

## PROPOSED COUNTY BUDGET CUTS TO AFFECT CALFRESH APPLICATION TIMELINES, IVFP



SHENGYU ZHANG / DAILY NEXUS



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NEXUS FILE PHOTO

Michelle Cisneros  
Lead News Editor

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is considering extensive budget cuts that would most impact UC Santa Barbara students through longer CalFresh wait times and diminished law enforcement coverage in Isla Vista. These cuts are being proposed due to a projected \$66.4 million budget deficit over the next five years. In early March, County

staff gave a report on the budget's projected deficit ahead of this week's budget workshops for the next fiscal year. According to County staff at the March 3 Board of Supervisors meeting, losses in government funding, rising operating costs and less revenue have led to the budget deficit. The budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year is \$1.64 billion which is a 2.9% decrease from last year.

Throughout this week, County departments will be presenting to the Board and the public regarding their proposed budgets and goals. County staff recommended \$70 million worth of cuts, with social services and health departments facing the largest reduction according to

Noozhawk.

Per the proposed balancing measures, Social Services would see a budget decrease of \$30,863,031. In regards to CalFresh, the funding decrease could result in "slower" CalFresh application and renewal processing time. Other impacts include unfunded positions within Social Services departments and eliminated family resource center funding.

These changes are likely to compound with existing federal cuts. Last October, UCSB's CalFresh outreach program, which helps students apply to CalFresh, faced a 60% budget cut for 2026. According to the University's Basic Needs department, 48% of undergraduate students

experience food insecurity.

Regarding law enforcement cuts, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office is proposing eliminating 30 positions within the Isla Vista Foot Patrol, custodian services and other areas, which amounts to \$5,044,794 of savings. The anticipated impact of these cuts would be "diminished patrol coverage in Isla Vista and increased response times in South County patrol areas," according to the proposed balancing measures.

The Board will adopt the official budget in June. Budget workshops are open to the public, with the final one taking place on April 17 at 9 a.m. at the County Administration Building as well as on livestream.

## STESA provides support for sexual violence survivors

Jack Dindia  
Lead News Editor

From Montecito to the Santa Ynez Valley, the local nonprofit Standing Together to End Sexual Assault has been providing support to sexual assault survivors for the past 50 years.

Standing Together to End Sexual Assault (STESA) was established in 1974 as a 24-hour hotline out of Muff Bizwell's garage in Santa Barbara. Bizwell, along with Nora Hochman and Barbara Lindemann, established the first crisis hotline for sexual assault in Santa Barbara, with the help of volunteers. In the following decades, the nonprofit organization expanded to include counseling, education and self-defense classes while running the 24-hour hotline.

To accommodate the nonlinear forms of coping

with sexual assault, STESA provides counseling for survivors in a variety of ways. Its "crisis counseling" focuses on immediate incidents and provides survivors with up to 10 free sessions. The organization also provides long-term counseling and helps clients work through past or recent trauma they may have experienced.

Pricing for counseling services varies based on a client's financial situation. According to STESA Community Engagement Manager Karla Huizar, the organization uses a "sliding scale" to determine how much a client will pay.

"To be honest with you, we've offered counseling at 25 cents per session. So it really just depends on where that survivor is at," Huizar said.

According to Huizar, most of STESA's clients come through its 24-hour hotline and start with crisis counseling before

moving into long-term. She said that clients can come and go as they please, and they are always assessed on the type of counseling suitable for them when they return.

As a nonprofit organization, STESA heavily relies on volunteers to run the hotline. In order to become a first responder for the hotline, volunteers must undergo crisis intervention training. If no first responder is available, the hotline call is directed to staff members.

Huizar underlined the significance of STESA operating as a nonprofit, since its goal is to "work for the people." While STESA needs money to function, Huizar said, they're ultimately here to "work for survivors."

STESA's main philosophy when counseling clients is to believe, support and validate them. Huizar emphasized that STESA uses the "empowerment model" when

counseling clients, meaning they won't guide survivors in a specific direction, but rather help them gain internal validation for whatever decision may suit them best.

Approaches may also differ by age. Huizar said the empowerment model may be confusing for underage clients who are still learning to set boundaries.

"With minors, we tend to just take a little bit more time. They're super aware, it's just they don't give themselves the permission, is what I've seen," Huizar said. "But nevertheless, we use the empowerment model."

STESA also allows survivors to report perpetrators and can provide some legal assistance, such as contacting the police or pressing charges. Through STESA, survivors can also report incidents anonymously to law enforcement. Huizar highlighted that there have been a few cases where

multiple anonymous reports helped identify a serial perpetrator.

"I know that we've had at least three different survivors who all submitted anonymous reports, and their reports were tied to other sexual assaults. So then these perpetrators were incarcerated because they had multiple sexual assaults," Huizar said. "It was that anonymous report, where [survivors] were initially not ready to disclose their personal information, but it led to their perpetrator being arrested."

Huizar emphasized the importance of having trauma-informed law enforcement in the community. Huizar said STESA trains local law enforcement agencies three times throughout each year.

"Regardless of what's going on in the community, survivors will always be treated with fairness [and] with integrity," STESA pg. 5



STESA is relocating to Anacapa Street from their current location on East Canon Perdido Street.

# A week in UC student news

Michelle Cisneros  
Lead News Editor

## Governor Newsom appoints four new regents and reappoints two

California Governor Gavin Newsom appointed four new members to the University of California (UC) Board of Regents on March 23. Newsom also re-appointed two board members.

The board consists of 26 members and makes decisions for the UC regarding systemwide policies and financial affairs. The new members consist of alumnus of multiple UCs and businessman Carl “Chip” Robertson, businesswoman and nonprofit board member Dorene Dominguez, director and former lecturer in American Indian studies Mabelle Hueston and former state assembly member and public affairs partner John “Rusty” Areias.

“Each brings new perspectives and a depth of experience that will strengthen our board and serve the University of California,” UC President James B. Milliken said in a statement. “I look forward to working with them as we build on the University’s extraordinary legacy of academic excellence, life-saving research, and world-class patient care.”

UC Los Angeles alumna and regent since 2019, Janet Reilly,



and Greg Sarris, who has been a regent since 2023, were reappointed.

“I am grateful to them both for their collaboration and commitment to our University,” Milliken’s statement read.

## UC revises AFSCME contract amid contract negotiations

UC administrators presented the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) 3299

with a revised contract last week. The agreement proposal included a 32% wage increase throughout the contract’s length and a 7.5% healthcare cap, according to a UC press release.

AFSCME represents 40,000 service workers and other medical employees across the UC. According to the release, contract negotiations began in January 2024.

The UC also proposed a bonus of up to \$1,000 for employees

represented by the union. With negotiations ongoing, both parties will reconvene on April 21.

“Reaching an agreement would provide employees with greater certainty and access to these benefits as soon as possible,” the release read.

## Department of Justice investigates UCSD School of Medicine

The Department of Justice (DOJ) launched an investigation

into the UC San Diego School of Medicine for its alleged use of “race discrimination” in its admission process. UCSD is one of the three schools to which the Trump administration sent a letter with demands on March 25.

According to The New York Times, the DOJ demanded that Stanford University, the Ohio State University and UCSD relinquish “extensive” data on admissions by April 24. Failing to comply with this demand may lead to the loss of federal funding.

“At this time, our investigation will focus on possible race discrimination in medical school admissions,” DOJ Assistant Attorney Harmeet K. Dhillon said in the letters.

Some of the information in the requested data includes test scores, home ZIP codes and potential ties to university donors. The DOJ also requested internal messages about diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, as well as correspondence with pharmaceutical companies.

“UC San Diego is committed to fair process in all of our programs and activities, including admissions, consistent with federal and state anti-discrimination laws,” UCSD communications said in a statement.

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

Jack Dindia  
Lead News Editor

## UCSB Sustainability hosts ‘Learning to See the World’

UCSB Sustainability is hosting a “Step by Step: Learning to See the World” walk on Thursday, April 16, at 1 p.m., starting at Campbell Hall.

“Join us for a gentle mindfulness walk inspired by the teachings in How to Walk and How to See. During this guided nature experience, we will slow down, breathe deeply, and practice becoming more aware of the world around us,” the Shoreline description read.

## A.S. EAB hosts ‘Beach Clean Up’

The Associated Students (A.S.) Environmental Affairs Board (EAB) is hosting a “Beach Clean Up” on Thursday, April 16, from 4-5 p.m. at Campus Point.

“We’ll be meeting at Campus Point to help keep our coastline clean and beautiful. We’ll also be tide pooling and checking out some cool marine creatures, so durable shoes are encouraged,” the Shoreline description read.

Donuts will be provided for attendees.

## Arts & Lectures hosts Sierra Hull

Arts & Lectures is hosting Sierra Hull on Thursday, April 16, from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Campbell Hall.

“Mandolin virtuoso Sierra Hull blends bluegrass roots with adventurous, intimate songwriting. With stunning technique and heartfelt vocals, she crafts performances full



of precision, warmth and creative spark,” the Shoreline description read.

## IHC hosts free screening of ‘Islands’

The Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC) is hosting a free screening of the film “Islands” on Thursday, April 16, from 8-10:05 p.m. at Isla Vista Theater.

“Tom, a tennis pro washed up on a holiday island. Now he’s the coach at a hotel resort, hitting countless balls over the net to tourists. When he crosses paths with a particular tourist family, it seems he’s found an escape of his own,” the Shoreline description read.

## Health & Wellness hosts Generation Recovery Art & Music Festival

Health & Wellness is hosting its fifth annual Generation Recovery Art & Music Festival

on Saturday, April 18, from 12-4 p.m. at Anisq’Oyo Park and People’s Park.

“This event promotes harm reduction, overdose prevention, recovery from substance use disorders, and honoring those we’ve lost,” the Shoreline description read.

The festival will include Narcan tutorials, a T-shirt giveaway, local vendors and artists and four bands. Additionally, there will be a raffle with “gift cards and prizes.”

## Department of Recreation hosts Women’s Climbing Night

The Department of Recreation is hosting Women’s Climbing Night on Saturday, April 18, from 6-8 p.m. at the Recreation Center Climbing Wall.

“Join our climbing center

staff for a night of climbing and socializing at the UCSB climbing wall! This event is designed to welcome women who want to get into climbing, as well as for anyone who already climbs and is looking for a fun night of socializing and beta swapping!” the Shoreline description read.

## Balkan Gauchos Association hosts Balkan Night

Balkan Gauchos Association, in collaboration with the Greek Club and Albanian Club, is hosting Balkan Night on Saturday, April 18, from 6-11:50 p.m. at Sands Beach.

“Join us for a beachside bonfire filled with Balkan music, culture, great conversations, and even better vibes. Whether you’re here for the community, the culture, or just a fun night by the fire – everyone is welcome,” the

Shoreline description read.

Food will be provided for attendees.

## Health & Wellness hosts ‘The Body Project Series’

Health & Wellness is hosting their first session this quarter of “The Body Project Series” on Monday, April 20, from 1-2 p.m.

“The Body Project is a 4-week small group body acceptance program that provides a forum for women to confront unrealistic beauty ideals and engage in the development of healthy body image. This program has been found to improve body satisfaction, reduce the risk for eating disorders, and improve school and social functioning,” the Shoreline description read.

Recurring sessions will take place for the next four Mondays. Students can register via Shoreline for the location.

## RCSGD hosts Discussion on Trans Visibility

The Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (RCSGD) is hosting “Trans Empowerment Hours | Outspoken: Discussion on Trans Visibility” on Monday, April 20, from 6-8 p.m.

“Join us in an event with TRANScended, TQCOMM, Black Quare, and the Trans Week of Visibility committee members in a discussion around gender to find a community of new friends with shared experiences!” the Shoreline description read.

Students can register via Shoreline for the location.ss



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Printed at the Santa Maria Times printing facility.

“But I don’t know if we should print that.”

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# Senate hears concerns over proposed systemwide shift to online language courses



Department of French and Italian faculty and students expressed concerns over the UC-wide effort to shift language courses online.

Wynne Bendell  
University News Editor  
Zach Miller  
Staff Writer

The 76th Associated Students Senate heard concerns from students and faculty in the Department of French and Italian about the University of California-wide effort to shift language courses to an online program.

#### Public forum

First-year global studies major Sarina Salzer-Swartz and second-year comparative literature major Casey Carnow spoke out independently against the system-wide shift from in-person to online language classes at UC Santa Barbara and the rest of the UC system. Both students praised UCSB's Department of French and Italian, arguing that a transition to online classes would decrease the quality of learning.

"Every professor I've worked with is incredibly intelligent and really very enthusiastic about their field of expertise," Carnow said. "I speak from experience that taking foreign language classes is one of the most eye-opening experiences that one can have."

