history. They are currently working with student architects and engineers to create a sustainable LED-based design that uses the electricity from El Centro to power the flame.

The second presentation during the public forum was brought by First President Pro-Tempore and second-year political science major Evan Sussman. He explained that A.S. has accumulated around \$13 million in reserves, with large portions rolled over and unused every year. He said reallocating funds would help entities that need it without asking students to pay more, and he urged the senate against raising the A.S. based fees.

Reports

Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD) Director Spencer Brandt presented a request for \$25,225 of A.S. funding to contribute to a cityhood fiscal analysis of IV. This analysis is a part of IVCS's continual push to make IV. a city. The study, which is expected to begin this month and take three to four months to complete, would determine whether it is financially feasible for IV. to become a city.

The study is only the first part of IV's cityhood process. After the study, the results would be

submitted to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), where they will then conduct a more thorough study. If LAFCO determines that IV. can financially afford cityhood, residents will be able to vote on whether IV. becomes its own city. According to Brandt, if passed, it would take about one to two years for IV. to transition into its own city.

Harter asked Brandt how cityhood would benefit tenants living in IV., to which Brandt responded that rent control would become a possibility through cityhood.

"Any ordinance [related to rent control] would need to be adopted by the full Board of Supervisors, which is very politically diverse, and would have to apply to all the unincorporated areas in the county," Brandt said. "There is no way to make a cookie-cutter ordinance for Isla Vista to solve that problem just for Isla Vista under our current government structure."

After this, Sussman reported on his updates regarding the lagoon's safety measures. He explained that the California Coastal Commission

SHERINE JOHN / DAILY NEXUS



The Senate adopted a resolution that will introduce an A.S. legal code amendment to democratize the BCU fee proposal process.

(CCC) has approved a temporary permit for 90 days, which includes newly set cameras and lighting systems around the lagoon. Once the permit expires, Sussman said that it is likely the lagoon will receive permanent lighting, and construction will begin as early as June.

Financial Motions

The Senate then allocated \$15,000 from the Senate Unallocated Account to the Office of the President for honoraria and special events. The full request of \$26,300 was not allocated because of concerns from Senators over the high request amount.

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New Indivisible I.V. chapter holds protest against I.C.E.



I.V. community members marched through Anisq'Oyo' Park protesting Immigration and Customs enforcement on Feb. 7.

Jack Dindia
Lead News Editor
Gabriel Welch
Reporter

Isla Vista community members gathered around the Anisq'Oyo' Park stage to protest against United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Trump administration on Feb. 7. This protest was the first demonstration held by the new Isla Vista chapter of the grassroots organization, Indivisible.

Indivisible is a nationwide organization founded in 2016, working to "stop the rise of authoritarianism in the United States and to demand a real democracy," according to its website. Isla Vista's chapter was formed this year by second-year political science and philosophy double major Tallula Borman, second-year geography major Kira Valles-Knoll and second-year political science and philosophy major Juju Johnson.

Since President Donald Trump began his second term, over 380,000 people have been arrested by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.), including over 1,600 people across Santa Barbara County, San Luis Obispo County and Ventura County.

Before the protest started at noon, student volunteers handed out water, pamphlets with chants and QR codes for fundraisers and petitions. Speakers soon took the stage to address the crowd of about 150 that had formed.

Borman, who serves as the I.V. Indivisible president, spoke about the goals of both Indivisible as a whole and the new chapter.

"We are dedicated to this fight against I.C.E., and you all are here to join us as students, as community members and as people. We must make it known that this is not a world that we will accept," Borman said. "We call for I.C.E. out of our communities, for the protection of the rights of immigrants as well as the rights of human beings."

Following Borman's opening address, other representatives from Indivisible spoke, including a speech given in Spanish by Valles-Knoll, as well as mentioning donation opportunities available such as to 805 UndocuFund, a local non-profit organization that offers financial assistance to immigrant and mixed-status families in the 805 area code.

According to Borman, the emergency relief fund goes directly to families who are impacted by I.C.E., such as immigrant families and people whose primary providers are detained by I.C.E.

Santa Barbara City Councilmembers Oscar Gutierrez and Wendy Santamaria emphasized the significance of community action.

"[The political system in place] is designed to oppress us and to exploit us and harvest labor off the backs of Black and Brown and Indigenous communities," Santamaria said. "Our job as young people, as folks in the community who care about one another, is to number one, realize that there are way more of us than there are of them and recognize that their hate ... and their apathy is nothing compared to what every one of you here can create and multiply as you come together."

Following the

councilmembers' speeches, protestors went around the Embarcadero loop four times, yelling various chants such as "No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here," "No I.C.E., no KKK, no fascist USA" and "Money for jobs and education, not for war and deportation," among others.

In an interview with the Daily Nexus, Borman spoke about the formation of Isla Vista's Indivisible chapter, which she formed after attending one of the Santa Barbara chapter's protests. She said members of the protest were thanking them for "being there as young people," which inspired her to bring the organization to I.V.

"It just felt so backwards, because we felt like we should really be the ones thanking them, because it was our future that this is concerning. This is going to have a huge effect on the world, and it already has and I think we need to realize that it's going to affect our future," Borman said.

After emailing the Santa Barbara chapter's president, they began taking the steps to form I.V.'s chapter. Borman said she felt I.V.'s chapter of Indivisible differentiates itself by appealing to "the young people of our community." She continued by saying she hopes this allows I.V. residents to "express their own passions" in a way that's "activism-like."

"The fact that it's just such a young demographic, and we just have so much energy and we're willing, we have time, we're here, I think that sets us apart a little bit from the older demographics that tend to go to the other Indivisible things," Borman said.

Borman concluded by emphasizing that the I.V. chapter is "for our community."

"We're for the students. We want people to get involved, we want people to reach out to us. We want to help people advocate for themselves, and we are here for our community and we want to help organize people to fight for their passions," Borman said.

Mexican-American author Julissa Arce receives UCSB Luis Leal Award



SHENGYU ZHANG / DAILY NEXUS

The event transitioned into a Q&A portion where many of Garcia, his students and others in Chicana and Chicano Studies courses asked questions.

Michelle Cisneros
Lead News Editor

Before receiving the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature, author Julissa Arce recalled the hardships of keeping her immigration status secret while trying to assimilate into a new country. However, she also vividly remembers the joys she experienced before obtaining citizenship.

"I remember this picture of a wedding I went to in 2006 or something. I was still undocumented, and it's a black and white picture, and I'm in this nice dress, twirling and smiling," Arce said in an interview with the Daily Nexus before receiving the Luis Leal Award. "I look at that picture, and I'm always just reminded [that] as many worries as I had, as much weight as I had to carry on my shoulders, there were still moments of joy that reminded me that at the end of the day, I am just a person like everybody else."

Arce's wide-ranging experiences as an undocumented student who became a Wall Street executive and later author are present throughout her literary works. On Feb. 4, Arce was presented with the 2026 Luis Leal Award for her contributions to Chicano/Latino Literature.

This year marks the 21st Luis Leal Award ceremony, which was established to commemorate UC Santa Barbara Professor Emeritus of Chicana/o studies Luis Leal, who passed away in 2010. Chicana/o studies Professor Emeritus Mario Garcia helped establish the award to preserve Leal's legacy and honor the craft of Chicana/o literature.

"Luis Leal was a Chicano scholar who was one of the first people to say Chicano studies is a field of study at a time when people did not think that Chicano studies was a thing," Arce said, reflecting on Leal's legacy. "Professor Mario Garcia started this award in his honor and to say that all of us Chicano/Latino writers who have received this award are part of this tradition of putting our hands in the air and saying, 'Our literature deserves to be amongst all the literature.'"

Arce's memoirs include "My (Underground) American Dream," "Someone Like Me: How One Undocumented Girl Fought for Her American Dream" and "You Sound Like a White Girl."

The ceremony began at 4 p.m. in the McCune Conference Room of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building and was at capacity during the event. Garcia began by introducing Arce before presenting the award.

"In her writings, [Arce] plants memoir, social critique and cultural analysis to reframe conversations around immigration, identity and what it means to truly belong," Garcia said. "Her work is a leading voice in the national dialogue on race, belonging and the power of reclaiming one's roots."

Arce moved from her home in Guerrero, Mexico to Texas on a tourist visa when she was 11 years old. Once the

visa expired, Arce became undocumented and held this legal status through high school and university. She graduated from University of Texas at Austin with a degree in finance and eventually became a vice president at Goldman Sachs by 27. Arce said she felt compelled to tell her story, which led to her career shift. Arce kept journals throughout her life, which have helped inform her memoirs.

"That is the work that I've tried to do now, is to really empower our community, empower us to know just how powerful we are, just how deep our roots in this country are and just how much history we have here," Arce said, reflecting on what the award meant for her.

The event transitioned into a Q&A portion where attendees, including Chicana/o studies students, asked questions. When asked about the Trump administration's immigration policy and whether United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement should be abolished, Arce said "absolutely."

"We're seeing people now who are sitting in detention center[s] who followed the process for the lucky ones that had a process to follow, and they're still ending up in detention," Arce said. "So it's not about immigrants. It's not about legality. It is a lot to do with skin color and immigration policy in this country, from the very beginning, has always been about race."

Arce also described what it felt like to receive her green card.

"I remember opening this envelope and holding the green card, just thinking to myself, 'Oh, my God, I went through so much for this plastic thing and yet, that plastic thing gave me so many freedoms,'" Arce said. "I could finally travel back to Mexico and go visit my dad's grave and go visit my mom and go back to my grandma's house."

She continued by saying that when she began her writing career, she "wanted other people to see the humanity in immigrants" but has more recently focused on "trying to give us language to name the thing that we've been feeling."

"I still think to this day that the most important thing that we can do is to learn our history, because there's a very important reason why people have tried so long to hide it from us and it's because history empowers us," Arce said.

When asked what advice she would give undocumented students navigating the system, she said that she would start by acknowledging their struggles.

"There needs to be a level of understanding that it really sucks to be an undocumented child, because you can have so many dreams and ambitions and aspirations, and left and right, people are telling you can't do those things," Arce said. "One thing about immigrants, we're going to find a way, we're going to figure it out. And so just reminding them that there are resources, that there are people who are rooting for them."



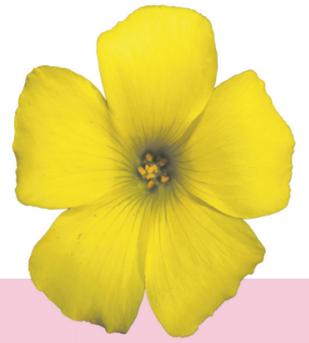
SARA STEVENS / DAILY NEXUS



SARA STEVENS / DAILY NEXUS

Indivisible is a nationwide organization that aims to fight authoritarianism. I.V.'s chapter was formed this year by three UCSB students.

Flowers of UCSB



By Shengyu Zhang

The world is moving at a breakneck speed and so are many of us students, especially as we move into the second half of a less-than-forgiving winter quarter. It is with this fast pace that we often walk by the many different assortments of flowers planted next to our commute without looking deeper into the complex patterns that they exhibit. In this Valentine's Day special macrophotography story, a diverse selection of flowers were chosen to be magnified and presented — before they ultimately disappear with summer.



A bee standing on the pedals of a flower from a *Oxalis pes-caprae* (sourgrass) plant near Isla Vista Theater.



An unidentified flower.



A *Bougainvillea* flower, seen in the area between De La Guerra Dining Commons and the Campus Lagoon.



A flower from the *Correa backhouseana* plant.



A *Hemerocallis fulva* (orange day-lily), seen near the University Center.



A *Bellis perennis* (common daisy) flower found in the Arts Building lawn.



An inflorescence of a *Rhus integrifolia* (lemonade sumac) bush near De La Guerra Dining Commons.

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ARTSWEEK



SBIFF 2026: Ethan Hawke reflects on 40-year career, meets Jeff Bridges at American Riviera Award

Lauren Chiou
Artsweek Editor

Actor, filmmaker and writer Ethan Hawke was honored with the American Riviera Award at the 41st Santa Barbara International Film Festival for his extensive, genre-spanning career. The award was presented by actor and Santa Barbara local Jeff Bridges, who Hawke has looked up to throughout his career.

The Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) American Riviera Award, recognizing “outstanding achievement in American film,” was presented in downtown Santa Barbara’s Arlington Theatre on Friday, Feb. 6. Hawke is currently nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance as late Broadway lyricist Lorenz Hart in “Blue Moon.” This marks his fifth Academy Award nomination overall, and first in the Best Actor category.

In a red carpet interview with the Nexus, Hawke gave insight on the unique circumstances leading to his characterization of Hart, and how it contributed to his performance.

“People don’t really know [Hart]. They don’t know much about him, and they don’t have many preconceived notions,” Hawke said. “I got to draw from how Lorenz Hart and I intersected, and I got to build the character from there.”

Following a red carpet appearance by Hawke, Bridges, Hawke’s wife and teenage daughters, attendees were directed inside Arlington Theatre for the discussion portion of the evening. The talk was moderated by entertainment journalist Dave Karger, who guided Hawke and the audience through his career.

From Hawke’s first-ever acting role in 1985’s “Explorers,” which he starred alongside late actor River Phoenix at just 14 years old, to his star-turning roles in 1989’s “Dead Poets Society” and Academy Award-nominated performance in 2001’s “Training Day,” the retrospective set out to span Hawke’s prolific 40-year filmography.

“I’m gonna get comfortable,” Hawke said after taking a seat on stage across from Karger, unbuttoning his shirt before diving into the hour-long discussion.

After speaking about the early years of his career, Hawke commented on the nature of the film industry and



WESLEY HAVER / DAILY NEXUS

met for the first time at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. Bridges presented Hawke with the award.

what he loves most about acting.

“There’s an aspect of this profession that is really superficial and fancy flame of the ego in a way that can be destructive. But there’s another aspect that is really noble and enlightening and beautiful, and I want to share that with my family, and I want to share that with you all tonight,” Hawke said.

Throughout the night, Hawke also touched on his background in theater acting, comparing it to acting on camera. He credited his theater experience with properly preparing him for the dialogue-heavy script of “Blue Moon,” where he frequently monologues throughout the film.

“Part of the relationship to the theater has been my training ... I have the muscle memory and the habits that you need as a student to know how to handle that level of verbiage,” Hawke said.

Much of the conversation focused around the actor’s many high-profile and career-defining collaborations. Hawke’s most notable collaborator is filmmaker Richard Linklater, who directed Hawke in “Blue Moon.” The 2025 film marks their ninth film together, a joint filmography that has spanned over 30 years.

Hawke described working with Linklater on 1995’s romantic film “Before Sunrise” as “... the first time I ... worked with somebody of my generation that was brilliant, and who thought about film not as a career but as a life’s calling.” The duo went

on to make two more installments, creating the “Before” trilogy and earning Hawke and Linklater writing nominations for two Academy Awards each.

When discussing “Boyhood,” a coming-of-age epic that was filmed over the course of 12 years, Hawke cited his and Linklater’s similar upbringings as key for the emotional driving of the film. Hawke plays the divorced father of the main character.

“We both come from what they called when we were growing up ‘broken homes,’ for through divorce. And we both had a lot to say about that,” Hawke said.

The honoree also took time to praise his co-stars and fellow actors.

“I owe much of my career to other actors,” Hawke said.

Hawke’s star-studded list of onscreen partners include Winona Ryder in “Reality Bites,” Denzel Washington in “Training Day” and Philip Seymour Hoffman in “Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead.”

Hawke teared up when speaking about Hoffman, who passed away in 2014.

“[Hoffman] loved acting and he thought it was important. He thought we had a job to do and that the world was not going to help and we had to do it. And I loved him and I admired him and he was so good,” Hawke continued.

Following Karger’s discussion, Bridges came on the stage to deliver

some words about Hawke and present him with the American Riviera Award. Bridges has been another longtime inspiration for Hawke, who shared an anecdote earlier in the night about having seen “every Jeff Bridges movie.” However, the two met only an hour prior, when backstage at Arlington Theatre.

“He feels like an old friend, and we just met tonight for the first time,” Bridges shared, laughing.

In his speech, Bridges highlighted Hawke’s multifaceted career.

“He directs, he writes novels, he acts on stage, TV, in the movies, makes documentaries. The guy’s a full-blown, realized artist, and it’s just so wonderful to herald him tonight,” Bridges said.

Bridges touched on the evening’s common theme of collaboration.

“As Ethan mentioned, it’s a communal art form ... not only the cast, but the crew, all of these guys putting their energies and their artistry together to make something beautiful,” Bridges said.

He commended Hawke’s artistry, comparing him to his own father, the late Lloyd Bridges.

“My dad would come on the set and he had such joy and excitement about what we were all getting to do together ... That’s something that Ethan does,” Bridges said.

“I dig your approach, man,” he concluded. “I dig your style.”

Hawke was moved to tears by

Bridges’ speech, wiping tears as he accepted the American Riviera Award and took to the podium to deliver a few words.

“I will remember this my whole life,” Hawke said.

Hawke thanked SBIFF, Karger and SBIFF Executive Director Roger Durling for honoring him that evening and contributing to the world of cinema.

“Collectively, we who make film and care about art and care about stories and care about painting and pictures and documentaries and movies ... we’re making dreams for each other. We’re talking to each other. And that’s how we heal ourselves,” Hawke said.

“I’m going to put this in my office and I’m going to think, ‘Jeff Bridges gave me this, man.’ That’s fucking awesome,” Hawke said, holding the award in both hands.

He concluded his speech by commenting on the Trump administration’s escalated attacks on immigration and increased presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) across America.

“Let’s get I.C.E. off our streets, and into my drink,” Hawke said. The audience cheered in response.

Following his speech, Hawke and Bridges shook hands and embraced, marking a newfound friendship between the actors.

The 98th Academy Awards will take place on March 15, where Hawke is currently nominated for Best Actor.

SBIFF 2026: Comedian before all else, Adam Sandler honored with Maltin Modern Master Award



BRYCE HUTCHINS / DAILY NEXUS

Adam Sandler sat down with film historian Leonard Maltin to reminisce on his 30-plus-year career in the film industry.

Stella Mullin
Artsweek Editor

Comedian before anything else, actor Adam Sandler was awarded with the Maltin Modern Master Award at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival to honor his over 30-year career in the film industry and most recent film, “Jay Kelly.”

The event took place on Feb. 5 at Santa Barbara’s Arlington Theatre, and audience members would have been hard-pressed to not let out a chuckle during the tribute. Sandler and Leonard Maltin, film historian and namesake of the award, spent the hour discussing their shared alma mater, New York University; watching clips from Sandler’s multifaceted career and

learning how Sandler got into the industry — he originally wanted to be a songwriter (which he still is in some ways).

Sandler credited his older brother with his comedy career. When he was 17 years old and undecided about his future, his brother at Boston University told him to look into comedy and set him up with his first gig at a stand-up comedy club.

“I did five minutes ... and I didn’t get one laugh. They just stared at me,” Sandler said.

He shared that he was also dressed in a button-up shirt gifted to him by his uncle Michael, white pants and a retainer in his mouth. Because Sandler went into the gig not understanding what his older brother meant by “material,” he

tweaked his approach for the next time. He attended NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts the following year, where he wrote “Billy Madison” with his roommate, Tim Herlihy.

“I always said in the back of my head, ‘I want to be a comedian but maybe one day I can surprise them by being in a movie like James Connor’ ... I lucked out. I got to do it,” Sandler said.

“You have to work hard when you’re given lucky opportunities. You got to be prepared and put in the work,” Sandler said on “Billy Madison.”

In a red carpet interview with the Nexus, Sandler touched on his most difficult roles to prepare for across both comedy and drama films.

“As I get older all the roles are a little tougher ... I start studying my lines five months in advance now because I keep forgetting them,” Sandler said.

Over the course of the evening, Sandler touched on a wide variety of his movies. From his earliest acting and writing days in “Happy Gilmore” to “Jay Kelly,” his most recent film, it was clear that, while comedy may seem like the easier route to take, it’s not.

“There is a long-standing, often-debated belief that comedy is easier than drama. To me, that’s bullshit. Making people laugh with genuine laughs is harder, in my book,” Roger Durling, executive director of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF), said in his opening speech.

Growing up, Sandler’s favorite comedian was Jerry Lewis and a photo of the two of them sits in his office. He reminisced on watching Lewis with his dad, specifically

on the day before his grandfather died.

“I remember the day my grandpa died ... I remember being at home, being upset and ... Jerry Lewis came on. I remember laying there watching Jerry Lewis and feeling good again,” Sandler said.

On current stand-up comedians, Sandler is admirable of their honesty. When he was younger, he would get jealous or intimidated by comedians with better material or bigger laughs. Now that he’s older, Sandler remarked on the fact that he can just appreciate other comedians, especially all the new ones.

While a majority of the evening was centered around comedy, watching clips from films like “Happy Gilmore,” “The Waterboy,” “Big Daddy” and “50 First Dates,” Maltin asked about his more serious movie, “Uncut Gems.” As “Uncut Gems” director Josh Safdie, one half of the Safdie brothers and director of Academy Award-nominated movie “Marty Supreme” is also set to be honored at SBIFF, “Uncut Gems” feels much more relevant.