David Moak, a UCSB lecturer in French studies and comparative literature, continued the discussion on the future of foreign language programs at UCSB. He explained that current budget cuts will cause a 60% reduction in both course offerings and faculty in the Department of French and Italian. He went on to discuss the Global Language Network, the online hub of UC language classes.

"Our faculty perspective is that we simply don't know what is happening... because it is not being communicated to us," Moak said.

Moak requested that the Senate draft a resolution affirming that the austerity measures levied towards the Department of French and Italian have been disproportionate to the budgetary reality. Furthermore, he asked the Senate to speak out in support of a reinvestment in foreign language programs. Later in the meeting, the Senate passed a resolution expressing support for maintaining UCSB's foreign language programs.

Next, third-year biology major and Executive Board Member of Santa Barbara Hillel, Justin Shirazian, notified the Senate of an upcoming health fair that will be hosted in association with the Hillel chapter, the Counseling, Advocacy, Resources & Education office and other on-campus groups. The health fair is designed to connect students with doctors and volunteer organizations in Santa Barbara. Shirazian intends to use the High Impact Fund to sponsor free CPR certifications conducted throughout the event.

Following this, fourth-year political science major Santino Gigliotti spoke on behalf of the UCSB chapter of the Alexander Hamilton Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing students with career consulting and networking opportunities in foreign policy and national security in Washington, DC. Gigliotti requested that the Senate promote the organization through social media and was directed to the Senate's Instagram to coordinate further advertising.

Afterward, fourth-year sociology major and Senator Mira Than, addressing the Senate as a member of the public, commented on the lock-in student fees for the Community Volunteer Foundation and Commission for Marginalized Genders. Although both organizations are currently being funded by student fees, neither has been active in years. Than asserted that Associated Students (A.S.) either needs to downsize or drastically improve public transparency if they wish to gain broader student support.

#### Reports

In a statement regarding Soltopia,

A.S. Executive Director Sean Lieberman shared that housing citations and parking incident reports were down by over 50%, citations by 92%, medical calls by 94% and hospital visits by 92%. The Warm Up, the A.S. Program Board's concert for students, sold all 4,000 tickets with 2,800 people in attendance.

Lieberman proceeded to shift the discussion to student fees. United States Students Associated student fees have been canceled, Commission on Marginalized Genders fees will be canceled as soon as an official memo is sent requesting cancellation and the Community Volunteer Foundation fee has been paused for four years pending the creation of a new board to spend existing funds.

Next, A.S. President and fourth-year Spanish, communication and global studies triple major Le Anh Metzger announced she will host another rapid response training on April 16. Hosted by the local non-profit 805 UndocuFund, the training will teach attendees how to identify Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) vehicles, the difference between different warrants and how to respond to I.C.E. sightings.

#### Legislation proposed

Senator and first-year physics major Alec GeoSimonian proposed a resolution condemning President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14391 issued on March 13. The order gave Secretary of Energy Chris Wright the authority to invoke the Defense Production Act to regulate American energy resources. Wright then authorized the restart of the Santa Ynez offshore oil platform, located off the coast of Santa Barbara County. This platform was originally closed in 2015 due to the Refugio oil spill.

The resolution was referred to the advocacy committee, and if passed, copies of the resolution will be mailed to the relevant entities, including President Trump.

#### Legislation passed

The Senate adopted a bill to standardize chairship, authored by Second President Pro-Tempore and fourth-year political science and history double major Melanie Jones. The bill will limit the number of chairs a Board, Committees and Units (BCU) can have to five and push for more distinct roles within A.S.

Next, the Senate adopted a bill to standardize A.S. departments and BCUs, authored by First President Pro-Tempore and second-year political science major Evan Sussman. The bill strictly defines BCUs to determine what entities fall under A.S. and which are registered campus organizations under the jurisdiction of Student Engagement & Leadership.

The Senate then adopted a bill, authored by Sussman, to end the Outstanding BCU awards that are given to select BCUs with monetary prizes at the end of each quarter. Sussman originally introduced this bill because he said it is not appropriate to use student fees to award work within A.S. when that money could go into student projects.

#### Financial motions

The Senate voted to approve the Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) Productivity Pod High Impact Project proposal, which included the allocation of \$94,388 for the pods and another \$10,000 for potential future costs. The proposal includes one Americans with Disabilities Act accessible framery four pod and three framery one pods. The pods are designed to offer a private location where students take Zoom calls or interviews.

#### Appointments and resignations

The Senate voted to remove Senators Mia Gutierrez and fourth-year communication major CJ Toledo from the Senate on the grounds of failure to fulfill attendance requirements.

# IVCSD hosts Soltopia cleanup, showing less litter in I.V.

Lola Hadley  
News Intern

The Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD) recently hosted its annual post-Deltopia cleanup on April 5, yielding 372 pounds of trash. The gathered trash across I.V. was over 400 pounds fewer than last year.

Soltopia, the alternative sanctioned event to Deltopia, is in response to the 72-hour noise ordinance proposed by the Isla Vista Foot Patrol. Isla Vista residents and community members experienced a decrease in the amount of trash in the neighborhood compared to previous years.

Soltopia was hosted in a central location in I.V., between Embarcadero del Mar and Embarcadero del Norte, which helped centralize waste and consolidate most trash to the zones of Soltopia.

The cleanup was a part of the Adopt a Block (AAB) initiative within the governing body. In prior years, Isla Vista Recreation and

Park District (IVRPD) hosted the event, but Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD) recently took over the volunteer program.

Jenna Norton, IVCSD Public Works and Sustainability Director, organized the cleanup and helped coordinate the volunteers. In years prior, Deltopia brought many "out-of-towners" to the event along with a large amount of trash, which largely impacted the surrounding environment.

"Visually, it's night and day because we had all of the trash can receptacles set up here [during Soltopia]," Norton said.

The 45 volunteers were gathering trash from the central event location as well as on Del Playa Drive and Sabado Tarde Road, according to Norton.

"Trash was generated, but it was not turned into litter," she said.

According to Norton, during last year's Deltopia cleanup, 61 volunteers collected 792 pounds of trash. This year's cleanup saw 45 volunteers collect 372 pounds of trash.

Katherine Retzer, a fourth-year psychological & brain sciences major, volunteered at the cleanup for the first time this year.

"The change from Deltopia to Soltopia really encouraged me to help the community in my own way," Retzer said.

The environmental impacts of events like Soltopia and Deltopia are vast, especially in a small and dense community like I.V. On Feb. 24 the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors adopted changes to waste management in I.V. after 30 years. These changes aimed to reduce the amount of litter and "streamline waste management."

"Overall, there was significantly less litter than in previous years. This of course does not account for how much waste was produced overall because it does not account for the trash that actually made it into trash cans," Norton said. "However, given that Soltopia was a single, centralized event rather than multiple different house parties, I am quite confident that less waste was created overall."

# Biweekly I.C.E. Sighting Report

Lucy Wellons  
Staff Writer

Information is primarily sourced from community alerts from the 805Undocufund, a local nonprofit that verifies Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) sightings in the Central Coast. A full map of I.C.E. sightings reported by 805Undocufund in Goleta and Santa Barbara can be found on the Daily Nexus Website.

**March 27: Santa Barbara Jail (6:56 a.m.)**

Multiple unmarked I.C.E. vehicles were reported in the Santa Barbara Jail parking lot in the early morning. An I.C.E. agent crashed into an embankment at the jail entrance while in pursuit of a recently released individual, blocking the roadway for nearly two hours and leaking oil into a nearby drain. The

individual reportedly fell from a fence while fleeing and sustained a serious leg injury. No detainments were confirmed.

An investigation by the Santa Barbara News-Press found that I.C.E. arrests at county jails are "far more frequent" than what is listed within official reports.

**March 27: Santa Barbara VA Clinic (7:24 a.m.)**

I.C.E. presence was reported at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic early in the morning. No detainments were confirmed.

**March 31: Santa Barbara Jail (6:56 a.m.)**

A white Department of Homeland Security (DHS) vehicle was observed parked in the jail lot. No detainments were confirmed.

It should be noted that I.C.E. is an agency within DHS, and not all DHS activity is I.C.E.

**April 2: Santa Barbara VA Clinic (10:55 p.m.)**

Two I.C.E. vehicles were reported in the VA Clinic parking lot. No detainments were confirmed.

**April 2: Santa Barbara Jail (11:05 p.m.)**

I.C.E. presence was reported at the jail. No detainments were confirmed.

**April 6: Santa Barbara Jail (8:00 a.m.)**

An unmarked I.C.E. vehicle was reported in the jail parking lot. No detainments were confirmed.

**April 8: Santa Barbara Jail (11:00 a.m.)**

An unmarked I.C.E. vehicle was reported in the jail parking lot. No detainments were confirmed.

**April 9: Santa Barbara Jail (7:09 a.m.)**

An unmarked I.C.E. vehicle was reported in the jail parking lot. No detainments were confirmed.

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# Lisa Phillips advocates for survivors of sexual violence, speaks against Jeffrey Epstein

Iris Guo  
Community Outreach Editor  
Levi Kauffman  
County News Editor

**TW: This article contains mentions of sexual assault.**

Podcaster and sexual assault survivor Lisa Phillips shared her story of recovering from sexual abuse and seeking justice on April 8 at Isla Vista Theater. Around 250 people attended to listen to Phillips speak about the abuse she experienced from Jeffrey Epstein and answer questions.

Associated Students Take Back the Night (TBTN), a student group dedicated to ending sexual violence, hosted the event. In honor of April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month, TBTN is hosting several events throughout the next few weeks to educate students. TBTN co-chairs and history of public policy and law and sociology double majors, fourth-year Kayla Goodin and third-year Cameron Curtin, moderated the discussion.

According to TBTN campus outreach director and second-year feminist studies and global studies double major Valerie Tan, it was a "one-off" to have Phillips visit UC Santa Barbara and share her story.

"Lisa was so willing and excited for opportunities like these to speak about her story and remind everybody that [college age] is one of the prime ages for sexual assault to take place," Tan said.

At the turn of the century, Phillips was working as a model in New York when a fellow model invited her to convicted child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein's island,

Little Saint James, where she was first sexually assaulted by him. For the next couple of years, she would continue to be regularly assaulted by Epstein while working under Ford Models, a highly prestigious agency at the time.

According to Phillips, Ford Models hired her based on a recommendation from Epstein, a tactic she now describes as "grooming." She described the modeling industry at the time as "kind of a sex trafficking ring." Phillips also explained that Epstein's sex trafficking operation involved victims recruiting other girls and women, which is how she became acquainted with Epstein.

"The 14-year-olds were brought by other 14-year-olds. The 20-year-olds were brought by other 20-year-olds. That's the way he operated it. It was like a genius plan to make you feel like you're complicit and that you were part of the problem," Phillips said. "I'm very good friends with a lot of Epstein survivors and unfortunately, most of them were brought in by other friends or other people the same age as them. So it's a confusing thing, but we all have accepted the fact that we don't blame them for it."

Phillips said she chose to keep quiet about her experiences to protect her career and out of shame. Despite separating herself from Epstein in the late 2000s and starting a family, Phillips described the emotional release she had upon finding out about Epstein's death in 2019.

"It was a moment where I just started crying and I was hyperventilating and I didn't understand that weight that was finally lifted off my shoulders,"

Phillips said. "I was scared of him all those years, so it was a time where I said, 'Okay, I need to start figuring things out.'"

Shortly after Epstein's death, Phillips would join other survivors like Virginia Giuffre to begin speaking about her experience and advocating for justice. She was able to find a supportive community among other survivors, which has helped her cope with her trauma and understand that "there is no real perfect survivor."

"When you have something that you're maybe ashamed about, something that happened to you, you need to find the right people to talk to," Phillips said. "You can't judge survivors anymore, you just can't, because you don't understand the grooming that goes through. Child abuse and domestic violence and serial predators and college campuses, that's usually kind of a grooming process. That's a false pretense that you don't have to be ashamed of anymore."

Phillips was asked about how the media can impact survivors coming forward, to which she said that she believes recent years have been the "first time in American history" that people have begun to pay attention to survivors of sexual violence.

Over the past year, the Department of Justice has censored and withheld many files related to the Epstein case, including after the passage of the Epstein Files Transparency Act in November 2025. In light of this, Phillips said that justice would be a "deeper understanding and education" around sexual violence. She also urged the next generation to use the resources at their disposal to make a difference



Podcaster and sexual assault survivor Lisa Phillips shared her story of recovering from sexual abuse and seeking justice.

in empowering survivors.

"I have a voice because I put myself out there on Instagram. I'm not trying to be an influencer, I'm trying to influence you to do something. It's a shift right now and you have the power right now to make the changes," Phillips said. "I think you just have to find that you're in power somehow and it just starts by kind of owning your true, real story about yourself."