“I kept thinking they were skateboarders,” Sandler said on his first impression of the Safdie brothers. They reached out to Sandler to play the lead in “Uncut Gems” and, after watching one of their films, “Good Time,” Sandler agreed.

“We had fun making that movie together. It was one of the highlights of my life,” Sandler said. “When you are doing something that you are passionate about, there’s nothing that bothers you on the set ... On movies like that, when I hear we are wrapping, I’m like ‘Why? Why are we wrapping?’” Sandler

continued.

Sandler’s most recent movie, “Jay Kelly,” was not nominated for an Academy Award, but Sandler expressed the same amount of pride as if it did.

“Everyone who did get the nomination, they were fucking great. So it made sense. It doesn’t bug me that much. I do feel nothing but pride for that movie,” Sandler said.

Earlier in the conversation with Maltin, Sandler shared that his favorite actor growing up was Dustin Hoffman. At the end of the evening, Hoffman came onstage to present the award.

“Adam Sandler has an instinct that can’t be taught ... What people sometimes underestimate is what resonates most about Adam — his humanity and his heart,” Hoffman said.

Before the ceremony ended, Sandler shared a few words of gratitude for the people, places and things that have helped him get to where he is now. He specifically mentioned the In-N-Out Burger “Flying Dutchman” and his quintessential triple extra large Hawaiian shirts.

“To my mom, Judy, thanks for always saying when I was young that I was the best at everything. And that I was going to become a big star someday. Thank you to my dad for saying to my mom, ‘What the fuck are you talking about? That kid is a fucking idiot,’” Sandler said.

The rest of his thank-you’s followed suit, a snippet into Sandler’s comedian side. After the tribute event, he left the same way he arrived — driving himself instead of taking an SUV — and having a late dinner at In-N-Out.



NEXUSTENTIALISM

It's Satire, Stupid.



NICOLAS BROWN-CORRADA / DAILY NEXUS

How to break up with your low-commitment, exclusive, no-labels situationship with benefits

Don Juan Tenorio
Hopeless romantic

Valentine's Day is fast approaching and with it often comes the realization that maybe you could be treating yourself better. Taken too many walks of shame recently? Maybe it's time to ditch that stranger-turned-lover that you've been leading on for seven weeks and actually be honest with yourself for once in your life.

If that's what you need, look no further: these are the five easiest ways to break up with that low-commitment, exclusive,

no-labels situationship with benefits.

1. Ghost them

It's ol' reliable! When the truth is too inconvenient because you don't want to hurt their feelings, instead you ignore them and hurt their feelings more. Or maybe you don't really care about their feelings and just want to make things easier for yourself.

Either way, this technique is sure to get them off your hands for good. Just watch out for dirty looks when you inevitably run into each other at the gym in a few months.

2. Have bad sex

The success rate here is middling, but it can be an easy way for them to break up with you instead, which we all know is the ultimate objective here. I've found that to make things really awful the number one thing you can do is a sort of Austin Powers-esque British accent. Otherwise, try Mario noises or the old Goleta Special (if you know you know).

3. "I want to be exclusive"

Sure, you guys have technically been exclusive for a few weeks, but neither of you have verbalized it. By telling them that you want to be exclusive, it will

trigger the primal fear instinct found in all Isla Vista residents, and they'll be morally obligated to run off into the sunset.

4. "I don't want to be exclusive"

Wow. How could you even say that after all you guys have been through? They literally were there for you when you got a little tipsy at a shitty dayge and needed to lie down. You got to sleep on their couch for two whole hours and this is how you repay them? By saying you want to sleep with other people too?

Don't you get that a low-commitment situationship is

serious? What the fuck is even wrong with you?

5. Sit them down and have a conversation about what you both want from this relationship

JUST KIDDING!!!! Why would you do that? That's stupid. You idiot. Go post a subliminal Instagram story with a Lana Del Rey song or vaguely call them out on YikYak. Maybe hook up with other people until they get the message idk. Any of those would be better than this.

Don Juan Tenorio is redownloading Hinge.



JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

Frat looksmaxxer mistakes peptides for HRT

Jesse Joint
Frat correspondent

Each new year brings with it new health and fitness trends that begin to dominate every frat house, football field and Friday function. Whether it's downing Joe Rogan brand protein powder or shoving chicken into every meal in an ungodly fashion, there is always a drastic new trend in the attempt to achieve that perfect Santa Barbara beach body.

So we talked to our local source, Preston Tides, a third-year economics major and co-president of the frat ZBD. Tides is a self-proclaimed "looksmaxxer" and prides himself on using all the latest fitness and beauty trends to exemplify his perfected surfer boy persona.

"I've always been on the ball when it comes to the latest looksmaxxing tactics. Like when it dropped that drinking holy water could have benefits right before a workout, I immediately got a plug for it with my altar boy bro. Bless up," Tides said.

Which is why, when peptides came onto the scene, Tides was one of the first to begin injecting

the brand new type of research chemical into his body with reckless abandon. For context, peptides come in many different forms for different purposes like increasing muscle mass and improving skin to even shifting skin tone and increasing intelligence.

When critiqued about his injection of these untested, unregulated and highly expensive mystery chemicals, he blew off concerns claiming he knows his health.

"Look, this stuff is totally safe. My body is a temple, do you really think I would put something in there that isn't good for me? So yes, injecting myself daily with an unregulated chemical is A-OK. I'll never eat any dining hall food, though. That stuff toxic for you bro," Tides said.

A problem arose when Tides realized he had been taking a peptide in the fridge for months that he had never purchased. Tides failed to put the pieces together, but for months people had been commenting how good his skin looked, how his face shape was getting prettier and how he even seemed to have a lighter, more beautiful tone.

Since the compliments kept rolling in and Tides was feeling better than ever about his own appearance, he just decided to disregard that concerning fact and just keep injecting.

Tides's roommate Gadge, a third-year psychological & brain sciences major, let us know that his cousin Amy had been staying with them for a few months.

"My cousin Amy is trans and my createine-for-brains roommate has been taking her [hormone replacement therapy (HRT)] on accident for months now. Even when we tell him, he still just injects every vial that's in the fridge anyway like it's his pure life source," Gadge said.

Tides continues to enjoy his daily Peptide and HRT cocktail so he can surf and "ride the tide" of his injectable cosmetic gains.

Regardless of health concerns, as this rise in peptide usage takes over the nation we prepare to see a new brand of frat boy who is going to be more fit, more fierce and unintentionally more femme.

Jesse Joint is still on the search for a Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) peptide.



MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS

C.A.P.S. opens sports betting division, overwhelmed after Super Bowl

Associated Student Psychiatrist

UC Santa Barbara Counseling and Psychological Services opened the door to their newest service: support for failed sports gamblers on Feb. 9. Counseling and Psychological Services counselors expect these services to be in heavy demand following the Super Bowl. Many bettors lost upward of thousands of dollars trying to predict various props from player yards to Gatorade color to the number of ads Morgan Freeman would feature in.

On the first day of service, over three thousand students visited or called for assistance. Informal polling of those waiting in line outside indicated that the 1-800-GAMBLER line had broken on Super Bowl Sunday due to the volume of simultaneous calls.

Nexustentialism had the opportunity to interview some of the waiting students. One student, Tim Burr, a second-year statistics and data science major, talked about his history with gambling.

"I'm a professional at sports betting," he told Nexustentialism

reporters. "Just because I'm down right now doesn't mean I'm out. I'll take a visit to get back on my feet and go right back to the grind. All I need is one good hit and I'm set for life."

Analysis of his trading account shows that Burr placed bets on every single player prop and got all of them wrong.

"I didn't realize I could lose so much money gambling," another student, Will Powers, a fourth-year economics major, told our reporters. "It seemed like a fun game to play with friends, but now I'm down hundreds without any memory of how it happened."

Analysis of his trading account shows that Powers lost most of his money trying to predict the order of the Bad Bunny songs at the halftime show.

In the future, Counseling and Psychological Services (C.A.P.S.) hopes that this service will make help available to those who need it. They also hope that students will stop calling to ask if they think Stephen Curry will hit over 26.5 points tonight.

Associated Student won \$300 because he predicted the coin toss correctly.

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JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS



COLUMNISTS



sex and the community

Diana Paradise
Sexpert

For couples: How to manage and meet expectations

This year's Valentine's Day will be the first time I am passing the holiday truly single since 2019 (yikes)! Throughout my long-term relationships, flings and situationships, I have had my fair share of Valentine's Day fun, flops, amazing dates, heartbreaks and walks of shame.

Contrary to its supposedly-intended purpose, Valentine's Day can often create wholly unromantic conditions for couples. Your favorite restaurant might be booked. You might find out that your partner is bad at gifting for the first time. You might not even know if you're serious enough to celebrate at all.

I believe that there are three factors that add complications to your romantic day: 1) Relationship status. 2) Plans and gifts. 3) Comparison with other couples.

If you are in a relationship where you have already hit most of the major relationship milestones (officially declaring yourselves a couple, having sex, saying "I love you," etc.), Valentine's Day is made for you. You can openly express how much you love each other, (hopefully) know each other well enough to know your gifting

preferences and make plans with honesty and communication.

Where Valentine's Day can get complicated is when you're waiting for one of these milestones — or purposefully putting them off.

My freshman year, my extremely low-commitment fling asked me to "hang out" on "Wednesday" (which was Feb. 14) over Snapchat. When we saw each other, he intentionally did nothing remotely romantic or indicative of a serious relationship. At the time, this broke my heart. Yet, in hindsight, I think that what he did was clever on his part — it set the tone for the kind of relationship that he wanted.

In the early stages of coupledom, Valentine's Day can make or break your relationship. If you're waiting for the special "Will you be my girlfriend?" or "I love you" or "I want to lose my anal virginity to you" moment, this could be the perfect occasion to take — or specifically not — take that step.

People's upbringings, habits from past relationships and quirky personal preferences can come out in ways that might create problems this coming Saturday. Gifting, especially, can bring out a side of your partner that you never knew existed.

My ex's family apparently never did "surprise" gifts; they always told each other something they wanted or needed. My family is the opposite, where finding an endearing gift and surprising the recipient with it is the special part of the gift-giving process. This came to a head on my birthday when he failed to get me something because I never told him that I wanted anything "specific."

The quote about "If you really want to know someone, travel

with them" is a classic for a reason. On your Valentine's weekend getaway with your partner, you might find out that they have zero sense of urgency, spend way more money than you do or that they always want to shower together (a sexual pet peeve of mine).

Both giving gifts and planning romantic outings requires, unfortunately, the most cliché thing of all: communication. Simple phrases like "I can't afford San Ysidro Ranch right now, babe" or "How much are we spending on gifts?" might be hard to say in the moment, but if you want to avoid tension on Feb. 14, you have to establish clear and honest communication.

Lastly, it might be easy to compare yourself to another couple when your friend posts that her boyfriend surprised her with Oku for dinner and yours couldn't get time off work. Sometimes, comparison to other couples can be enlightening and helpful to improving or moving forward from your shitty relationship.

However (and I don't mean to sound like a shitty boyfriend making stupid excuses), Valentine's Day really is a capitalist venture, at the end of the day. The fact that another couple was able to spend more money or time on each other is rarely, if ever, an accurate measure of love and happiness.

Communicate honestly, focus only on your relationship and fuck so loud that your neighbors complain.

How to: Valentine's Day for couples and singles alike

For singles: How to up your masturbation game

I'll cut to the chase — I hate single people who are sad on Valentine's Day. What do you have to be sad about? You can post yourself on Instagram, take yourself out to your favorite restaurant and give yourself the best orgasm you've ever had.

Not all vibrators, orgasms and masturbation sessions are created equal. But, as a seasoned expert, I can guide you in the direction of excellence.

First of all, you're going to need to spend money. Trying to hack it with your hand is cute and all, but if you really want to change your life, you need to invest. Imagine how much money you would be spending on your partner if you had one. Might I suggest The Adult Store downtown?

You need a vibrator. They can get very expensive, but they don't have to be. A \$10 bullet from Target will do the job. However, splurge on the Rose Toy if you can. Your second most important purchase is a clitoral balm. The industry leader for this is Bijoux Indiscrets' "Horny Jar" that can be purchased for under 20 dollars online.

These two have got your physical sensation covered. The balm essentially warms up and stimulates you before you even get started. The vibrator is self-explanatory.

Equally as important as the physical sensation is your mental state when trying to achieve the best orgasm of your life. Porn is so out. It deserves its own

column installment regarding all of its harmful mental and social implications, but it also just doesn't deliver the best orgasms.

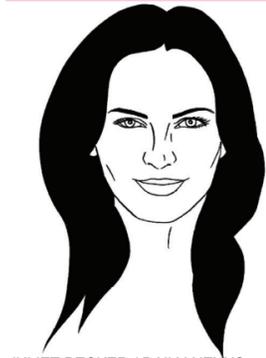
Around a year ago, I discovered something that changed my relationship with masturbation — and sex, as a whole — forever: tantric. Tantric is a practice about which there is plenty of information on the internet, but I found that it completely revolutionized what masturbation is to me.

Rather than focusing on porn or imagining a scenario that turns you on, you pay close attention to your breathing and the actual sensations that you feel while masturbating. It changes masturbation from a sex-centered experience based on getting off to a bodily-aware meditation.

Tantric allows you to explore what feels good without the involvement, imagination or view of anyone else. I also recommend that, if you do ever have sex again, you try tantric sex with a trusted partner. It can bring you closer together and slow down your poorly-trained jackrabbit boyfriend.

Also, it depends on your personal preferences, but a high-quality edible or a few hits of a joint can bring your tantric experience to the next level. It might take more focus to reach orgasm when you're high, but it's worth it in the end. Trust me.

Diana Paradise says there's no reason to be sad about being single on Valentine's Day.



JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

What we keep wearing: Lingerie and lace

Arna Churiwala
Fashionista

Valentine's Day has a way of making everyone suddenly aware of what they're wearing underneath their clothes. Even if you're single. Even if you're wearing sweatpants and hiding in your dorm. Even if your plans involve nothing more than avoiding Instagram posts and bingeing "Sex and the City."

There's something about Feb. 14 that makes lingerie feel unavoidable — whether you're wearing it for someone else or yourself. Lingerie is personal, adaptable and endlessly fun. It's sexy and intimate without needing an audience.

When we say "lingerie," we're usually talking about a few different things at once.

At one extreme, there's the Brandy Melville vibe: soft cotton matching sets, ribbed tanks with bows and boy shorts finished with big buttons. Simple "girlish" pieces like these feel more like elevated pajamas than anything scandalous. Perfect for studying, lounging or pretending that you didn't think twice about your panties when the sweats come off.

On the other hand, there's what most people think of as "real lingerie": lace bras, satin slips, corsets and all glamorous underthings à la Victoria's Secret. Think structural pieces with underwire, padding or shiny finishes that are designed to look dramatic even under clothes. Victoria's Secret turned lingerie into a kind of aspirational fantasy: runway-ready bras, glittery sets and the iconic Angel wings that were never about practicality.

Somewhere in between these archetypes lives a growing category of lingerie-as-fashion:

delicate pieces you thrift, style and wear outside the bedroom. Here, lingerie becomes an intentional style choice, bringing the fun, girly sensuality of lingerie to the real world.

Lingerie didn't start out as flirtation or fantasy. For centuries, it was about structure. Corsets and petticoats shaped the body, protected outer garments and signaled status. By the early 20th century, undergarments softened. Silk slips replaced heavy layers, camisoles lightened and lingerie started hinting at elegance. It wasn't meant to be seen, but it also wasn't meant to be hidden.

The 1990s changed everything. Slip dresses became the ultimate cool-girl uniform. Kate Moss strolling in Calvin Klein slips. Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's understated satin silhouettes. Lingerie went from invisible to aspirational. Worn under a leather jacket, paired with low-rise jeans or layered over simple white tees, it blurred the line between private and public.

Runways never let lingerie disappear. Jean Paul Gaultier's corsets-as-outerwear, Dolce & Gabbana's lace motifs and Versace's sheer layering are just a few examples. More recently, designers like Chloé and Michael Kors have been layering satin and showing slips in theatrical, yet wearable ways. These runway trends made lingerie feel both aspirational and accessible.

Textures matter too. It's all about how it feels on you, not just how it looks. Cotton sets are cozy and comforting, while lace and delicate mesh feel playful, tactile and powerful. Even small details like a satin ribbon, a scalloped edge or a bow can change your mood.

Lingerie and lace

Nothing feels classier than sliding into silk or satin after a long day of classes. Doing a 10-step skincare routine while wearing lingerie makes the ritual feel extra feminine.

Fashion icons have proved that lingerie can be outerwear time and time again. Hailey Bieber sat front-row at a saint Laurent show wearing a pair of silk lace-trimmed shorts. Kendall Jenner was once even spotted pairing a sweater with nothing but underwear and tights. Lingerie has become a high-fashion tool for styling, a way to mix softness with structure.

Vintage and thrifted lingerie has amplified this trend with Gen Z. 90s silk slips, sheer camisoles, lace-trimmed nightgowns — pieces that once belonged in someone else's private life now get a rebirth. Worn with boots, under oversized jackets or peeking out from sweaters, they feel nostalgic without being costume-like.

Pair a satin slip with sneakers, a denim jacket or your mom's old cardigan, and suddenly your "bedroom only" piece is a date-night uniform. Utilize your black lacy bra by letting the straps peek out from an off-the-shoulder sweater. It completely elevates the outfit!

Valentine's Day is the perfect excuse to play with it. Couples gift lingerie and lean into the fantasy. Those who are single do too, but differently. A matching set doesn't require a partner and a slip dress doesn't need an audience. Wearing it is about confidence and mood. Knowing you have pink lace underneath your oversized hoodie can make

you feel hotter and encourage you to flirt with the world!

On campus, the duality is evident everywhere. There's the soft, practical cotton set you don't intend on showing anyone, or the deliberate satin ensemble you wear out intentionally. It's a little extra attention and a lot more fun, whether someone else sees it or not.

What makes lingerie so enduring is its adaptability. It can be cozy or scandalous, minimal or dramatic. It can stay hidden or become the star of your outfit. It's empowering. On Valentine's Day or any other day, wearing something delicate, sensual and playful is an act of confidence.

Maybe that's why we keep wearing it. Vintage slips, breathable cotton sets, flattering

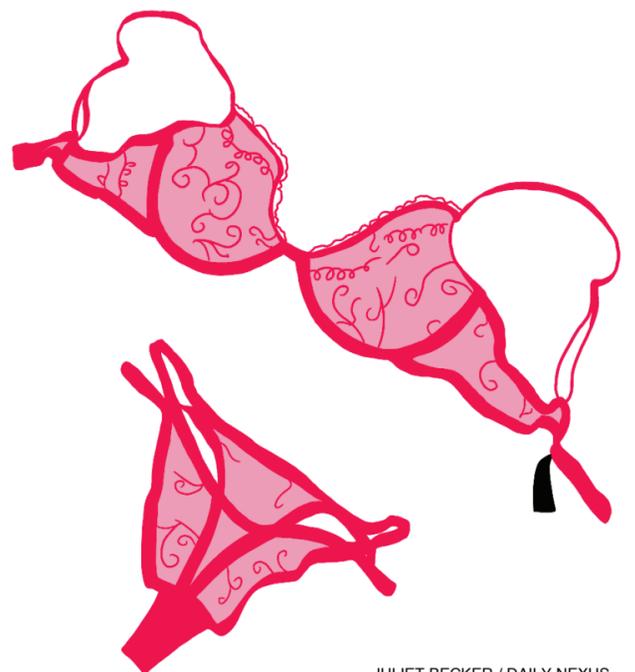
JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS



lace camisoles, unbearably tight corsets — lingerie adapts to every style, every era, every Valentine's Day.

Long after the pink decorations disappear and the chocolates are gone, lingerie stays in our lives. In drawers, under baggy jeans, layered intentionally or worn out on the town, it keeps coming back. It's particularly special on Valentine's Day, but also a year-round reminder that a little flirtation never goes out of fashion.

Arna Churiwala believes lingerie works its magic under clothes — and over them.

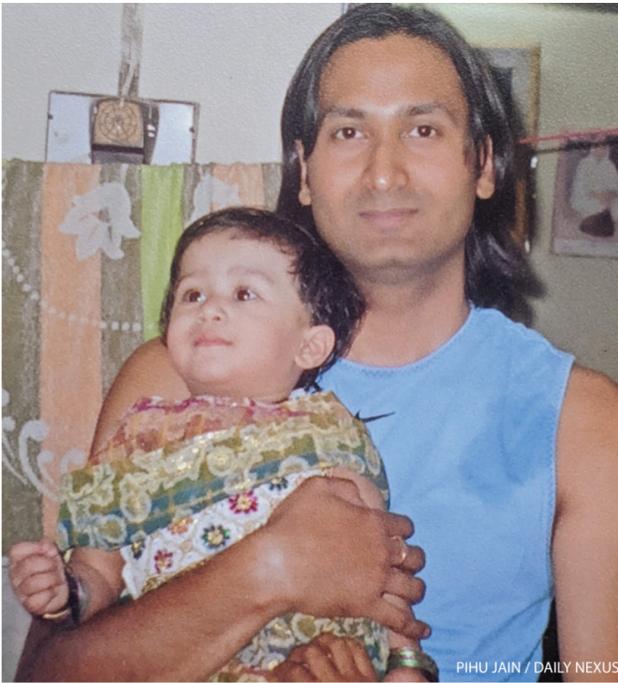


JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

ON THE MENU



My first valentine



PIHU JAIN / DAILY NEXUS



PIHU JAIN / DAILY NEXUS

My first valentine was my dad, and always will be.