Following the discussion, members of TBTN asked various questions submitted by attendees. An attendee asked Phillips about how people can recognize grooming. Phillips responded by saying that these situations can be similar to Stockholm syndrome, as victims may be threatened and manipulated by abusers to remain silent, and encouraged victims to tell anybody they're close to about what has happened to them.

"[Abusers may] say something to get you on their side, so that keeps you silent, because grooming and sexual abuse only happens in silence," Phillips said.

Another attendee asked what Phillips believes to be the best

way for the public to advocate for survivors, and said that offering support and empathy over social media platforms is a good way to support them. She emphasized that attending rallies and contacting local representatives can be impactful, as this could lead to the passing of legislation that could enable survivors to pursue justice against their abusers.

The event concluded following the Q&A session. Goodin and Curtin recognized that audience members may have experienced sexual violence, and reminded them that they are not alone and that there are resources for them on campus, including UCSB Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education Center (C.A.R.E.).

"Approximately 13% of all students experience rape or sexual assault on campus, 26.4% of female undergraduate students, 6.8% of male undergraduate students, 21% of nonbinary students and that's just what goes reported," Curtin said. "We hope that this conversation has begun to elevate survivors' voices and create a culture of consent at UCSB."

## Former Israeli hostage speaks at UCSB

Conor Kelly  
Staff Writer

UC Santa Barbara's Chabad Chapter, along with its Santa Barbara and Montecito counterparts, hosted Omer Shem Tov on April 13. Shem Tov is an Israeli citizen who was held hostage by Hamas militants following the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

Shem Tov recounted his story of captivity to about 600 UCSB students and members of the broader community in Campbell Hall. The talk commenced at 6:30 p.m. with a contextual video montage and concluded after a Q&A segment, moderated by members of UCSB Chabad at around 8:00 p.m.

Shem Tov was one of 251 hostages taken during the October 7 attack on Israel by the Palestinian militant group Hamas, where around 1,200 other Israelis were killed in the attack. In the aftermath, a reported nearly 68,000 Gazans were killed in what a United Nations commission has deemed a genocide by the Israeli government. Of the Israeli hostages, 166 were freed, with 85 having died in captivity.

Shem Tov has been on a media tour since his release on Feb. 22, 2025. He met with President Donald Trump in March of 2025 and has more recently been visiting college campuses to share his message. He has spoken in support of Trump and spoke at the conservative non-profit organization Turning Point USA's event "America Fest" in December 2025.

Shem Tov recounted the story of his capture on October 7, his 505 days as a hostage and the days following his release. He emphasized the importance of his faith in keeping him going during his detention.

"I thank God that he brought back my soul to my body," Shem Tov said.

He explained the trauma of his kidnapping while trying to flee Hamas militants. He also mentioned the "fun" he had at the Nova music festival that

would become a symbol of the attack around the world.

"I can tell you today that the party was one of the best parties that I've been in," he said.

He spoke at-length about the conditions of his detention and how he used his faith — which involved a prayer routine — to stay optimistic while in captivity.

"I would say, thank you. Thank you for the air that I have in my lungs. Thank you for the food that I have on my plate. Maybe it's small amounts, because we were starved there, but thank you for the food that I have on my plate. Thank you for everything that I have and anything that I don't have," Shem Tov said.

He also claimed to have been forced to carry "500 boxes" of UN-administered food aid through the tunnels at the behest of his captors. This detail related to the debate around whether or not Hamas militants had routinely intercepted aid shipments for themselves, which was claimed repeatedly by the Israeli government. However, investigations found no proof of systematic theft by Hamas, although incidents of theft from Palestinian civilians were observed.

During the two years of fighting, hostages like Shem Tov were used as negotiating chips as Hamas leadership met with the Israeli government in hopes of reaching a ceasefire deal. This eventually occurred on Oct. 10, 2025, leading to the eventual return of all surviving Israeli hostages. In the end, 166 hostages were freed, with 85 having died in captivity.

Hundreds more Palestinians have been reportedly killed in the months following the ceasefire signed in October 2025.

Shem Tov emphasized the need to appreciate what you have during trying times.

"The amazing thing is that throughout those horrible 505 days that really, I don't wish anyone to go through, I witnessed miracles day after day after day after day, I witnessed miracles. From small ones to great ones, I witnessed miracles" Shem Tov said.

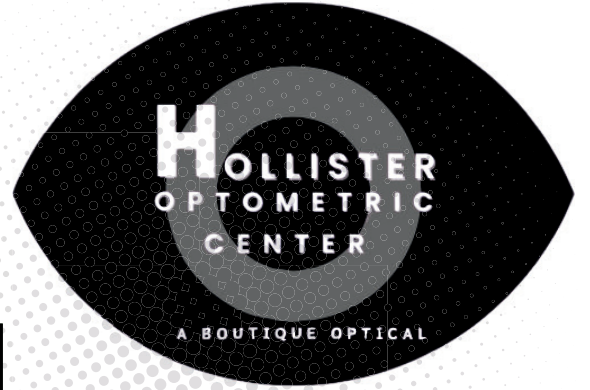
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# Queer culture on campus: a week of Pride

Elijah Obando  
News Intern  
Isabella Le  
Reporter

Associated Students Trans and Queer Commission held their annual Pride Week from April 5-11 with the goal of celebrating queer culture at UC Santa Barbara. This year's Pride Week, themed "Pride is in Bloom," featured multiple events with prominent queer figures, including a research panel and drag show.

Although the national Pride Month is in June, the Trans and Queer Commission (TQC) hosts Pride Week earlier to avoid conflicts with finals. This allows students to attend without the stress of exams and other academic commitments.

## Queer Research Panel

TQC hosted a "Queer Research Panel" at the Student Resource Building (SRB) on April 6. The event featured queer UCSB research professors who shared their experiences with navigating their identities in the context of academia. The professors included writing and literature professor Michelle Petty, sociology professor Dana Kornberg, environmental studies professor An Bui and ecology professor Jackie Shay.

Fourth-year biology major Theo Jiang hosted the panel and asked the speakers questions submitted by audience members. The first question from the audience asked how the professors maintain Pride in their identities within research. Shay explained that her research is currently focused on joy within large science classrooms. She believes that joy does not take away from the rigor of a course but instead creates a sense of inclusion.

"That [joy] broke open the door for me that allowed me to walk through a n d really embrace



science as a part of who I am," Dr. Shay said. "I find joy to be a place where I see my identity — my queer identity — come into play because I see how it just creates a space where everyone can be themselves ..."

Hadley Simmons, a second-year writing and literature major, shared how her queer identity has affected her educational endeavors.

"I do a lot of writing about queerness and identity ... and I've allowed queer theory and trans theory and different kinds of intersecting identities to inform my research and the questions I'm asking," Simmons said.

## Comedy Night with Dwayne Perkins

On Wednesday, Emmy-nominated comedian and actor Dwayne Perkins was invited to The Hub to perform a stand-up comedy set that was free for students to attend. The comedy show titled "How Being Black and Gay Made Me Better Than You!" featured bits about grade school mishaps, growing up and embracing queerness.

Finnick Gonzalez, a third-year psychological & brain sciences and English double major, organized the event and was glad to have the funding to bring in more prominent names to perform at this year's Pride Week. He explained that the queer community often uses humor to share common ground and hoped that the show was able to bring some laughs to attendees.

Perkins explained a time where he was being bullied because of his identity — tired of the harassment, he decided to physically fight back against it. He said this ultimately became a defining moment in his life.

"[After I hit my bully] I started crying harder than him. I was so mad because I felt so bad for being bad and I just ... It was in that [moment] I realized that I didn't want to hurt people," Perkins said. "I just wanted people to stop hurting me."

Perkins ended the comedy show with a Q&A section where he answered audience questions ranging from his relationship status to his future career ambitions. He excitedly shared about working with comedian Tiffany Haddish, continuing to perform and creating new media.

## Trans Care Fair

On April 8, QTC hosted their second ever Trans Care Fair outside of the SRB. It was hosted in collaboration with multiple queer-aligned organizations on campus, including Black Quare and Marginalized Genders in

Gaming. The aim of the event was to ensure that Pride Week featured an event specifically geared towards transgender people.

Third-year psychological & brain sciences major Laura Ballard-Arellano stated the significance of transgender spaces in LGBTQIA+ settings, emphasizing "The T" (in LGBTQIA) is there. The "T" stays there."

The Trans Care Fair's primary focus was education and resources for attendees. Gilead Sciences, a biopharmaceuticals company, shared information on sexual health and Sexually Transmitted Disease prevention. Legal information on topics such as name changes for transgender people as well as scholarship details were presented.

Third-year sociology major Dee Saenz and coordinator for Trans and Gender Nonconforming events hopes to host the Trans Care Fair again soon, with even more booths and organizations.

## Student Film Festival

Later that night, TQC hosted a Student Film Festival at Anisq'Oyo Park in Isla Vista. They screened two student films; the first being "Queer," created by second-year film and media studies and psychological & brain sciences double major Anastasia Rose Wang. The second film was "Opera Box," created by first-year film and media studies and statistics and data science double major Rishika Pandrala and animated by first-year film and media studies major S.J. Ly.

The outdoor movie projection set-up then screened the 2022 film "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe," a coming-of-age romantic comedy that follows the love story between two Mexican-American teenage boys.

Summer Tucker, a third-year anthropology and sociology double major, organized the event in order to promote UCSB student filmmakers and to highlight queer representation in film.

"I hope that everyone who sees the film can find part of themselves on screen and feel less alone," Tucker said.

## Fashion Show

On April 9, TQC hosted a fashion show in collaboration with UCSB's Drag Club at The Hub. The show featured UCSB alumnus and professional drag queen Cherry Von Illa as the emcee of the event.

Von Illa emphasized that they believe fashion allows people, especially queer people, a space to express themselves freely.

"I think for queer people especially, fashion is one of the best ways that an individual can express

their identity, personality, gender and sexuality expression," Von Illa said. "I think clothing is a way for people to really just show the world: this is who I am."

Von Illa also performed two solo performances throughout the show. One category titled "Performative Queer Identity" had models adorned in flannels, belts and carabiners to poke fun at "stereotypical queer attire."

Next, a "bob-off" was held which had two attendees volunteer to wear wigs and attempt to snatch it off the other. The winner was awarded a \$100 gift card.

Audience members were also able to participate in a "lip-synch battle" where participants battled to have the best stage presence and overall performance.

The event concluded with "Mother Earth," a reflection of the overall theme of Pride Week. Models wore flowy clothes and floral motifs to represent nature and spring.

Halee Scott, a second-year writing and literature major and TQC's Pride commissioner, highlighted how fashion gives queer people courage to be themselves and find community.

"So many people tonight got on stage to do the lip-synch battle and that was so heartwarming and everyone was just cheering them on," Scott said. "So, really it's like a community where we're here for each other."

## Queer Prom

TQC hosted "Queer Prom" at The Hub on April 10. According to Tucker, organizer of the event, they hosted a prom to give attendees an opportunity to "reimagine" their high school prom in an inclusive space. The prom featured a DJ, decorations, colorful low lighting and places to take pictures.

"I hope attendees of this event get a space to be themselves, but in a fun expressive way with their friends and have what you're supposed to have at prom, which is something you're gonna remember with your friends," Tucker said.

Second-year computer science major Kai Houlihan explained how the prom gave them an opportunity to express their trans identity free of judgement.

"I'm trans and [the prom] allows me to be in a place where I can dress how I want to present in a safe manner," Houlihan said. "It's like a

fun way to express yourself how you want without having to fear someone else bashing you for it."

First-year psychological & brain sciences major Karina Martinez expressed the need for community in light of the current political climate.

"I feel like with everything happening in the world, we [queer people] have to stick together, especially since there is a lot of homophobia a n d transphobia within our [UCSB] community," Martinez said.

## Queer Fest and Drag Show

On the final day of Pride Week, April 11, TQC hosted "Queer Fest" and a drag show which featured four influential and professional drag queens.

The fest was hosted at Anisq'Oyo Park and featured arts and crafts, live music from local bands, queer UCSB organization tabling and local vendors.

According to Vincent Cavillo, a fourth-year history and sociology double major and organizer of "Queer Fest," the event was held at Anisq'Oyo Park to increase event turnout. Cavillo explained that this decision gave "Queer Fest" the highest turnout of the week.

Cavillo expressed his joy for how the week of events turned out.

"Pride Week has been really fantastic. I can say that most of our numbers from our events have been up compared to last year," Cavillo said. "I feel like I've heard more people come up to us and tell us 'Thank you for having these events.'"

The drag show was held at Campbell Hall and featured five drag queens, four of who have been contestants on the reality show RuPaul's Drag Race. The line up included Roxxy Andrews, Alaska Thunderfuck, Saphirra Cristal, Morphine Love Dion and CoCo D. BauCherry. Each drag queen had multiple dance numbers with a ton of audience interaction. The show had many nods to RuPaul's Drag Race and drag culture in general.