There's something so special about how immigrant parents show love, feeding you the way they were once fed.

Pihu Jain On The Menu Editor

For as long as I can remember, my dad has given me and my sister each a rose (and my mother a bouquet, of course) every Valentine's Day. The roses given each year are his way of trying to show us love in a way we grew up understanding here in the States. Though he isn't the most vocal in his affections, he is a soft-hearted, dependable man who has taught me so many things, one of which is to have a tremendous appetite for all things delicious.

There's something so special about the way immigrant parents show love. Not always the most vocal with affection, they do their best to show you they love you in the only ways they understand. For my parents, that currency of love

has always been food. My mother is already an incredible chef, but there was something special about the foods my dad would give or share with me.

I felt his love every day in the smoothies he would make me every morning (saffron, almond and banana), his few attempts at packed lunch (actually successfully fitting a whole small apple into a thermos), the daily cups of chai, ordering me Thai red curry and the P.F. Chang's lettuce wrap whenever I would pout, sometimes sharing a glass of wine after a long day just to spend time with me.

I still remember the drives to karate classes as a kid. My dad always remembered to give me a warm piece of cornbread on the way to practice, me huddling in front of the car vents trying to stay

warm in the New Jersey winters, hearing made-up stories from him about spiders on Mars and two twin fish in the sea named Sini and Mini.

He used to tell me, "Don't let your tongue drive your life," but how could I not when he was constantly feeding me? My dad is the man who introduced me to some of my favorite foods: the seaweed I eat on an almost daily basis (supplied by him too, of course), black bean burgers at Chili's, sea-salted dark chocolate so bitter it makes you pause and be present in the moment.

You know the saying about love driving people to invention? I don't know if it was just love (definitely a hungry belly or two were factored in), but one of the dishes he invented has become a favorite

of mine that I crave. Small cubes of bread and sweet white onion, tossed in butter until brown and delicious, served with a sprinkle of salt, a dish more precious to me than the most expensive dinner money could buy.

It's the silent things, like him buying whole bags of lemons and premium olive oil when I started doing lemon juice and olive oil shots in the mornings, a ton of sumo citrus after I said how much I liked them, taking the time to peel pomegranates for me, seed by seed, grabbing a guava or two from the Indian store even when they were ridiculously expensive.

I see love in how my parents' parents cook for my family, rushing into the kitchen to cook up the foods that will transport them to when they were small

and constantly cared for. I see this echoed when I come home, both of my parents scrambling to assemble my favorite dishes, sending me back to college with boxes of pomegranate seeds and buttery makhana (lotus seed).

Mothers are often so openly loving, nurturing and caring, seen as universal symbols of warmth, but I always saw both my parents in that way. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank my dad, who was often equally as nurturing and caring, a soft father in a hardened world that can leave people jaded, my father who always chooses to see the bright side.

Thank you, papa, for who you are and the love you've given me. I will always be full because of you.

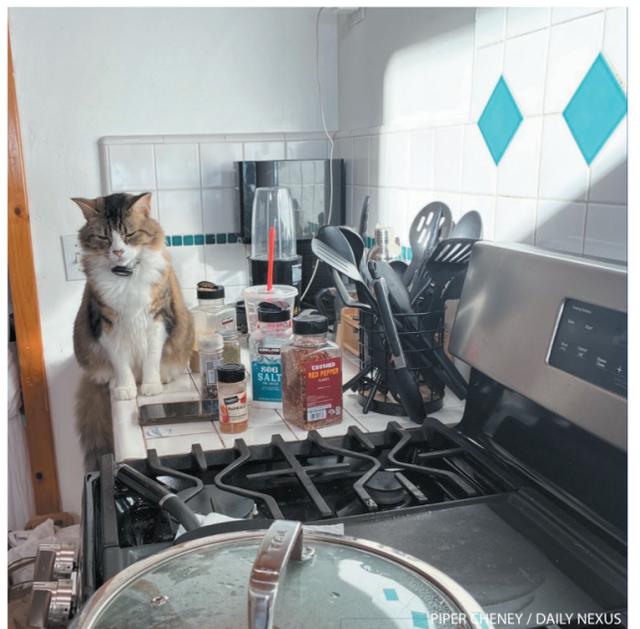
Happy Valentine's Day, to my first valentine.

A love letter to "Tiny"



PIPER CHENEY / DAILY NEXUS

Our kitchen at the beginning of the school year, covered in gnocchi dough.



PIPER CHENEY / DAILY NEXUS

My cat, Tokyo, helping cook lasgana soup.

Piper Cheney On The Menu Editor

Food has become the main way love moves through our small Isla Vista house. It lingers in the kitchen as a pot simmers on the stove or a cutting board dries by the sink. Food is simply our love language at home.

All UC Santa Barbara students are painfully aware of the housing crisis that riddles the streets of Isla Vista. Students are practically living on top of each other in houses that feel as though they should not pass any county test. All this while paying double of what their friends in San Luis Obispo pay for a single with a private bathroom. My house this year is especially small — it is literally nicknamed "Tiny." The house is made of pretty much a long hallway, so narrow that you could stick both of your hands out and have your palms hit both of the poorly insulated walls.

The eight of us, however, have learned to love this kind of living — not because of how small it

is, but because living this close has made us close (or maybe we've just been brainwashed by Playa Life after all these years). Friendships have been formed in the small lofts we call home. More often than not, we end up piled into the same bed after a night out, even though our own beds are only a few feet away. You can't leave the house for a Starbucks run without inviting those who linger in the hallway. The close living formed our bond.

Living with eight people in such a small space probably sounds overwhelming and overstimulating — it did to me the summer weeks leading up to move-in. But, it turns out it's rare for eight college kids' schedules to line up at the same time. Between classes, sororities and all the extracurricular activities in between, it's difficult to find even half of us at home at the same time.

Our house is often quiet in unexpected ways; doors opening and closing, footsteps passing

through, but rarely is everyone together. The exception is our blue- and white-tiled kitchen that overlooks the ocean. No matter how scattered we are, someone is almost always there, standing at the stove or leaning against the counter, turning our narrow hallway of a house into something that feels briefly full. It's the only place where the house feels intentionally occupied, rather than just passed through.

Five months into living at "Tiny," it's easy to tell who's home based on which smell wafts from the kitchen into the rest of the house. If the air smells like fresh dill and tuna, it's probably Kaiya, carefully mixing her tuna salad and leaving out little bits of tuna for my cat, Tokyo, in an effort to win her over. When the house fills with garlic and onion, it's usually Erin at the stove, preparing a savory dish like shakshuka or shepherd's pie. Over the school year, these smells have become less about food and more about reassurance; the comfort of

knowing someone else is home.

Most of the time, we're just making food for ourselves, squeezing past one another in the kitchen and negotiating counter space as we go. But even then, the act of cooking becomes communal. Someone tastes a sauce, someone else asks how long until the airfryer is free, someone joins the Spotify Jam that's consistently playing in the kitchen. In a house where schedules rarely align, the kitchen becomes the place where we overlap, not because we have to, but because food quietly pulls us together.

In "Tiny," food becomes a kind of language. It doesn't ask anyone to sit down or stay, and it doesn't require conversation. Cooking is simply defined as the comfort of having a friend home, of filling the house with something warm and intentional. In a space where privacy is scarce and time is limited, food offers the steady presence of someone tending a pan on the stove.





LA VISTA

Ethan Hawke motiva a los jóvenes artistas a “encontrarse a sí mismos”

Néstor Manzanares
Editor para La Vista

Durante el tercer día del Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF), el actor, autor y director estadounidense Ethan Hawke recibió el American Riviera Award por su interpretación de Lorenz Hart en la película Blue Moon. En el marco del festival, Hawke reflexionó sobre su trayectoria artística y compartió consejos dirigidos a las nuevas generaciones interesadas en la actuación, la escritura y la producción cinematográfica.

Ingresar a la industria del entretenimiento y lograr reconocimiento en Hollywood, señaló Hawke, no es una tarea sencilla. Más allá del talento o la ambición, el actor subrayó que el punto de partida debe ser el autoconocimiento.

En una entrevista, consulté con él sobre el consejo más importante para los jóvenes que desean abrirse camino en el mundo de la industria creativa. Hawke enfatizó la necesidad de descubrir la

propia identidad antes de buscar el éxito profesional. Explicó que encontrarse a uno mismo es, al mismo tiempo, el paso más difícil y el más esencial del proceso creativo.

Según Hawke, cada persona posee una originalidad única que muchas veces pasa desapercibida. Reconocer esa singularidad, dijo, permite aportar una voz auténtica a cualquier trabajo artístico. Cuando los creadores comprenden qué los hace diferentes, comienzan a entender que su individualidad es su mayor fortaleza.

El actor también destacó que este proceso requiere “tiempo y un interés genuino por uno mismo”. Para Hawke, convertirse en el propio aliado es clave para sostener una carrera artística a largo plazo, ya que la creatividad se fortalece cuando el artista confía en su propia perspectiva.

A lo largo de su carrera, Hawke ha demostrado esa filosofía en la práctica. Es ampliamente reconocido por su papel de Jesse en la trilogía Before (Before Sunrise, Before Sunset y Before Midnight),

CORTESÍA DE WESLEY HAVER



así como por sus interpretaciones en Training Day, Dead Poets Society y la serie Moon Knight. Ha recibido cuatro nominaciones al Premio Óscar —dos como actor y

dos como guionista—, además de obtener un BAFTA y premios del Sindicato de Actores.

Con su participación en el SBIFF, Hawke reafirmó su posición

como una figura influyente del cine contemporáneo y dejó un mensaje claro para los jóvenes artistas: la originalidad nace del autoconocimiento.

Conecta con el mar y relájate

Alué Otiura
Escritora para La Vista

Hay días en los que sentimos que ya no podemos dar más. Estamos cansados, abrumados y con una lista interminable de cosas por hacer.

A veces parece que al día simplemente le faltan horas para poder cumplir con todo. En momentos así, tomarse un descanso no es un lujo, sino una necesidad. Reconectar con la naturaleza puede ayudarnos a bajar el ritmo y recuperar un poco de calma.