Cavillo shared why he believes Pride Week is an important part at UCSB.

"I think not only is it tradition that we've been doing this [Pride Week] since the '80s or '90s, but I think it's important, even now given the circumstances we're in politically, that we all have a space to congregate and be happy together," Cavillo said.

## STESA

Continued from p. 1

Huizar said.

When discussing sexual assault, Huizar believes there needs to be "a lot more education" on both consent and boundaries on college campuses. When Huizar was doing crisis work around four years ago, she felt as if UC Santa Barbara had failed to protect survivors and penalize perpetrators.

"They are letting a lot of cases slide, and a lot of these

perpetrators are getting away with what they did, and the survivors are the ones that are left with the responsibility of 'Do I continue school or not?'" Huizar said. "We've had cases where the survivors were sexually assaulted by their professors, and their professors are still today teaching, and why didn't anything happen? There's no intervention there and there's no accountability that was

taken."

STESA's current biggest project is its "Raise the Bar" campaign, which seeks to make nightlife in Santa Barbara safer by reducing sexual assaults at bars and clubs. The campaign is built around bystander intervention training for nightlife staff and has been expanded to focus more on policy and education since its cultivation in 2015.

In 2022, the campaign was

revived in collaboration with UCSB partners and received a \$180,000 grant in 2024 to reboot the project, according to Huizar. As of now, STESA is collecting data from nightlife transport services such as Bill's Bus or Jump on the School Bus, as well as from patrons, in order to better develop their education curriculum.

STESA specifically collaborates with campus organizations like Associated Students (A.S.) Take Back the Night (TBTN) and the Pardall Center to better prepare students for recognizing sexual assault, as well as further bystander training.

In regard to male sexual violence, Huizar suspects that men experience sexual assault at a higher rate than reported but are less likely to come forward. Additionally, Huizar suspects that people assaulted within marginalized groups are less likely to report their assaulter as they "want to protect each other."

"[Survivors] did not report the perpetrator because they don't want them to be another statistic, and that was their sole reason. I don't want them to be another statistic," Huizar said. "Justice looks different for everyone, so [survivors] just need them to know that they did something bad, and that law enforcement is aware. But I don't want them to go to jail because I know this is not going to go good for my race."

With sexual assault being at the forefront of American politics due to the Epstein files, Huizar said "we don't see the justice system working in favor of survivors." She highlighted that powerful people "getting away" with sexual assault

can lead to a survivor feeling discouraged about reporting their assaulter.

"These are such powerful people, and they're getting away with what they're doing," Huizar said. "For survivors whose cases don't have all this evidence, they're feeling like, 'If that's what that survivor didn't get what am I gonna expect for my own case?'"

However, Huizar noted a positive that came from the Epstein files: "A lot more compassion and empathy" on a broad scale. Additionally, she said the files help prove that sexual assault looks vastly different across many cases.

"In Santa Barbara County, human trafficking looks very different. One of my concerns is there's this idea of what sexual assault looks like, and when it doesn't fit that box, then you just don't accept anything else," Huizar said.

Looking forward, Huizar hopes that STESA will focus more on human sex trafficking, as she said it's a prevalent issue in Santa Barbara County. Within 10 years, she hopes that STESA will continue to grow and expand its services to focus more on prevention and create additional support groups for men or the LGBTQIA+ community.

"STESA has helped the community move to a place where we've made it supportive and have validated and said 'yes, you need to heal.' So I see our community shifting, and I do see our community moving towards a more supportive and less tolerant of sexual violence," Huizar concluded.

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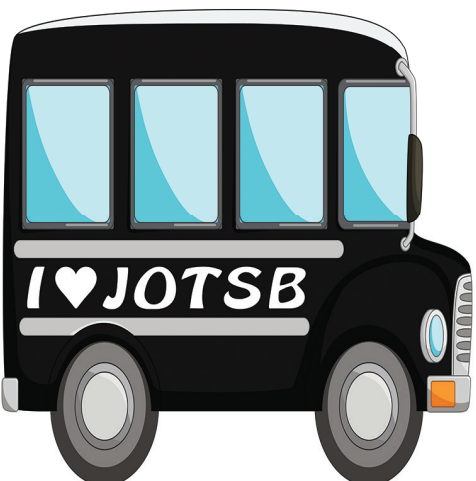
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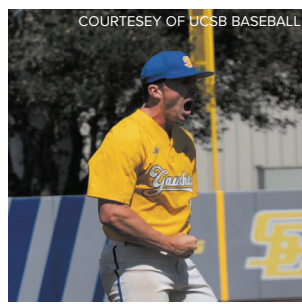
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# SPORTS

## GAMES OF THE WEEK



### Baseball at UC Irvine

Gauchos baseball travels to Anteater Ballpark to take on UC Irvine this weekend in a three-game series. UCSB currently has a 10-5 conference record and is second in the Big West, while the Anteaters are 7-8 in conference.



### Men's Volleyball at UCSD

The current No. 9 UCSB Men's Volleyball team takes on the No. 11 UCSD Tritons on Saturday, April 18 at LionTree Arena in La Jolla. The Gauchos and Tritons are currently fighting for the fourth place spot in the Big West.



### Softball vs. CSUN

Softball takes on CSUN at home this weekend at Campus Diamond in a three-game series. The Gauchos are currently 13-5 in conference, while the Matadors are 8-10.

# Gauchos rally and respond, take three-game series from Tritons

Haider Rogers  
Sports Editor

The UC Santa Barbara men's baseball team secured a hard-fought series victory over UC San Diego, winning two of three games in a weekend set that had dominant pitching, extra innings and clutch performances.

April 10: The Friday series opener showcased a pitcher's duel, as junior ace pitcher Jackson Flora faced off with Triton starter Steele Murdock. While Flora was playing well, a run in the fifth ended his impressive scoreless streak, and defensive mistakes overshadowed his effort. UCSD took advantage of this with a three-run seventh inning to take control. Senior catcher Nate Vargas provided nearly all of the Gauchos' offense, hitting a solo home run and later adding an RBI double in the ninth inning. Despite bringing the tying run to second, UCSB fell just short in a 4-3 loss.

April 11: The Gauchos bounced back on Saturday in a tight, high scoring game that ended in extras. Vargas



The Gauchos dugout celebrates after scoring a run.

continued to dominate on offense, starting the Gauchos off with a two-run homer, helping UCSB create a 6-1 lead. However, UCSD responded with a surge of offense, highlighted by a grand slam in the eighth

inning that flipped the game and put the Gauchos on the brink of a second straight loss.

Down 10-7 in the ninth inning, UCSB did not back down. Junior infielder Jonathan Mendez started the

rally with a solo home run, and the motivated offense crawled back to tie the game and forced extras. Freshman pitcher Josh Jannicelli gave the Gauchos three clutch innings out of the bullpen to keep the Tritons in reach. In the 11th

inning, junior infielder Xavier Esquer ended the game with a walk-off RBI single, giving UCSB a 11-10 victory.

"I thought Josh Jannicelli was awesome today. He came in with a runner on second and nobody out, was able to get that thing stopped and then pitched fantastic. That was his first collegiate win, so that was certainly a highlight for the bullpen," Head Coach Andrew Checketts said.

April 12: Sunday's game was highlighted by a pitching performance from senior right-hander Kellan Montgomery. Montgomery allowed just one earned run during eight innings while striking out nine, retiring the final 13 batters he faced. After a solo home run in the fourth from UCSD, Montgomery kept composure and controlled the game. The Gauchos won the game with a two-run double in the seventh and a solo homer in the eighth from sophomore outfielder Liam Barrett.

Using the momentum from a series win, the Gauchos will face off against UC Irvine on April 17.

# Gauchos celebrate seniors, fall short in the home game season finale against No. 3 Long Beach

Izabella Nickerson  
Sports Reporter

No. 9 UC Santa Barbara men's volleyball took on No. 3 California State University, Long Beach in back-to-back matches Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11.

Ending the weekend with

a 4-5 record in the Big West Conference, the Gauchos faced the Beach, who hold a current 6-2 record.

The Gauchos celebrated senior night during their final home match on Saturday, April 11. Falling to the Beach on Friday and Saturday night, the Gauchos

went 0-3 in both matches.

April 10: On Friday night, the Gauchos started confidently during the first set with a 2-0 lead against the Beach. After exchanging points, the Beach began to pull away with a 5-point lead at 12-7. Trailing 20-16, the Gauchos fought back

with a kill by sophomore outside hitter Riggs Guy. Important kills by junior middle blocker Josh Aruya, freshman middle blocker Mikey Denver and Guy helped narrow the gap between the Beach, who led 23-17. The Gauchos were unable to obtain a victory, losing the first set 20-25.

Starting strong, the Beach used their momentum in the second set with a 10-5 lead. Ahead for the rest of the set, the Beach won 25-19. Notably, junior setter Cole Schobel and Guy both reached their set highs for the match during the second set, with Guy reaching 4 kills and Schobel 10 assists.

During the third and last set of the night, the Gauchos persevered and tied the Beach at 4-4. The Beach then took the momentum with a 4-point streak, leading 13-8. Kills by Aruya and sophomore outside hitter Ethan Saint attempted to break the Beach's domination, fighting with their own 5-point streak and coming close to a tie at 15-17 and even closer at 19-20. Once more unable to gain the lead, the Beach won 25-20.

April 11: On Saturday night, the Gauchos celebrated their final home match of the season. Seniors Joe Wallace, Andreas Schuetz, Ben Pearson and Owen Loncar were recognized. Hoping for redemption, the Gauchos

took on Long Beach for the second night in a row.

The Beach triumphed in the first set 25-13, their biggest lead from both Friday and Saturday night. The Gauchos' only hope during this set was 3 kills by Aruya.

Yet, the Gauchos fought back, leading the second set 2-0 with back-to-back kills by Aruya and Guy. The Gauchos traded points with the Beach until 14-14, but were unable to edge ahead, with the Beach collecting another set at 25-20.

During the final set, the Gauchos reignited their offense, establishing multiple ties. After their final tie at 12-12, the Gauchos were unable to regain momentum for the rest of the set. The Beach secured the win with the closest set of both nights at 25-21.

Notably senior outside hitter Owen Loncar was efficient during the match with three kills and a .600 kill percentage. Guy was perfect with 3-for-3 kills, and Aruya contributed with three out of four on kills.

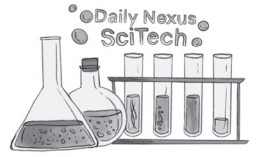
These losses dropped the Gauchos from No. 8 to No. 9 in the Big West Conference.

The Gauchos will play their last regular-season game with No. 11 UC San Diego on April 16 at 6 p.m. UC Santa Barbara beat UC San Diego earlier this season 3-2; the Tritons hold a current record of 3-6.



Men's Volleyball celebrates senior night, recognizing Joe Wallace, Andreas Schuetz, Ben Pearson and Owen Loncar.

# SCIENCE & TECH



## What “Hoppers” gets right about sci-fi animation, environmentalism and the science of consciousness



Roxanna Reid  
Science Editor

In the past week or so, it feels like I'm the last person on campus who still hasn't seen “Project Hail Mary.” The space odyssey starring Ryan Gosling has just surpassed \$500 million in global box office revenue – securing its status among the highest-grossing science fiction films of all time – and earned a “Certified Fresh” 94% on Rotten Tomatoes. But tied on the Tomatometer is Disney Pixar’s “Hoppers,” an animated sci-fi movie marketed toward younger audiences and overshadowed by Gosling’s star power.

For non-Disney Adults who monitor Pixar releases less closely, “Hoppers” follows animal-fanatic undergraduate student Mabel who must defend the natural landscape of her childhood home from the rapidly expanding nearby metropolis. In order to do so, she seizes control of classified technology to transfer her own consciousness (“hop”) into a hyperrealistic animatronic beaver. As Mabel butts heads with a charismatic yet self-concerned mayor (who looks distractingly similar to Governor Gavin Newsom), she enters the animal kingdom to take back nature from urbanization: gaining cross-species communication abilities, forming enemies and alliances, and accidentally inciting a revolution among beavers along

the way.

Albeit a children’s film, “Hoppers” offers an interesting inquiry: Could human consciousness seriously be transferable into an animal? The idea sounds like purely science fiction, but “transhumanism” – a philosophical and scientific movement that envisions a future where human abilities are augmented by technology – is recurrent in discourse and research around artificial intelligence (AI).

Moreover, consciousness itself is a hot topic for researchers at UC Santa Barbara. The M.E.T.A. Lab explores the capacity for consciousness of different species and employs signal analysis of electrical activity to explore concurrent independent streams of human consciousness. Recent findings by the SAGE Center for the Study of the Mind suggest that both synaptic connections and rhythmic “brain wave” oscillations are necessary for higher cognition, while ongoing research by Professor Michael Miller reveals full integration of the brain’s two hemispheres can be sustained by only a partial fragment of the corpus callosum’s nerve bundles.

Beyond our institution, research into transition periods between states of consciousness is approaching milestones that could bring the technology from “Hoppers” into the domain of reality. Challenging previous

conceptions of “conscious” and “unconscious” as binary, new research suggests that consciousness exists as a broader spectrum of states: This includes consciousness disconnected from our surroundings such as in sleep as well as “connected consciousness,” defined by environmental awareness.

Promoting environmental awareness, in a more literal sense, is the purpose of the film. But can animated films like “Hoppers” promote pro-environmental behavior for modern audiences whose contact with nature is limited?

According to a recent study, film is a promising pathway towards positive widespread environmental outcomes. Environmental films have several characteristics that allow them to overcome audience resistance to conservation – humor, immersion and appearing non-persuasive in intent – an audience member’s attitude and beliefs can be altered as they enter the world of an animated film.

This phenomenon of transportation via animation was notably achieved by the animator Hayao Miyazaki of Studio Ghibli, who remains renowned for his unique “ecophilosophy” – a synthesis of ethics and aesthetics in the captivating landscapes of movies like “Castle in the Sky” or “Princess Mononoke.” Through hand-drawn, frame-by-frame animation, Miyazaki

aimed to spark reflection on the “interrelatedness and interdependence of natural systems, both living and nonliving” and to “teach children to appreciate the beauty of the world.”

While “Hoppers” was produced using advanced 3D computer animation techniques (with a much higher carbon impact) in lieu of traditional animation resembling Ghibli films, it shares a goal of promoting interaction between film and environmental thought. Fittingly, director Daniel Chong cited the Studio Ghibli film “Pom Poko” as an inspiration, which tells the story of a troupe of raccoons who band together to defend their home from urban expansion. “Pom Poko” is rooted in Japanese folklore of animals who appear human, and both films alternate between two animation styles in their portrayal of animals: The beavers and raccoons appear “wild” from the vantage point of human characters and vividly anthropomorphic when communicating with each other.

The beaver dialogue in this film is not, of course, the most accurate portrayal of animal communication systems. But Mabel’s effort to bridge communication with the animals around her reflects a growing scientific interest in inter-species communication technologies, enabled by innovations in bioacoustic monitoring and

natural language processing.

Mabel (in her human form, at least) mirrors a characterization of Gen Z activism that’s abundant in media: highly politically engaged, yet reliant on technology to disrupt power structures. These characters are often portrayed through a satirical tone to criticize modern activism as performative by nature. In “Hoppers” however, Mabel’s radical eco-consciousness qualifies her as the film’s unlikely hero and promotes individualism as an effective means to achieve environmental progress.

Other environmental films – especially for young audiences – often exhaust this “unlikely hero” trope in stories that feel reductive, overstating individual impact while overlooking the influence of larger systems. Hoppers, by contrast, pairs individual responsibility with an awareness of the authority of organizations and governments in conservation.

Pixar has a long-standing history of environmentalism via thematic engagement and cautionary science fiction storytelling, and the impact of environmental activism can be effectively amplified by animation. In the shadow of another great science fiction blockbuster (no shade, Ryan Gosling), this silly beaver movie is still a must-watch for any undergrad with a soft spot for nature – simply put, “Hoppers” was pretty dam good.

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# LA VISTA

## Como la autonomía agraria y la autosubsistencia protege del capitalismo

**Graham Neiman**  
*Escritor para La Vista*

Hoy en día, nos encontramos en una situación de dependencia casi total del capitalismo.

Todo lo que comemos, llevamos y usamos para las actividades diarias no solo lo compramos nosotros, sino que pasa por un proceso de comercialización en todo lo que procede su compra.

Esta dependencia tampoco es ningún accidente, sino que representa el proceso inevitable de la consolidación del capitalismo.

El capitalismo y sus partidarios tienen la tarea constante de subordinar a todas las actividades humanas y productivas bajo la lógica del mercado.

Leandro Vergara-Camus en su artículo Globalización, tierra, resistencia y autonomía: el EZLN y el MST, describe este proceso en el campo mexicano.

Usa el ejemplo específico de la subordinación del campo latinoamericano bajo las lógicas capitalistas.

Sobre todo después de las olas fuertes del neoliberalismo, observa cómo "El agronegocio nacional y transnacional" y sus prácticas más modernas y mecanizadas se han vuelto dominantes y "el número de pequeños y medianos productores rentables se ha reducido drásticamente".

Lo que resulta es una crisis de supervivencia, en que la dominación del capitalismo sobre el campo "transforma la competencia en un imperativo para la supervivencia de los productores".

Es decir, participar en el capitalismo nacional y transnacional ahora es obligatorio.

El mecanismo más controversial de este proceso

es la privatización de la tierra en México, el cual pasó en el 1992, cuando se quitaron las leyes agrarias que habían sido implementadas después de la revolución, y en su lugar se solidificó el nuevo status quo neoliberal.

Sin embargo, el neoliberalismo tiene muchas formas de consolidar su implementación, por ejemplo la dependencia en las semillas comercializadas que aumentó después de la implementación del TLCAN.

Las semillas anuales y de modificación genética conectan aún más a los productores agrícolas al agronegocio transnacional, ya que reemplaza las prácticas de usar las propias semillas, y obliga la compra a los negocios transnacionales, los cuales tienen monopolios de sus semillas.

Ahora, los productores

están dependientes del capitalismo para producir sus cosechas, y por eso están obligados a operar bajo las lógicas del mercado.

La privatización de la tierra y de las semillas ha hecho que la producción orientada hacia el mercado se haya vuelto necesaria, y muchos productores ahora se encuentran en una posición de dependencia.

Aunque esta dependencia es producto de factores históricos dominantes, no quiere decir que sea inevitable ni permanente.

Reemplazar esta dependencia con autonomía, entonces, será la tarea de cualquier grupo que trabaje para la liberación.

Por eso, no es sorprendente que el movimiento Zapatista haya tomado medidas para proteger la autonomía agraria de sus áreas de operación.

Frente a esta dependencia y sus riesgos, hay muchas prácticas que dan un cierto "refugio" del capitalismo.

Estas prácticas incluyen sobre todo la autosubsistencia, en que los productores producen para su propio uso, y no se encuentran obligados a participar en el comercio.

Otras actividades económicas importantes son el trueque, el préstamo y el intercambio según necesidades, ya que promueve la "diversificación de la producción, la reducción del uso de agroquímicos y la creación de microproyectos colectivos", lo cual se prioriza el autoconsumo y reduce "al mínimo la necesidad de dinero".

Lo que hacen estas estrategias es crear un espacio fuera del capitalismo y crean una seguridad para

los que las practican.

La enajenación de la tierra, además de las experiencias con autonomía basada en el control sobre la tierra, para los campesinos en esta zona "les han hecho valorar que tener acceso a la tierra les permite mayor control sobre sus vidas".

Y esta meta, al fin de cuentas, es lo que busca cada movimiento libertario: más control sobre nuestras vidas, y menos dominación por parte de las fuerzas opresivas.

Más allá de movimientos, estas prácticas, de crear espacios y actividades fuera del capitalismo se pueden practicar al día a día, aunque no sean con el mismo alcance.

Invito al lector a pensar en cuales actividades en su vida podrían crear una separación entre ellos su dependencia al capitalismo, aunque sean solo en un ámbito específico.



CORTESÍA DE WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## La importancia de escribir diarios personales en nuestra vida

**Ana Ramirez Cermeno**  
*Editora para La Vista*

Los diarios que escribimos sobre nuestra vida son una forma muy importante de expresarnos y también de sentirnos bien con nosotros mismos.

A través de la escritura podemos poner en palabras lo que sentimos, lo que pensamos y lo que vivimos cada día.

Siento que muchas veces la gente piensa que escribir un diario es una pérdida de tiempo o algo sin importancia, pero en realidad es todo lo contrario.

Es una manera de desahogarnos, reflexionar y expresar nuestras emociones sin miedo a ser juzgados.

Escribir un diario nos permite ser honestos con nosotros mismos. En la vida diaria, a menudo no tenemos el espacio o el tiempo para hablar abiertamente sobre lo que sentimos, ya sea

tristeza, felicidad, estrés o agradecimiento.

Sin embargo, cuando escribimos, podemos liberar todo eso de una forma segura y personal.

No necesitamos explicaciones ni opiniones de otras personas, sólo nuestras propias palabras y pensamientos.

Además, los diarios también son recuerdos y recordatorios que marcan nuestra vida.

Cada página se convierte en un capítulo de nuestra historia personal.

Con el tiempo, podemos volver a leer lo que escribimos y darnos cuenta de cuánto hemos cambiado, qué hemos aprendido y cómo hemos crecido como personas.

Es como tener una línea del tiempo de nuestra vida emocional y personal.

Otra cosa importante es que escribir un diario nos ayuda a organizarnos mentalmente.

Cuando ponemos nuestros

pensamientos en papel, muchas veces entendemos mejor lo que estamos viviendo.

A veces estamos confundidos o tenemos muchas emociones al mismo tiempo, pero escribir nos ayuda a aclarar nuestras ideas y a ver las situaciones desde otra perspectiva.

Especialmente a mí, escribir me ayuda a seguir adelante.

Cada día tiene una historia diferente, con momentos buenos y momentos difíciles.

Al escribir, puedo reflexionar sobre lo que viví y también recordar todo lo que tengo que agradecer.

Para mí, en lo personal es una forma de conectar con Dios y reconocer todo lo que Él me ayuda a lograr en mi vida. Esa gratitud me da fuerza para continuar, incluso en los días más difíciles.

También siento que escribir un diario me ayuda a valorar más los pequeños momentos.

A veces estamos tan ocupados que no nos damos

cuenta de las cosas simples que hacen la vida especial, como una conversación, una sonrisa o un logro personal.

Pero cuando escribo, puedo detenerme y apreciar todo eso con más calma.

Para mí en lo personal escribir un diario no es solo escribir palabras en una hoja.

Es un proceso personal que nos ayuda a crecer, a sanar y a entendernos mejor.

Es una forma de guardar

emociones, pensamientos y recuerdos que forman parte de quienes somos.

Aunque algunas personas no lo vean importante, para muchos es una herramienta valiosa que nos acompaña en nuestro desarrollo personal y emocional.

No dejes de escribir tus diarios si es una manera en la que te sientes feliz haciéndolo, solo se tu no cambies, por los demás.



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# ARTSWEEK



## Disclosure is gone, dance on: Brother duo takes on Santa Barbara Bowl



COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA BOWL

Disclosure hit the Santa Barbara Bowl on Tuesday, April 7 and Wednesday, April 8 before making their way to Coachella.

**Stella Mullin**  
Artsweek Editor

It's no secret: It's Coachella season. Amid the excitement around the desert festival, English electronic music duo Disclosure stopped by the Santa Barbara Bowl on Tuesday, April 7 and Wednesday, April 8 as a pitstop on their way out to Indio. Consisting of brothers Howard and Guy Lawrence, Disclosure evoked a flock of concert-goers donning glitter-covered outfits.

The brothers opened with "F for You" and "When a Fire Starts to Burn," two tracks off their 2013 album "Settle." Even 13 years after the album's release, the crowd knew every word, eager that the duo played well-loved songs. Bubbles and smoke swirled around the stage and pit area.

"Settle," the duo's debut album, made up most of the setlist for the evening. In an era where musicians aim to play their newer music at live shows, it was refreshing and satisfying to see Disclosure play what they are most known for. And "Settle" isn't just about popularity — it was also nominated for Best Dance/Electronic Album at the 2014 Grammy Awards.

Guy Lawrence, the older of the two, addressed the crowd before really jumping into the set.

"You know usually, at this point, I'm so used to saying 'It's been a long time.' But you know what it actually hasn't ... it's blowing my mind right now that there are so many people here again," Lawrence said.

Disclosure came to the Bowl in September of 2025 and is already back. Throughout the concert, Lawrence kept making comments about Santa Barbara's turnout — despite playing not even seven months ago, the April shows were still sold out. It was not hard to see that Santa Barbara clearly loves Disclosure.

After "Holding On," Lawrence was met with excited screaming. To the backdrop of girls on shoulders and neon lasers, Lawrence hyped up the audience.

"We want to make sure that this Tuesday feels like a fucking Friday night," he said before moving into "White Noise."

The brothers then played their newest song and a deviation from their well-loved, well-known sound. Released in March 2026, "The Sun Comes Up Tremendous" features rare vocals from Howard Lawrence, the younger of the two. The song is on the slower side, vocals set over a funky bass line. As they played the song, a variety of different biomes and seasons moved on the screen, perhaps mirroring the underlying message of the song — the chaos of life.