Como estudiantes de UCSB, tenemos una gran ventaja: nuestro campus está rodeado de naturaleza y, sobre todo, del mar. La playa y el sonido de las olas tienen la capacidad de relajarnos, reducir el estrés y hacernos sentir más presentes.

Si no sabes cómo aprovechar este recurso increíble, no te preocupes.

En este artículo te explico cómo usar el mar como una herramienta sencilla para meditar y cuidar tu bienestar mental.

Cuando escuchamos la palabra “meditación”, es común pensar que se trata de algo complicado o difícil de lograr.

Muchas personas creen que meditar significa dejar la mente completamente en blanco o sentarse por largos periodos de tiempo en silencio.

En realidad, meditar es mucho más simple: se trata de prestar



ALUÉ OTIURA / EL NEXO DIARIO

atención al momento presente, sin juzgar lo que sentimos o pensamos.

No requiere experiencia previa, aplicaciones especiales ni mucho tiempo. Incluso unos cuantos minutos.

La playa es un espacio ideal para meditar porque ofrece estímulos naturales que ayudan a relajarnos de manera casi automática.

El sonido repetitivo de las olas funciona como un ancla para la

atención, facilitando que la mente se calme.

Además, estar frente al océano nos aleja de pantallas, notificaciones y del ruido constante de la vida universitaria.

Caminar hacia la playa, sentir la brisa y observar el horizonte ya es, en sí, una forma de empezar a desconectarnos del estrés diario.

Una manera sencilla de meditar en la playa es encontrar un lugar cómodo donde puedas sentarte o simplemente quedarte

de pie mirando el mar.

Una vez ahí, puedes cerrar los ojos o mantener la mirada en el horizonte y comenzar a respirar de forma lenta y profunda.

Inhala mientras una ola se acerca y exhala cuando se aleja.

Si tu mente se distrae con pensamientos sobre tareas, exámenes o preocupaciones, no pasa nada.

En lugar de frustrarse, simplemente vuelve a enfocarte en el sonido del mar.

No existe una forma “correcta” de hacerlo; lo importante es darte ese momento de pausa.

Para quienes sienten que no pueden quedarse quietos, también existen otras formas de meditar sin necesidad de sentarse.

Caminar por la orilla de la playa prestando atención a cada paso, sentir la arena bajo los pies o notar el ritmo de tu respiración mientras caminas son prácticas igualmente válidas.

También puedes observar conscientemente el movimiento de las olas, los colores del cielo o la luz reflejada en el agua.

Estas acciones ayudan a entrenar la atención plena y a reducir el estrés de manera natural.

En un entorno universitario tan exigente como UCSB, es fácil priorizar únicamente el rendimiento académico y olvidar el bienestar mental.

Sin embargo, cuidar nuestra mente es tan importante como cumplir con nuestras responsabilidades académicas.

El mar está ahí, a pocos minutos del campus, como un recurso gratuito y accesible para todos los estudiantes.

La próxima vez que sientas que todo es demasiado, considera caminar hacia la playa y regalarte unos minutos frente al océano.

Tal vez no soluciones todos tus problemas, pero puede darte la calma necesaria para seguir adelante con una mente más clara y tranquila.

Ser inmigrante no es un crimen

Ana Ramírez Cermeño
Escritora para La Vista

Ser inmigrante no es un crimen.

Lo repito con mucha fuerza porque, a veces, siento que el mundo intenta vernos como criminales, pero no lo somos.

Somos personas que cada día luchamos por nuestro futuro, nuestros sueños y nuestras metas.

La gente nos ve como un número, un estatus o una amenaza, pero hoy puedo decir que yo no soy ninguna de esas palabras que usan para definirnos.

Soy una persona. Tengo historia, tengo familia, tengo sueños, alegrías, miedos y esperanza.

Y todo eso viaja conmigo en cada paso que doy lejos de mi país natal.

Duele cuando alguien me mira con desconfianza solo por mi acento.

Duele cuando escucho comentarios que me hacen sentir como si fuera peligrosa, como si buscar una vida mejor me convirtiera en algo ilegal.

Pero lo que más duele es que muchos no se detienen a pensar que detrás de cada inmigrante

hay un corazón que siente igual que cualquier persona que no ha tenido que migrar.

Y no dejamos nuestro país por gusto. Dejé lo que conocía porque quería vivir sin miedo, porque quería darle oportunidades a mi familia, porque quería existir con dignidad.

No es algo sencillo. Migrar no es un acto de rebeldía; es un acto de valentía. Un acto de fe.

Un acto de buscar nuevas oportunidades.

A veces, cuando pienso en todo lo que dejé atrás, me pregunto cómo tuve la fuerza para empezar de cero.

Pero luego recuerdo que cada sacrificio tiene un propósito, y que los inmigrantes llevamos una fuerza especial que nace del dolor, la esperanza y las ganas de levantarnos una y otra vez.

No vinimos a quitar nada; vinimos a construir; a aprender, a aportar, a crecer.

Somos parte del mundo, y el mundo también es parte de nosotros.

Por eso digo con fuerza que debemos defender nuestros derechos.

Porque si no lo hacemos nosotros, nadie lo hará.

No podemos permitir que nadie nos haga sentir culpables

por querer vivir.

No podemos dejar que nos silencien, que nos avergüencen, que nos hagan creer que valemos menos.

Soy inmigrante. Tengo derecho a estar aquí, a trabajar, a estudiar, a contribuir, a soñar.

Tengo derecho a ser tratada como un ser humano.

‘No quiero que me vean como una “inmigrante” primero y como persona después.’

Quiero que vean lo que

realmente soy: alguien que lucha, que siente, que ama y que intenta salir adelante, como cualquier otra persona en el mundo.

Ser inmigrante no es un crimen. Es una historia. Es un camino. Es una vida.

Y merecemos vivirla con dignidad, sin miedo y sin que nadie nos etiquete como algo que no somos.

Emigrar de un país en el que has crecido, el país donde estás

la mayor parte de tu vida no es fácil dejarlo atrás, por eso yo quiero decirle a cada uno de ustedes que están leyendo esto que no dejen que nadie ni nada los vea menos por ser “inmigrantes”.

Todas las personas tenemos los mismo derechos y la misma oportunidades, solo debemos de luchar y esforzarnos para demostrar de qué estamos hechos para alcanzar nuestras metas.

CORTESÍA DE GETTY IMAGES





SPORTS

Seahawks soar, Gauchos score: UCSB poll prediction matches Super Bowl outcome

Arianna Doan
Asst. Sports Editor

The Seattle Seahawks defeated the New England Patriots 29-13 on Sunday, Feb. 8, at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, to win Super Bowl LX and secure the franchise's second Vince Lombardi Trophy. Behind a dominant defense and a run-heavy offense led by running back Kenneth Walker III, Seattle took control early and never really gave it back.

Before kickoff, UC Santa Barbara students shared their predictions in a poll on the Daily Nexus Instagram story, where 72% picked the Seahawks to win (151 votes) and 28% chose the Patriots (58 votes). Since Seattle was widely expected to win, most Gauchos went with the safer pick.

Seattle set the tone early with a 33-yard field goal from kicker Jason Myers, who went on to make five field goals in the game, setting a new Super Bowl record and giving Seattle points even when their drives stopped short of the end zone. The Seahawks leaned on a

physical run game, while their defense, nicknamed the "Dark Side," kept pressure on New England and repeatedly disrupted the Patriots' offense.

Walker earned Super Bowl Most Valuable Player (MVP) honors after rushing for 135 yards on 27 carries and adding 26 receiving yards. He became the first running back to win a Super Bowl MVP in nearly three decades, showing just how important he was to Seattle's offense. Though a long touchdown run was wiped out by a penalty, his consistency kept the Seahawks moving and prevented the Patriots' defense from settling in.

Defensively, Seattle pressured the Patriots' young star quarterback Drake Maye all night, recording multiple sacks and forcing turnovers that prevented any real comeback attempt. Under constant pressure, Maye often looked rushed in the pocket and was forced into difficult throws as Seattle's defense closed in. New England did not reach the end zone until the fourth quarter, when

Maye connected with wide receiver Mack Hollins on a 35-yard touchdown pass, but by that point, it was already too late.

While the game was hundreds of miles away, the excitement reached Isla Vista. Students packed into apartments and residence halls to watch, with Bad Bunny's halftime show

drawing just as much attention as the action on the field. UCSB even has its own connection to Super Bowl history, as the Green Bay Packers practiced at Harder Stadium ahead of the very first Super Bowl in 1967.

In the end, the Seahawks delivered the outcome most UCSB students expected. As Seattle celebrated a championship built on defense and a relentless run game, the Gauchos had their own small victory: their Instagram poll turned out to be right, adding a bit of campus pride to the national story.

outcome

28% of UCSB students voted for the New England Patriots

Courtesy of Daily Nexus Instagram

72%

of UCSB students voted for the Seattle Seahawks

Courtesy of Daily Nexus Instagram

Gauchos play with passion, hold on to defeat Anteaters for first time since 2023

Owen Jones
Staff Writer

For the first time in over three years, the UC Santa Barbara men's basketball team walked away with a win over the UC Irvine Anteaters on Saturday, Feb. 7th. There was only one word to describe the affair when all was said and done: chaotic. The Gauchos kept pace in a hectic first half being played in front of an absolutely raucous crowd at the Thunderdome, exploded out of the gates in the second half and then weathered a late comeback attempt by the Anteaters on their way to an 84-79 victory.

With the student section filled to capacity, tensions were already running high by the time the referee threw up the ball at tipoff. Irvine's 6-foot-10-inch center, senior Kyle Evans, won the tipoff, and the Anteaters converted their first bucket; the Gauchos, while undersized on defense, found a way to score and kept the game within single digits until they took their first lead with 4:07 to go in the half. Junior forward Colin Smith scored a 3-pointer to put Santa Barbara ahead 26-24 and turned to the crowd with his signature kiss of the three-finger celebration, which was met with a roar of

delight from the home fans.

Irvine quickly tied the game, but the Gauchos went on an 8-2 run to end the half, capped off by graduate center Hosana Kitenge's graceful turnaround jumper as time expired, evoking an image of the great Dirk Nowitzki and his signature shot. The Gauchos came out of the locker room as energetically as they entered it, with their lead ballooning to 16 as the score stood at 55-39 at the 11:31 mark in the second half. With a comfortable lead, one would expect a composed stretch of gameplay as the Gauchos looked to ice the rest of the game. Instead, all hell broke loose in the Thunderdome.