Continuing with newer music, "Deeper," featuring Leon Thomas and released in December 2025, played in front of the ebb and flow of bioluminescent waves on stage. The neon blue lit up the Bowl and the crowd rose with the duo as a jellyfish swam to the surface. The track features bubbly, poppin' synths, the water bubbles — a perfect pairing.

Unlike other house music artists, Disclosure does not only mix and sample songs, but also writes their own. It was refreshing to see them include real instruments (versus simply a deck and synth) and at times, the brothers faced each other center stage while playing.

Following the two new tracks, Disclosure slowly started working back to 2013, but not quite yet. "She's Gone, Dance On" dropped in spring of 2024, but it fits right in with their older music. It's the perfect dance song, hence the title, and the duo moved through a galaxy on the screen.

On the newer music, Lawrence said they were experimenting

with different sounds.

"I think everyone should know this version, as a genre, as 'what the fuck is this?' What we'd like to do now, though, is a nice old friend and tested, just trusty old friend," Lawrence said before asking the crowd to turn on their flashlights.

During "Help Me Lose My Mind," the Santa Barbara Bowl lit up — with phone flashlights, not screens. Mirroring the excited crowd, the stage screen was also speckled with little white dots, while the rest of the venue was dark.

With a new trend of "2026 is 2016," Disclosure's song "Latch" has made its way back into pop culture discourse (although it never fully left). Despite its release in 2013, it was a pivotal song of the 2016 era. While the song played, no pair of eyes dared to look away from the stage.

The duo brought the brass back out with "Tondo," trumpeters and saxophonists surrounding the brothers on stage. The track samples Eko Roosevelt, a Cameroon artist who sings in Batanga, the traditional language of Cameroon, Africa. As the night headed toward conclusion, "Santa Barbara" flashed in neon block lettering on the screen.

Disclosure ended the night with "You & Me," opening and closing the show with songs off "Settle." They seemed to be paying homage to the album that started it all for them, and the crowd sang and danced to every word.

"Peace and love Santa Barbara, see you soon," said Lawrence as the duo exited the stage.

It is not hard to believe that they will, in fact, be back soon. Their show was a treat for all and, even if you do not think you know Disclosure, you have probably unknowingly hummed the words to a few of their songs.



COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA BOWL

One half of Disclosure, Howard Lawrence, frequently addressed the audience throughout the evening.



COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA BOWL

Second half of Disclosure, Guy Lawrence, shared a rare vocal performance in their new song, "The Sun Comes Up Tremendous."



COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA BOWL

Guy Lawrence moved between a drum kit and center stage throughout the night.



COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA BOWL

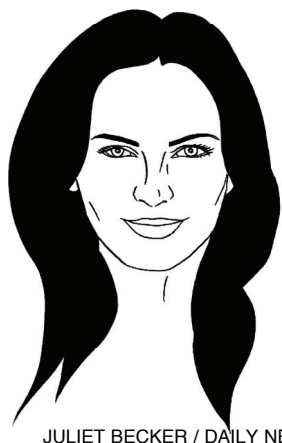
Disclosure brought out sparkly outfits, pashminas and funky sunglasses — outfit staples for the house music duo.

# COLUMNISTS

## sex and the community

### Empowering or desperate?

#### *Isla Vistans on: women approaching men*



JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

Diana Paradise  
*Sexpert*

“Holy shit, you’re bold!” my friend proclaimed after I told her about one of my recent escapades.

I had been imbibing at a local bar for a few hours and enjoying the view of a particularly attractive employee. Tapping into my natural prowess and liquid courage, I went up to him as I was leaving and simply said, “Hey, are you single?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Could I get your number?”

Obviously, the answer was yes and I skipped away gleefully. I didn’t think much of the interaction until several of my girlfriends were shocked I could do such a thing. Apparently, approaching men is still not accepted by a large portion of the population.

I sought out the opinions of several Isla Vistans to get a true pulse of what the people think about women approaching men.

I began with my good friend from high school who has had a fabulous Isla Vista dating history before settling down

with her now-boyfriend.

“If a man wanted a woman, he would approach her. I support women making a small step to push the relationship forward but if the man noticed you, him not approaching you is a sign you shouldn’t either most of the time.”

third-year communication and data science double major Princess Pollyanna said.

Now, I understand this perspective. I think that this comes closest to the classic dating narrative: A man should court a woman while she plays “hard to get.” If this sounds like it’s rooted in a culture of purity and misogyny, it is. But what isn’t?

This represents a more “traditional” relationship dynamic where the man takes initiative, pursues the woman and blah blah blah provider masculine energy, whatever you people are calling it nowadays.

As a woman, if you want a relationship where you’re chased, wined and dined and eventually offered a ring, then this makes sense for you. A

man who takes initiative in the first approach will be more likely to act in such a way.

This got me thinking: The way that one feels about the initial approach is usually how they feel about relationships as a whole. I consulted my go-to male correspondent for the column about this topic.

“I think if a woman approached me, I would think it’s weird. Some guys dream of that but I think it’s because they’re too scared. I think if she’s bold like that off the bat, we’d butt heads. It’s like the friend that always tries to take aux from you, it’s annoying.”

third-year economics major Cockey Correspondent said.

For such angry feminists like myself, the dating process looks a bit different. I a) get approached quite frequently and b) don’t feel the need to be pursued. I don’t feel the need to play “hard to get” and don’t believe that a man spoiling you initially is any indication of a good connection.

In a more hopeful sense, in many cases, the only thing standing between you and your

soulmate (or your next great fuck) is a confident approach. I consulted another one of my friends with whom I share this opinion.

“Approaching a guy makes me feel confident and fulfilled. If I see a guy who I find attractive, what’s the harm in approaching him? The worst he can say is ‘no.’”

third-year political science major Spunky Sarah said.

In fact, the aforementioned hot bartender sang my praises for approaching him and asking for his number. He gave me “kudos” for being straightforward and confident. Considering this happened on a recent date, you can infer that my approach was more than successful.

Granted — the elephant in the room must be addressed. Most people’s greatest fear when approaching someone is the possibility of being rejected and the consequential shame or embarrassment.

My greatest advice for anyone of any gender in this scenario is basic, but effective: play within your league. Is the person who you want to approach as

attractive as the people who typically approach you? Do you ever get approached? Does the person seem to show any sort of interest in you?

If the answer to any of the above questions is “no,” then you likely should not approach the person in which you are interested.

Additionally, less is frequently more. As the story at the beginning of this article suggests, I didn’t try to pull some crazy, sexy move on this guy (especially since he was at work and I didn’t want to be a creep). Being direct and honest about what you want and approaching confidently will likely lead to more success than trying to strike up a random conversation.

Plus, being direct allows your target to reject you appropriately if they aren’t interested. It’s much easier to say, “No, you cannot have my number” than it is to try to awkwardly put an end to a conversation with which you are forced to engage.

In general, I think that online dating has significantly eroded the art of the in-person phone number exchange. If you find someone attractive, you should go up to them!

It always works out for me.

*Diana Paradise wants to approach you soon.*

## What we keep wearing: Festival fashion

Arna Churiwala  
*Fashionista*

Flowy skirts trailing across bike paths. Crochet tops paired with low-rise jeans and worn-in leather belts. Layered gold necklaces and beaded chokers catching the sun between classes. Someone walks past in a sheer blouse and knee-high boots and for a second, it feels less like a Thursday afternoon and more like the desert in April.

It’s Coachella season — in Indio, California and on our campus.

Over the years, Coachella has become less about the music and more about the outfits. What started as an indie music festival slowly evolved into a fashion spectacle, where getting dressed is part of the performance. The looks are documented, curated and uploaded before the first set even starts.

Somehow, those bohemian outfits don’t stay on Instagram. They make their way into our daily lives.

Coachella style, as we know it, has a very specific origin story. In the early 2010s, it leaned into indie sleaze and Tumblr-era effortlessness — cutoffs, band

tees and messy hair. But by the mid-2010s, something shifted.

Around 2014 to 2016, Coachella fashion hit its peak identity. Think Vanessa Hudgens in layered jewelry and flowing skirts, Kendall Jenner in crochet and bralettes, the Hadids in mini shorts, boots and body chains. Flower crowns, fringe, coin belts and kimono layers became the unofficial uniform.

It was carefree, chaotic and effortlessly feminine in a way that felt both styled and spontaneous. That sun-soaked, bohemian version of Coachella is what people still picture.

And now, a decade later, it’s back.

The 2016 revival is everywhere, but it looks a little different this time. Low-rise shorts have returned, but they’re paired with fitted tube tops and cleaner silhouettes. Sheer tops and bralettes are still in rotation, but paired with simple bottoms. Maxi skirts flow the same way, but in soft neutrals and without quite as many layers competing for attention.

If 2016 Coachella was about throwing everything on at once, 2026 Coachella is about editing.

That shift has a lot to do

with the way trends move now. TikTok has turned festival dressing into its own genre of content. “Get ready with me” videos, outfit mood boards and hyper-specific aesthetics — “desert fairy,” “boho clean girl,” “model off-duty” — have replaced the illusion of effortlessness.

Outfits aren’t accidental anymore. They’re planned, filmed, posted and repeated.

At the same time, high fashion has been quietly feeding into this revival. At Chloé, recent collections have leaned into flowing chiffon dresses, low-slung belts and soft, romantic layering that feels it was pulled straight from a festival wardrobe. Isabel Marant continues to build on her signature effortless aesthetic — think slouchy boots, embroidered tops and barely-there blouses that feel undone in a calculated way.

What’s interesting is how these influences meet in the middle, somewhere between runway refinement and TikTok spontaneity. What once felt carefree is reframed into

something more controlled.

But Coachella style has always come with a more complicated layer, too.

The “boho” aesthetic that defines festival dressing doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Many of its most recognizable elements — stacked jewelry, ornate textiles and pashminas — draw from South Asian, Indigenous and other global traditions. Over time, these pieces have been repackaged into something vague and aesthetic, often stripped of their original cultural meaning.

In the context of Coachella, that flattening can feel especially prominent. What once held cultural significance becomes part of a reproducible outfit formula.

That doesn’t mean people shouldn’t engage with these styles, but it does raise a question: What does it mean to wear something rooted in culture as a trend?

On our campus, that question feels a little more immediate.

The reality is, most students aren’t buying full festival wardrobes. They’re remixing what they already have. A thrifted skirt. A hand-me-down piece of jewelry. A crochet top made by a friend. The “Coachella look” becomes something smaller, more personal and less performative.

You see it in subtle ways, like layered necklaces over a basic tank or a sheer blouse thrown over jeans instead of bikini bottoms. It’s festival-inspired, but still grounded in everyday life.

Coachella style is no longer about dressing for a specific place. It’s about capturing a feeling — something a little romantic, a little undone and a little free — and translating it



JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

into daily life.

Of course, there’s a fine line between inspired and overdone. The difference often comes down to restraint.

Instead of layering five statement pieces, pick one. Let a single accessory carry the outfit. Balance something soft and flowy with something structured. Keep the base simple, and let the details do the work. Even something as small as a silk scarf tied in your hair or around your bag can shift the entire look.

That’s what makes the current revival feel different from its 2016 predecessor. It’s more self-aware. Less about excess, more about editing. Less about escaping into a fantasy, more about incorporating pieces of it into real life.

There’s something about Coachella style that feels inherently escapist, even filtered through trends and time. It feels like a version of life that’s slower, warmer and more spontaneous, where getting dressed is playful again.

Maybe that’s why it keeps coming back. Even if the flower crowns stay in the past, the feeling doesn’t.

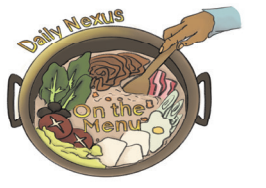
And while the desert is just a Pinterest mood board away, that feeling is easy to slip into — no wristband required.

*Arna Churiwala believes festival style shouldn’t be confined to the desert.*

COURTESY PHOTO / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



# ON THE MENU



## American fast food and chains through the eyes of a Brit



POLLY SYMES / DAILY NEXUS

Unfortunately, it's true what they say about Olive Garden: the best thing is, in fact, the breadsticks.



POLLY SYMES / DAILY NEXUS

View of In-N-Out Burger from my flatmate's car window, complete with its customary crossed palm trees.



POLLY SYMES / DAILY NEXUS

Not only was my Chipotle bowl quick to arrive, relatively cheap and very tasty, but the server filled the bowl to the brim — the portion covered me for two entire meals.

### Polly Symes Staff Writer

We are back with our second iteration of this series! Last time, I looked at American supermarkets through a British lens and this time, we're delving into American fast food.

Though the United States is a fascinating crucible of diverse culinary heritages, if you ask the average person (American or not) what first comes to mind as 'American food,' I'll bet you that they think of fast food. While not necessarily the healthiest, it's quick, cheap and (largely!) tasty.

In the two months I've been here, I've eaten more fast food than ever before (strictly for research purposes) which I shall now attempt to offer my honest thoughts on. In the following review, I will not be including either McDonald's or KFC, as they have been common in the United Kingdom for a long time.

#### 1) Chipotle

I was extremely impressed with Chipotle. I ordered the burrito bowl with carnitas, sour cream and cheese and it was delicious. Not only was it quick to arrive, relatively cheap and very tasty, but the server filled the bowl to the brim — the portion covered me for two

entire meals. Also, my body felt good after eating it — compared to other fast food chains, I felt that I had bought a surprisingly balanced meal from Chipotle that incorporated vegetables, protein, carbohydrates and, of course, flavor. My roommate informed me that Chipotle doesn't use anything frozen or from a tin, which reassures me that I made a wise choice.

#### 2) In-N-Out Burger

If I'm being honest, I'm putting In-N-Out Burger at number two just because I feel like if I don't, the Californians will come for me ... it has a very clear status as an iconic California fast food joint. I chose a cheeseburger, animal style (as advised), with animal style fries and a pink lemonade. It was tasty, and I think it would have been even better had I eaten it immediately, instead of waiting 15 minutes to drive home (the wait made the cheesy fries congeal somewhat).

#### 3) Wingstop

Wingstop: my hero. Wingstop was there for me after I completely lost it at a dayger and needed sustenance to replenish myself. This is potentially crazy of me, but I like the chicken plain, and I think they put way too much salt on the chips (or as Americans call it, fries)! But maybe that's just my unseasoned British palate

revealing itself. Anyway, thank you Wingstop for saving me in my post-dayger state.

#### 4) Subway

Okay, so Subway is very common in the U.K., but I'm including it because I have tried a new sandwich since moving to the U.S.: the meatball sub with marinara sauce and cheese. It gets a low ranking because this meal fully destroyed my outfit (I am not joking). I know I am responsible for my own choices, but how on earth does one eat a tomato sauce and meatball sandwich without getting said tomato sauce all over their trousers, socks and shoes, all while dropping the odd meatball in the process? I would not know ... Yes, the sandwich was tasty, but it was a humiliation ritual to eat. I won't be doing that again.

#### 5) Chick-fil-A

This random girl once raved to me about Chick-fil-A for a full 30 minutes, so that when I finally tried it, it was a bit of an anti-climax. As in, "this is it?" I bought a chicken sandwich with waffle fries, Chick-fil-A sauce and a Coke. It was ... meh? Sure, the fries were formed in an interesting shape, but other than that, it was just okay. Like with In-N-Out, I probably would have enjoyed it more had I eaten it immediately, but there was no space to loiter in the car park.

#### 6) Taco Bell

Okay, I'm a liar. I haven't been to Taco Bell since coming to the U.S. This is for one unfortunate reason; the first time I went to Taco Bell, I was 16 and thrilled because they had just opened one up in my hometown on the south coast of England. I remember I ordered the chicken quesadilla, and it just looked so flat and sad, it tasted sad and that made me sad. But realistically, I will probably go again, strictly for research purposes, in order to compare the U.K. and the U.S. Taco Bell.

#### 7) Olive Garden

I am aware that Olive Garden is a chain restaurant, not a fast-food chain. But I feel like it has a similar 'icon' status as some of the fast-food chains I've spoken about, so I'm including it in this review. Sue me.

Unfortunately, it's true what they say about Olive Garden: the best thing is, in fact, the breadsticks. But I was intrigued to discover that breadsticks in the U.S. mean actual sticks of bread, like mini baguettes — in the U.K., a breadstick is much thinner and has the crunchy texture of a cracker. You Americans always take things so literally!

Looking at the Olive Garden menu did make me laugh, as I could spot approximately

two dishes that were actually Italian (I have completed chef training in Italian cuisine). But I was still prepared for the food to surprise me, as I know that Italian-American fusion is famous for its exciting takes on classics. I ordered a raspberry lemonade, the pasta e fagioli soup for a starter, followed by the eggplant (it's aubergine!) parmigiana. The soup lacked seasoning, and the parmigiana tasted oily and underwhelming (I'm sorry, Olive Garden).

Perhaps the funniest part was that the waitress did not understand my accent at all. In the end, I had to put on an American accent to order my food, which made my flatmates laugh to no end.

#### Concluding Thoughts

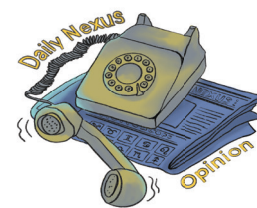
That about wraps up my views on American fast food and chains.

Though I have not held back in sharing my opinions of how some of these places underwhelmed me, chances are, I will eat at all of them again.

There is a reason why American fast food is famous: it hits the spot when you're tired, sad, drunk, uninspired or broke ... sometimes all of the above.

Thanks are owed to the land of the free and the home of Chipotle for enabling this review.

# OPINION



## Empty pews and oceanic feelings: Gen Z's search for a secular god

Sneha Cheenath  
Staff Writer

When I was 14 years old, I volunteered at my church's annual charity auction. Among baked goods, various artwork and vouchers for local businesses, a reserved parking spot and front-row seats in the pews for Christmas Eve Mass was up for sale. I remember thinking this was genius — my family was always sure to arrive at Mass at least 30 minutes in advance to secure a spot. Not even a good spot, just space for four people to sit together in a pew.

This Christmas, just seven years later, my dad arrived at Christmas Eve Mass 10 minutes late and he was able to find parking and a seat in the front half of the church without issue.

This isn't a story unique to my hometown. Pews are emptying, churches are closing. It's become undeniable — America is secularizing.

Admittedly, it's a bit bizarre for me to be raising alarm bells about this because I'm not particularly religious.

I grew up in a church-going family, and I spent my most formative years in Sunday Mass and weekly youth ministry. But as we got older, life got in the way and we eventually stopped going to church. One by one, my parents and older sister fell out of their faith, but I clung to mine through adolescence, insisting that my mom continue to take me to youth ministry, even if we weren't going to Sunday Mass anymore.

New York Times Opinion writer Jessica Grose said in her five-part column on the secularization of America that many shifted away from Christianity because they didn't agree with the political leanings of the church. And while I don't doubt that that's true, it wasn't my story. I went to a Bay Area Catholic church that was, all things considered, pretty woke — they were expressly pro-gay, had a big focus on community service and tended to stray away from conversations about abortion or contraception. So, while I knew that considering myself Catholic contradicted my politics, I was rarely confronted by it.

The reason I lost interest in the church wasn't because I was struggling to invest in the community, but rather that I had invested more than I realized.

I felt very strongly that there was power to communal worship; it was impossible for me to not feel it when we prayed together. That took me much further than my belief in Jesus Christ or any of the other particularities of religion.

Author Fredrik Backman, who's probably the closest thing I have to a spiritual leader these days, captured this feeling quite well in his latest book, "My Friends": the ever-contrarian Joar exclaimed, "I don't even think all the people who go to church every Sunday believe in

God. I think they just need company. To feel that they belong to a group." And the sensitive hero of the story responded, "But I don't think that means that God doesn't exist, Joar. I think maybe that's what God is."

I probably wouldn't have agreed with that in 2019, but I did in 2020, when the magic of gathering in physical space was taken away altogether. I realized that for me personally, the magic was more in the church than in Christ himself, so I slowly fell out of my faith.

There are, of course, many other kinds of communal gatherings that feel divine — Isla Vista is full of them. However, a church community has many qualities that are extremely difficult to find anywhere else. As Grose wrote, "A soccer team can't provide spiritual solace in the face of death, it probably doesn't have a weekly charitable call and there's no sense of connection to a heritage that goes back generations." Not to say there haven't been attempts — Grose recently wrote about one, the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) annual conference, where scientists, survivors and grievors gather to discuss the under-rated thin line between life and death: "[I]t's an open question whether the organization can grow to serve as a substitute for a mainstream religious community for more than a select few. When you do not have the connective tissue of a church building or the Old Testament, it is that much harder to maintain an ongoing spiritual relationship." IANDS is aiming to bridge that gap by increasing their online presence.

This lack of organization also severely hinders the political power of the non-religious. As sociologist Mayer Zald explained, organized religion unites people in routine and belief, which means religious leaders have a passionate audience — spiritually bonded and ready to

mobilize. If America is secularizing across partisan lines, the resulting power imbalance is non-random and highly consequential.

But yes, before 2020 I was deeply enchanted by the figure of the church. It made me feel connected to my family in India, who had been practicing Christianity for generations. I was obsessed with my youth group leaders, who were some of the only adults in my life I could really talk to other than my

the air that I could feel more strongly within the walls of a church.

I remember that feeling vividly, and I'm thankful for the comfort that it gave me in those times. But in the years since, my Christian faith subsided once again. I don't feel a strong connection to the physical church anymore, but this sense that there was something abstract and eternal behind the sky — that has remained.

This was a confusing in-between, and I couldn't really put it into words until I read "Civilization and Its Discontents" for a comparative literature class. In it, Sigmund Freud describes his friend's theory that religious energy is derived from an "oceanic feeling," an inherent sense of connectedness to all natural things and an awareness of an eternal force: "One may, he thinks, rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion."

I'm not here to argue whether you, personally, should or shouldn't have this feeling. Freud, to my disappointment, thought that an inability to detach yourself from the universe is correlated with "infantile helplessness" and "limitless narcissism." In Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World," a book I can't help but bring up, John "the Savage" insists "it is natural to believe in God when you're alone — quite alone, in the night, thinking about death." A sentiment that implies a completely secularized society is unnatural, occurring only in a dystopia like that of the novel, where everyone is too numb and chronically occupied to have abstract thoughts about the nature of the universe.

The reports of America's "dechurching" may give the impression that we're approaching that dystopia, but I don't necessarily think that's the case. At least in my immediate circles, I've noticed an uptick in people of my generation reaching for alternate manifestations

of the divine.

The Women Center's choice for their fall Feminist Book Club was "The Witch Studies Reader," which is indicative of this trend in and of itself. But maybe more convincingly, the chapter "Religion and Magic through Feminist Lenses" cited a 2018 Pew Research Center study where 29% of respondents said they believed in astrology and 42% said they believed "spiritual energy is energy located in physical things like mountains, trees, crystals." The authors concluded, "Not everyone doing tarot or astrology fully embraces magic as cosmology. But engagement in such practices is one of many indications that secularization is not the linear and progressive force theorized by Western social scientists and many second-wave feminists."

The chapter continues that academics should abandon their binary perspective on religion versus magic, and I would argue that believers and non-believers should do the same.

A few weeks ago, I was chatting with a man selling crystals on State Street and I asked if he could feel their energy. He said he absolutely could, and that if I held one in my hand and meditated I would feel it too. I think it's very likely that he would feel something similar if he were holding a Rosary instead, as would Catholics with a crystal.

I know that not everyone feels the need to channel their meditations into concrete objects or concepts of God, but it's clear that many do. Whether or not that energy has a supernatural power that actually stretches beyond the impact on our individual selves is wholly irrelevant, at least to me.

I recognize that many people take the particularities of their religions very seriously, and I don't mean to trivialize or disrespect that. But, at risk of overgeneralizing, people worship with similar methods across major religions: meditation, ritual, self-denial, song, etc. I think it's fair to argue that these practices have inherent power, while understanding that many practitioners truly believe they're also appealing to a specific higher power.

Although my attachment to my Catholic faith has waxed and waned, I've always found it rewarding to honor my oceanic feelings, and for that reason the growth of spirituality in the face of America's "dechurching" brings me hope. However, I think the individualization of our spiritual practices has great capacity for harm — on a personal, societal and political level. Moreover, I have no idea what a healthy spiritual community could even look like. I truly believe that answering that question is a definitional task of our generation.

*Sneha Cheenath hopes this article doesn't take her out of the running for next Pope.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF SNEHA CHEENATH

parents. And I felt a sense of power and solidarity when we raised our voices together in prayer.

However, community can't be all there is to it. Because until I was 15 years old, I would pray every single night before bed. That was something I found to be distinctly powerful, even though I was all alone.

My post-pandemic lack of spirituality was in large part because of the fact that I had never been faced with death or grief, so I didn't have a good reason to deeply consider other dimensions of life. That all changed my freshman year of college, when I lost someone very close to me. The only thing I could think to do was to go to church. And to my surprise, I found myself believing in God again. Not because I was taught to or because everyone around me did, but because in the face of immense grief, I genuinely didn't feel like I had any other choice. And I once again truly believed that there was something in

## Projecting nostalgia: The subtle genius of Justin Bieber's Coachella set

Lauren Chiou  
Artsweek Editor

Justin Bieber is the vocalist of our generation.