UC Irvine freshman guard Ben Egbo was seemingly the unexpected catalyst for a chaotic flurry of events at the 10:10 mark in the second half. Egbo lost control of the ball, and it appeared to roll off his leg and out of bounds for Santa Barbara possession. Irvine Head Coach Russell Turner, in his 16th season with the team, said something to a nearby referee that earned him a technical foul. Incensed, Turner started walking to the center of the court where the referees gathered and began to plead his case. At this point, Santa Barbara Head Coach Joe Pasternack had a

positively livid reaction to the situation as he tried to rush to the referee's huddle himself.

Pasternack was whistled for a technical foul of his own as he was physically held back by several members of his coaching staff; even Kitenge, the energetic sparkplug for the Gauchos, had to come over and restrain his coach from earning another infraction. Turner, still seething at his first technical, continued to jaw at the referees until they could put up with him no longer and tossed him from the game with his second tech.

Senior guard Aidan Mahaney knocked down both technical free throws as order was restored on the court, and the Gauchos' lead was extended to 21 by the eight-minute mark of the half after a Mahaney triple. Mahaney was quickly whistled for his own technical foul after holding three fingers up to his face as he ran past an Irvine player in celebration, earning the disapproval of the referee. The Anteaters wouldn't go down without a fight after they converted both technical free throws, and in the absence of their head coach they began to chip away at the Gaucho lead that was held by a team

that seemed increasingly comfortable to take their foot off the gas and merely play the clock.

The Gaucho lead was reduced to just 5 points with 42 seconds remaining in the game after graduate guard Andre Henry hit back-to-back threes, the second basket accompanied by an and-one free throw that sent every fan's heart racing. However, with so little remaining, the Anteaters were forced into the foul game, and Santa Barbara's closing lineup hit their free throws to seal the 84-79 victory. Kitenge had a highlight defensive play to end a fantastic night from the big man at the 5:59 mark in the second half when he recreated LeBron James' iconic chasedown swat of Andre Iguodala in the 2016 National Basketball Association (NBA) Finals, sending Anteater freshman guard Tama Isaac's shot ricocheting off the glass.

Mahaney led the team with 21 points on 7-12 shooting from the field in 39 minutes, providing the scoring spark and composure that Pasternack's lineup desperately needed from him in the absence of junior guard Miro Little for the second straight game. Smith shot 6-11 from the field on the way to 17 points with

7 rebounds, and freshman guard CJ Shaw and Kitegen added 15 and 12 points, respectively. Sophomore forward Zion Sensley secured his fifth double-double of the season with 10 points and 13 rebounds.

The Gauchos let up 44 points in the paint, with their smaller front court undermatched against Irvine's men. However, the battle on the glass belonged to Santa Barbara, as they outrebounded the Anteaters 37 to 27, with 13 of those coming on the offensive glass. The Gauchos also shot 50.9% from the field on the night, a great outing against an Irvine team whose opponents average only 37% from the field on average.

Santa Barbara improved to a 9-4 conference record with the win and unseated UC Irvine from the top spot after the University of Hawai'i at Manoa moved ahead of Irvine for the top spot in the Big West Conference after their Feb. 7 win against UC San Diego.

The Gauchos go on the road for their next two games, traveling south to take on the UC Riverside Highlanders on Feb. 12 before their second rendition of the Blue-Green Rivalry of the season at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo on Feb. 14.



COURTESY OF UCSB ATHLETICS

Graduate forward Hosana Kitenge pumps up the crowd after making a bucket.



COURTESY OF JACOB RODRIGUEZ

Junior forward Colin Smith swishes in a three.

SCIENCE & TECH



SIMPLY STATED: How attachment styles direct your dating life



SARAH CAULDER / DAILY NEXUS

Ceora Tan
Reporter

From Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" to Netflix's newest romcom "People We Meet on Vacation," romance has always been a hot topic of conversation in mainstream media and our society at large. It seems you can't go one family dinner without a relative asking, "So are you seeing anybody yet?"

Nowadays, not only are romance stories in demand, but with the rise of social media, the psychology behind relationships has piqued the interest of single and taken users alike. In particular, social media has brought more attention to the different types of attachment styles present in romantic relationships, with videos and posts attempting to answer our many questions about why some relationships work and why others appear doomed.

But where do these attachment styles originate? Are you just born with a certain attachment style or does your attachment depend on your lived experiences and upbringing?

Let's first clarify what an attachment style is. An attachment style is characterized by a set of behaviors that emerge in a relationship, often based on a person's sense of self and how

they anticipate the other person to behave. Generally speaking, there are three main types of attachment styles: secure, avoidant and anxious.

Those with secure attachment can easily form close relationships with others and find themselves comfortable with being emotionally intimate with another person, trusting that their partner will reciprocate that same desire for closeness. On the contrary, those with an avoidant attachment are uncomfortable with close relationships as they find it difficult to depend on others. They prefer to be independent, employing distancing behaviors as a defense mechanism and a way to maintain that independence. Lastly, those with anxious attachment have a deep desire for emotionally intimate relationships but fear that others will reject the level of intimacy that they want. Due to this, their actions in a relationship commonly center around obtaining reassurance and validation from their partner, which in turn causes them to feel dependent on their partner and often put them on a pedestal.

Psychologists have found a correlation between these attachment styles present in romantic relationships and the attachment styles of infants with their parents. John Bowlby, a

British psychologist, published the Theory of Attachment in the 1960s, proposing that the attachment style of a child depends on how responsive they perceive their parent to be; if they perceive their parent to be unavailable to them, the child's behaviors will center around increasing the proximity to their parent.

His theory was further supported by an experiment called the "Strange Situation," run by his colleague Mary Ainsworth. The experiment studied how children react to a parent's absence and return. The researchers found that securely attached children were distressed when their caregiver left but easily accepted their parent's comfort when they returned. However, some children in the experiment exhibited insecurely attached behavior, which psychologists classify into two categories: insecure-ambivalent and insecure-avoidant. Children with ambivalent attachment were inconsolable when the parent left, and upon the parent's return, they simultaneously sought assurance and rejected the caregiver out of anger. Meanwhile, the children with an avoidant attachment style demonstrated no reaction to the parent leaving and even ignored their parent during their reunion.

Psychologists have found that attachment style correlates with the

parent-child relationship at home — specifically the relationship between the temperament of the child and the responsiveness of the parent. Children who had secure attachment were likely to have parents who were highly attentive to their child's needs, while insecurely attached children had parents who were not as attentive.

The attachment styles of infants have also been discovered to affect their expectations of how their caregiver would act. Another study revealed that children with secure attachment tend to expect a parent figure to return after separation, while children with insecure attachment are generally surprised by a scenario where a caregiver returns.

More recent research suggests some similarities in how childhood attachment and adult attachment function in interpersonal relationships. For example, we tend to look for similar qualities that a caregiver would have in a potential partner; traits an ideal caregiver would possess such as attentiveness, warmth and patience are all generally desired in a romantic relationship.

Relationships in which both partners are securely attached tend to be healthier, more fulfilling and longer lasting than relationships where one or both partners are insecurely attached.

This finding is in line with other studies showing that securely attached children tend to be more successful in socializing and making connections with their peers than insecurely attached children.

As such, many psychological studies have suggested a correlation between the development of infant attachment and the later development of adult attachment styles. However, even though the attachment style of an adult seems to be in part formed in childhood, attachment styles are not fixed and can be worked through in a relationship. Doing simple activities with your partner such as holding hands, answering questions about each other and even taking time to reflect on your partner's good qualities can improve satisfaction in the relationship, build trust and increase comfort with emotional intimacy.

For any readers reflecting on their relationships and contemplating whether they have an insecure attachment style, not all hope is lost. Whether you're spending this Valentine's Day single, in a relationship or something in between, knowing your attachment style and where it may stem from is the first step toward navigating love, romance and a quite polarizing holiday.

A Matter of Opinion:

Love or addiction? The science behind dating apps

Aria Khaitan
Reporter

Tinder, Bumble, Hinge. Swipe left, swipe right, slide into the DMs. That's what dating apps are all about. Anyone who uses a dating app is in pursuit of love, connection and meaningful relationships, but the formulative nature of these apps begs the question: Is it love or addiction?

Arguably, the line between love and obsession is very thin and it is easy to become very reliant on the stimulus you get from a partner, rather than valuing security, trust and a stable future. Just as a like on an Instagram post gives us a rush, a match on a dating app gives us a similar dopamine hit.

Dating apps are designed to keep users hooked using a reward system based on a swipe right or a new message. This can create an artificial feeling of love and connection when in reality it may just be temporary neural dopamine networks that cannot withstand a real relationship.

Just as apps like TikTok and Instagram use an algorithm to curate a user's feed, dating apps like Hinge and Tinder use a similar mathematical algorithm to keep people coming back for another match or connection.



MICHELLE WU / DAILY NEXUS

Online dating activates the brain's mesolimbic dopamine system. When we experience interactions that feel rewarding, it stimulates brain regions that link dopamine-producing centers with areas involved in motivation and reward-driven behavior.

As we find increasingly interesting, diverse and new profiles, those dopamine releases are triggered. The idea of meeting someone different and exciting is stimulating to our brains, and on a platform where there are millions of personalities and profiles at

our fingertips, those regions get activated more often.

Further, the anticipation of a message back or an impending date can ignite those pathways more frequently. The apps are designed in such a way that the bursts of dopamine are randomized and not predictable. Meaning, a swipe right or like can come at any time while using the app, which maintains user engagement as the anticipation keeps people hooked and wanting more.

However, this is not to say that dating apps are evil or it is impossible to find someone

through online dating. Many long-term, flourishing and beautiful relationships come out of finding someone online and it is more than possible to meet someone who you connect with on a deeper level.

Recent studies have shown that 53% of people have found their dating site experience to be positive, and 10% of married and committed couples met their partner through online dating. In an increasingly digitized world, love can truly come from anywhere and there are tangible success rates of dating apps. It is important,

however, to acknowledge the mental health problems that can arise from the high of a swipe right and the anxiety of getting ghosted or blocked.

Research has found that love can be described as a chemical pathway that is comparable to addiction. When we fall in love, regions of the brain that are involved in reward and motivation are activated by neural pathways. Similarly, when the person who provided us with those feelings of stimulation and happiness is no longer in our lives, we feel something adjacent to drug withdrawal, craving those texts, words and hugs that gave us those dopamine hits.