That might be construed as opinion, but to many it's an undeniable fact. At age 13, the Canadian singer was discovered on YouTube for his cover of "With You" by Chris Brown, where he sang sitting down on a couch, serenading a camera. His cover is simple, yet powerful — never had the digital age captured such raw talent from someone so young. He was destined for greatness.

From there, Justin Bieber became a force in popular culture. His name was doodled in notebooks and blown up on billboards. His face adorned T-shirts and hoodies, paparazzi followed him everywhere. "Beliebers" (the name of his fan base) swooned at his every move.

YouTube, the home of Bieber's fame, became his kingdom. Music video after music video captured the hearts of viewers everywhere. Interviews showed off his boyish

charm. It's impossible to reminisce on the 2010s without catching some Bieber fever.

And yet, his career quickly became marred with controversy. The world got to watch a young boy grow up in the spotlight, at the cost of his own well-being. Bieber's status as a heartthrob led to inappropriate interactions on stages and red carpets. In 2014, at age 19, he was arrested for drunk driving. Bieber fever turned into Bieber hate, and he spent early adulthood learning how to navigate the music industry under immense pressure.

In 2020, he candidly spoke about his struggles with mental health, saying "By 20, I made every bad decision you could have thought of and went from one of the most loved and adored people in the world to the most ridiculed, judged, and hated person in the world."

When Bieber was announced to be a 2026 Coachella headliner, the stakes were high. Fans speculated the throwbacks he would sing, the guests he'd bring out, the choreography that would

be performed. Since his years as a child star, Bieber has been known as a performer. His past performances are characterized by sideswept hair and flirtatious glances, wooing over the crowd with his undeniable charisma. At the biggest festival in the world, fans hoped he'd bring Bieber back, big time.

And he did bring back Bieber, in the best way possible. Except the star he brought back wasn't the one people expected. Bieber spent his Coachella performance showing fans exactly what he's been trying to get them to see his entire career: himself, and his undeniable, raw talent.

His performance featured a simple setup: a MacBook, YouTube Premium and a projector screen. Bieber went back to his roots, playing his old music videos and rewatching them with an audience that fell in love with him through that medium. He harmonized with his teenage self, mixing the young vocals with his now mature, stronger voice.

While some fans were dismayed by his minimalistic performance, Bieberchella operated with the full power of nostalgia. Bieber utilized his digital past to reconnect with fans in the present, putting on a performance far more intimate than any other headliner in years past. There's nothing like watching him sing along to the "Beauty and a Beat" music video. It's simple, powerful and, dare I say, genius.

In a moment unexpected to even the biggest Beliebers, he projected his 2025 stand-off with paparazzi at Coachella. While humorous, Bieber's plea to the paparazzi to leave him alone is almost heartbreaking. "It's not clocking to you that I'm standing on business" might be one of the most iconic phrases of 2025, but the crux of his rant tugs at the heart. At his core, he's a boy who was exposed to fame at an age much younger than one could handle. And now that he's a husband and a father, he has a simple request to exist as he is, peacefully.

Because for a man who has given his all, he's gotten relatively little back. Yes, Bieber is an incredibly successful musician with a catalogue of hits and an unbeatable impact on modern pop culture. But he grew up in the limelight with nowhere to hide and suffered the consequences.

Bieber's simplistic Coachella performance acts as almost a rebellion against the industry standards placed on him since his preteen years. He doesn't need crazy stage designs, elaborate dance moves, campy merch and a horde of fan girls. All Justin Bieber needs is his voice and his raw talent. He forced the Coachella crowd and viewers everywhere to remember and acknowledge that.

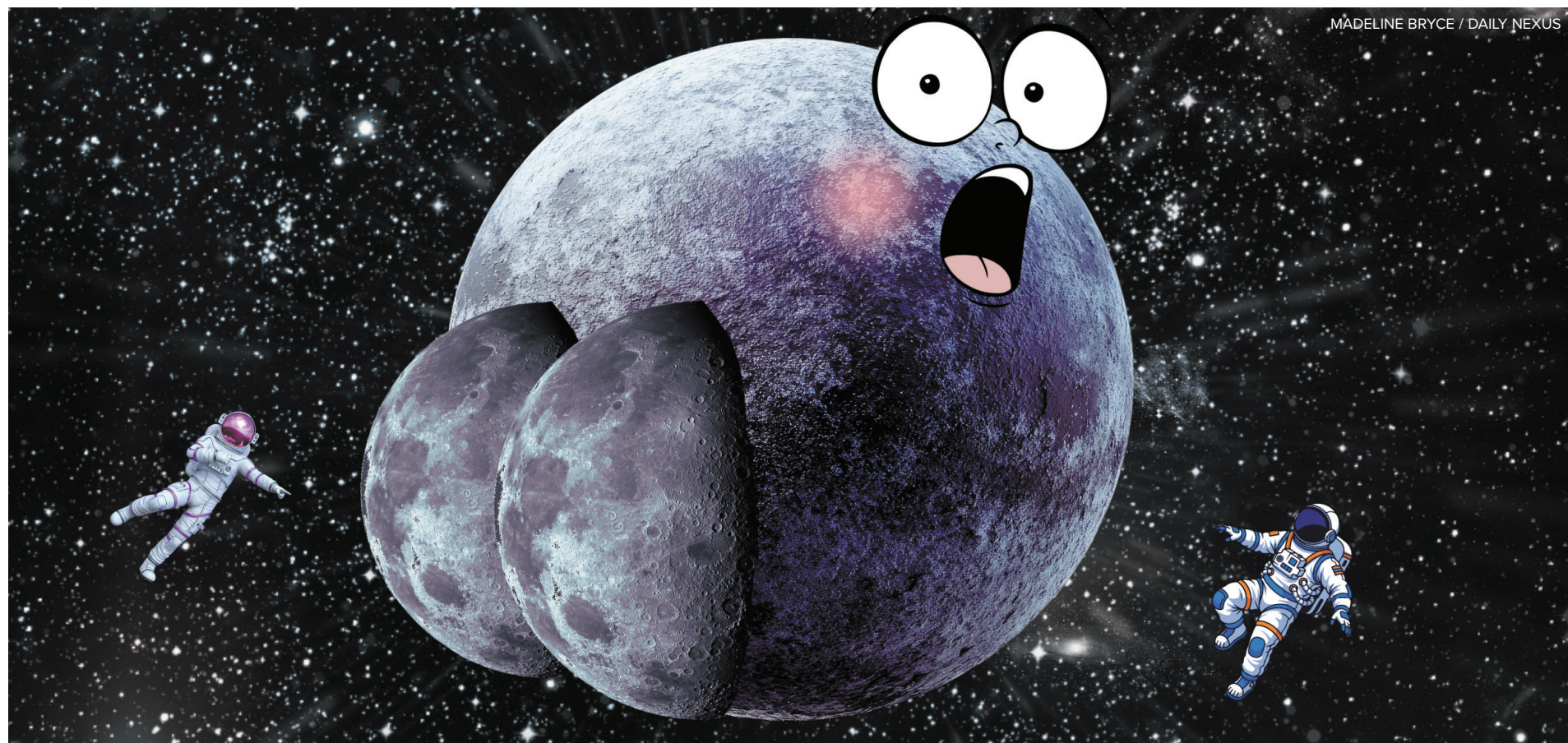
The power of nostalgia was felt by everyone watching, even Bieber himself. There's a moment when a now 32-year-old Bieber sings along to his breakout cover and smiles watching his 13-year-old self on screen — a homage to the journey it's taken him to get to where he is today.

*Lauren Chiou has Bieber fever and she hopes to never recover.*



# NEXUSTENTIALISM

It's Satire, Stupid.



MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS

## Mooned: Astronauts reach the back side of the moon, creating discourse regarding consent

Lucille My Balls  
*Consenting*

The mysterious “dark side of the Moon” has long been the topic of LSD-ridden rock bands and TikTok witches, but few have asked if the Moon even wants her dark side to be seen.

Since her discovery, the Moon has stayed steadfast in her boundaries; you can see it from the front but you may never hit it from the back. Many lunar scientists and anthropologists have attributed this preference to the Moon’s search for emotional

intimacy, arguing that the Moon tends to feel objectified when not looked in her metaphorical eyes.

However, just two weeks ago on April 1st, 2026, NASA disregarded the Moon’s centuries-old plea for privacy and sent Artemis II into a full lunar rotation – including her private back side. In turn, international discourse surrounding extra-terrestrial consent has been sparked.

Former TikTok witch and current activist Eileen Ulick (@cosmoconsent) has been particularly outspoken on this matter after taking a six-week

online Introduction to Feminist Studies course at her local community college.

“Why has there never been an expedition to the back side of the sun?” Ulick contended on TikTok live last night. “It’s no coincidence that the men at NASA respect the boundaries of the ‘masculine’ sun but not the clear boundaries of the ‘feminine’ moon,” she continued.

After clips of Ulick’s live went viral, and the public began putting pressure on NASA, President Donald Trump posted the following on x.com:

“The Artemis II expedition

has been the single GREATEST and MOST SUCCESSFUL space mission in the history of the world! Why are all the DERANGED liberals complaining when NASA already included TWO women? I LOVE THE MOON LIKE I LOVE WOMEN – WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT! President DONALD J. TRUMP!”

However, in a recently leaked video, President Trump was heard telling the NASA director to “grab the moon by her dark side.”

In response to this ongoing controversy, NASA released a statement begging everyone to

“leave them the fuck alone.” I guess engineering majors never get less awkward.

Attempting to prolong her TikTok fame, Eileen Ulick led a successful TikTok live in raising awareness for cosmic consent, ending her live with a powerful statement: “Her celestial body, her choice! Thank you for the roses!”

UPDATE: A GoFundMe has been launched to support the Moon’s legal fees following her sexual harassment lawsuit against NASA.

*Lucille My Balls wants to see the dark side of your moon...*



JULIET BECKER / DAILY NEXUS

## I lived it: My situationship with the Santa Barbara MTD

Joseph R. Biden  
*Heartbroken*

Never reliable. Lies about location. Always late. Never there for you when you need it. Always seen with other people.

Sound familiar? If you thought I was describing the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD), you thought correctly. Have you ever been invited by your situationship to a party, only to find them there making out with someone else? It feels pretty damn similar to when the 27 claims that it will pick you up at 3:32 p.m., but

drives right by.

What’s worse than relying on a man for a shoulder to cry on, only for him to shrug off your feelings? When you’ve been happy-hour-hopping downtown, wasted at the goddamn transit center and the 24X decides not to come that day.

Every once in a while, like men, you have to rely on the second best bus option to get you where you need to go. But seeing your first choice drive by is like seeing your #1 boyfriend while entangled with your lesser favorite. So embarrassing!

The thing about the MTD is:

when it’s bad, it’s so bad. Stranded downtown. Waiting indefinitely in the middle of Noleta with your groceries. Late to the bars because the bus left without you.

But, when it’s good, it’s so good. A true romance like none other. When the bus comes reliably, on time and in good condition, it can make your whole week.

I don’t know if I can handle the toxicity much longer. It’s not me, it’s you.

*Joseph R. Biden needs a fucking car.*



MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS

## Happy Couchella: I’m depressed ASF and can’t leave my house

Benjamin Epstein  
*Couch potato*

This time of year, many simpletons are engaging in “Coachella.” However, I am above that kind of unintellectual activity. Instead, I participate in Couchella, which is a far more refined experience meant for enlightened and depressed individuals such as myself.

The way I partake in Couchella is simple: I sit on my couch and never leave my house out of fear that I may have to talk to someone.

But, is there music? Yes! I listen to The Postal Service’s 2003 album “Give Up” on repeat. But, is there food? Yes! The four bags of black bean and quinoa chips I bought from Trader Joe’s aren’t going to eat themselves; that is physically impossible.

But, will Sabrina Carpenter be here? Probably not. However, it

is possible that she might walk into my house for some reason or another. However, even without Sabrina Carpenter, there is more than enough entertainment, like watching “The Pitt” while scrolling through Instagram on my phone.

You too can also take part in Couchella. All you need is chronic depression and a couch, or, if you don’t have a couch, you can make use of a bed, sofa, bean bag, large moss-covered rock, pile of mud, belly of a very large woodland creature or carpeted floor.

With Coachella, you have to be trapped in an environment with hundreds of sweaty people.


However, with Couchella, the only sweaty person you’re trapped with is yourself. That’s why, this year, I’m staying on the couch.

*Benjamin Epstein will be on Coachella main stage next year.*

Are you:

- ✓ Funny?
- ✓ Sexy?
- ✓ In need of us as your bosses?

**Come to orientation TONIGHT (4/16)**  
**under Storke Tower @ 6 p.m.**



◆ Google Gemini

# NOTES TO NAILED IT

Create a practice quiz covering the fall of the Roman Empire based on my class notes



HIST250.pdf  
PDF



Try Me!