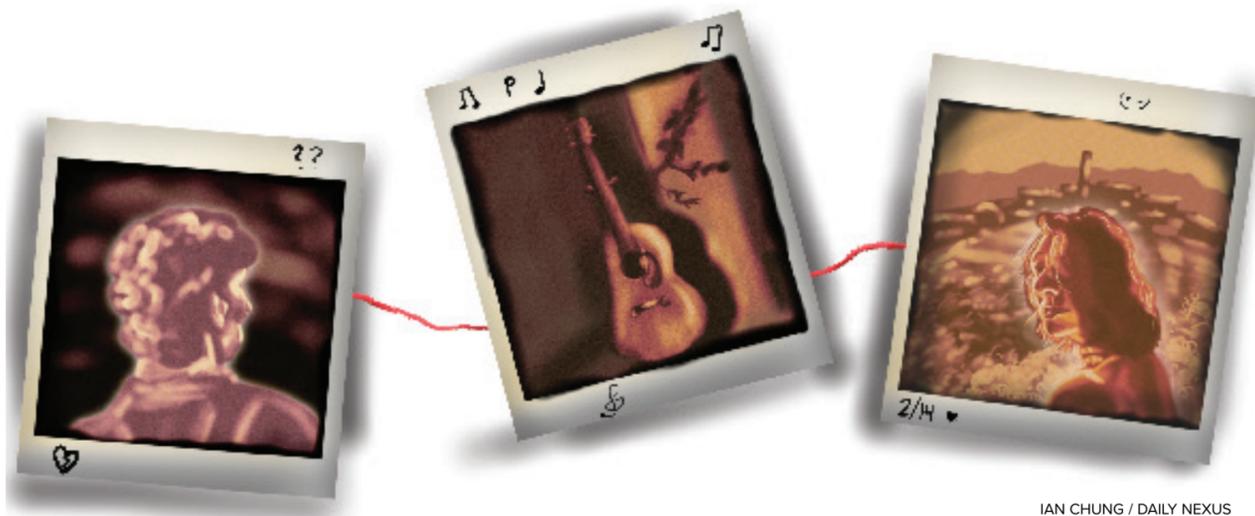
Dating apps can enhance these feelings by removing that unparalleled in-person connection we feel with someone and heightening our craving for artificial signs of love such as a match or DM. Love is much more than a neural dopamine network, and the emotions we experience with someone special are not artificial. However, with dating apps becoming increasingly prevalent (especially in college), it is valuable to know how our brains get stimulated from a like, swipe or message.

This Valentine's Day, just take a moment to yourself to think — is it love or addiction?

OPINION



Breaking up is hard to do ... especially on Valentine's Day



IAN CHUNG / DAILY NEXUS

Stella Mullin
Artsweek Editor

I want my guitar back and I don't know how to get it.

Isn't the saying "write what you know?" I think Hemingway said that. What I know is that breaking up with someone isn't the worst feeling in the world — I think it might be the scariest. And it moves into horrifying territory when it's done on a day defined by chocolates wrapped in shiny pink foil, red roses, heart-shaped boxes and teddy bears that say "I love you" when you squeeze them. It felt like all of the love in the world decided to play a mean trick on me: We will all come together while your love falls apart.

My boyfriend of two years and I broke up last Valentine's Day. If you want to be technical, we broke up two days later, but the words we knew we could never take back spilled out on that Friday designed to celebrate love. I guess we celebrated letting love go.

For the next few sad months, snapshots of that day and the aftermath of that conversation played like an old film reel, flickering on and off every time I closed my eyes. The sepia hue that tinges old books and photographs blanketed that relationship, and with each numb day that passed, the first love that once made my cheeks hurt from smiling began to fade.

The fear of forgetting was the hardest part. I resisted it for a really long time — I reached out after one week, thinking that was enough time to process what I felt. I think of that girl now and wish I could give her a huge hug. And then slap her across the face to wake her up.

That first post-breakup text message was, shocker, a mistake. It spiraled into months of walks — me begging to get back together and him saying no. Me knowing that in rehashing our breakup over and over I was hurting myself and also hurting him. Me, aware of what the answer was, but still prodding anyway. It took me three months to accept the fact that I needed to let my best friend, the person who knew me better than anyone, else go. It's weird to think he's almost like a stranger now. A stranger that knows everything about me.

On the day he told me he would never change his mind about breaking up, I threw up. In front of my ex-boyfriend and by the Devereux slough I threw up. To anyone reading this who might also be going through a breakup, at least you didn't throw up. And if you did, join the club. It's really not that bad.

Lesson one: Wait more than one week to text them. I promise, the urge to tell them everything will fade.

In my post-breakup mania, I decided to delete all forms of social media off my phone (they have, unfortunately, been re-downloaded). Without the option of a TikTok doomscore on "being friends with an ex" or "get ready with me as I tell you about my breakup," I was

forced to turn to Reddit.

Let me spare you the tears now: Do not look up anything on Reddit when you are in a fragile state. Do not turn over your burning breakup questions to everyone's favorite "dad app." Do not put faith in any "update" threads saying that they are either healthily best friends with their ex or they got back together. That does not apply to you. It did not apply to me, no matter how much I wanted it to.

In retrospect, I think I sought so much advice from these Reddit strangers because they were easy to reject. When my roommates or friends or mom told me to stand strong in my breakup decision and not reach out, I felt embarrassed telling them I already texted him. I felt horrible thinking that my image as a carefree, strong young woman with a "never look back" mentality was disappearing. That I was turning into the girl who was looking back. A girl who wasn't just looking back, but running back. The impersonality of Reddit, however, was comforting. It was safe.

These strangers have no idea what they are talking about," I thought. "They don't know my relationship." The problem with my roommates and friends and mom was that they did know my relationship. They knew my relationship incredibly well.

Lesson two: Don't turn to online strangers to answer your questions. The questions don't have an answer.

I am an introvert by nature, though I don't think many people know that. I like that I keep a lot of thoughts to myself; it's a shield against anyone ever knowing too much. Perhaps an unhealthy trait, but I like how some people have even told me they were scared of me when we first met because of how little I spoke. I observe a lot more than I engage. So, putting all my feelings on display, declaring to him that I still loved him was the most unnatural and scariest thing I have ever done. But, it's also something that I would do again and again. I knew I wouldn't be able to move forward without sharing how I felt, despite knowing that in doing so, I would have to forfeit my shield.

Lesson three: No matter how scary, share your feelings. At least you won't have regrets. You might throw up, though.

Breaking up is hard to do, as goes the old adage. Breaking up is so hard to do when there's no anger and no yelling. And it's even harder when the end of a relationship doesn't crumble under lies but instead with a huge hug and an "I love you."

I pride myself that we were mature enough to end our relationship like that — and astonished to know that I was brave enough to do it. I also pride myself on our brief attempt to be friends.

That's the big question, isn't it? Can you be friends with an ex-significant other?

I wanted that to be true more than anything I have ever wanted in my life. I wanted to be told that it would be easy to turn romance into platonic love. To know that the person who knows me most at this school — who knows that I hate cheese but I love cheeseburgers, that I have an addiction to the New York Times crosswords and I hate the word "ya" — would always be a leading character in my life. It was too hard for my 20-year-old brain to understand that being friends was just a way to hold on to him for a little longer.

We actually did remain friends for a short while after we broke up. After the throwing up incident, we still had a long walk back to my house. We talked

about what we thought the "great American novel" was. I said "To Kill A Mockingbird." I think he said "Huckleberry Finn." I don't quite remember. What I do remember from that conversation was a window into what the next stage of our relationship would be like. It was bittersweet: just two readers talking about books like old pals.

We talked sporadically over the summer, exchanging small stories about what we were up to, mostly about what I was writing and reading and what he was exploring. We both spent some time in Berlin, not in the same period, so I gave him recommendations. It's odd now to think that such a dreary city was one of the last things linking us together.

And then, in November, my most dreaded thought came true: he moved on. It had been nine months; it wasn't shocking, but I still cried. I felt replaced, a natural feeling that I'm sure most people have felt at some point in their lives. That's when I realized us being friends was a way for me to avoid letting him go. Fighting my heart, my mind told me to tell him I needed space. And that's what I did. I haven't spoken to him since then.

Lesson four: "Being friends" is sometimes just a way to prolong the inevitable loss of someone who was once the most special person in your life.

People put too much pressure on being in love. I think we should just put pressure on

love. Because losing the feeling of being "in love" forced me to realize how much platonic love is in my life. My roommates cooked for me when they saw I was too sad to eat. My best friend laid in my bed while I cried so hard I was shaking. Another laid flowers on my bed when I was out, a small gesture that told me she was there to listen. I sought refuge in the Daily Nexus office, spending longer than usual laughing with my co-editors and surrounding myself with stacks of newspapers: my favorite thing. My little brother sent me music recommendations and my sister, who never expresses emotion, sent me a nice text. My mom sat on the phone every day for hours on end, just listening. She still does that.

This was my first real breakup. It was the first time I was in love and the first time I got my heart broken. And it happened on only my second Valentine's Day. For a long time, it seemed like the days only got sadder as I moved further away from my first serious boyfriend. In a screwed-up way, I wanted those horrible and sad days to last longer and time to stand still. Then I wouldn't be so far from that girl who used to be in love. The days only get happier now, one year out.

Lesson five: Being in love isn't everything. Being surrounded by love, though, is.

I cried a lot writing this article, forcing myself to put into words something I haven't been able to understand. I know I didn't offer anything different than Jane Austen, bell hooks or Dolly Alderton already have, but I hope that for anyone who went through the same thing, you know you will be more than okay. The great authors of books that are stacked high on my shelves, threatening to topple over and make me the next Flat Stanley, also write to make sense of the world. Perhaps on a much larger scale than my silly college breakup, but writing as the answer nonetheless. And the musicians too. It really does help to drive circles around LAX playing Olivia Rodrigo's "driver's license" on repeat while bawling your eyes out. The comfort I once got from the Reddit strangers I now get from them.

If I lived in 1,000 different universes with an infinite number of storylines, I would choose this one every time. All of the good and all of the bad led me here: a girl who wakes up, grabs her cup of coffee and stands on her deck, staring out at the huge ocean knowing that that is exactly what her future looks like. I stood strong and now don't have to worry about subconsciously editing my dreams to fit another person. And I am so thankful for it.

But sometimes, I still wonder if he uses my guitar to record his new songs.

Stella Mullin used to believe Tom was right in "(500) Days of Summer." Now she agrees with Summer.

HOROSCOPES

The signs as romantic comedies

ARIES



"(500) Days of Summer"

TAURUS



"Love, Rosie"

GEMINI



"You've Got Mail"

CANCER



"Red, White & Royal Blue"

LEO



"Crazy Rich Asians"

VIRGO



"Set It Up"

LIBRA



"Notting Hill"

SCORPIO



"27 Dresses"

SAGITTARIUS



"How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days"

CAPRICORN



"The Holiday"

AQUARIUS



"She's the Man"

PISCES



"To All the Boys I've Loved Before"

KAYLEE HEARTMAN & MICHELLE WU / DAILY NEXUS

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