

# SLOHS EXPRESSIONS

MARCH ISSUE 2017  
SLOHSEXPRESSIONS.COM



## Ivan Simon

*Ivan Simon is one of the most beloved and well-respected teachers on the San Luis Obispo High School campus. He attended UCLA, where he received an Undergraduate Degree in Psychology and later a Graduate Degree in English. Simon began his career as a teacher in 1983, joined the San Luis Obispo High School Staff in 1994, and currently teaches Advanced Placement 11 and 12 English.*

## EXPRESSIONS

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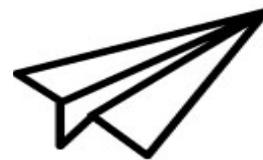
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March 2017

## March is Kindness Month

By sophomore Sabrina Marks

High school is a hectic time, I get it. You have homework, sports, college stuff, jobs, a social life, and much more to worry about. It's never going to be easy to manage these things, but would you believe me if I told you that, by adding one more item to your to-do list, it would make your life less stressful? Being kind to other people is an easy and effortless way to improve your life and the lives of others.

Showing compassion for other people could be as simple as picking up someone's pencil or smiling at somebody as they walk by. Yes, it's really that easy. You never know how much something so small can impact somebody else's day. By being kind, you draw other kind people to you, and this leads to healthier relationships with your friends and peers. In the long run, this will eliminate unnecessary drama and stress from your daily life.

Many scientific studies have shown that being empathetic and kind actually makes you physically healthier, too. After doing something kind, the brain releases certain hormones that lower blood pressure and protect your heart. These hormones also reduce inflammation in the body, slow aging, and may help you live longer.

When someone experiences an act of compassion, there is often a "pay it forward" effect, meaning kindness is contagious. If you want to help spread the love, this month REACH Club is promoting March Kindness Month. They are putting on activities around campus encouraging kindness and all the great stuff that comes with it. Give it a try; it's something easy you can do to feel good and make the world a better place.

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# Trump's Promise to the LGBTQ+ Community

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By Sawyer McSorley

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On January 20, President Donald Trump was sworn into office. Only four days later, he made the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning community a very big promise: Trump and his administration explained that he plans to upkeep the laws that went into effect during Barack Obama's presidency which pertain to LGBTQ+ rights.

Many are still skeptical about the validity of this statement due to the unpredictability of President Trump's actions in the past, but other members of the community all over the country took to social media to express their relief after hearing this news.

*Expressions* asked a few San Luis Obispo High School students what Trump's words mean to them.

"To me, it's a little bit of safety. It's that security to know that I won't have to sacrifice more of my life and many more

people won't have to fight for it again, because it's just a continuous battle. We've made so much progress and to take two steps backwards would be way worse," said senior Chase Gargano.

"If he didn't [protect LGBTQ+ rights], it would be kind of heartbreaking honestly, especially for youth. Like I'm going to college and my life is just starting, so it would be terrible to have that on my shoulders too," said Gargano.

Gargano's girlfriend, Lea Thompson, had a similar opinion.

"We're getting so far with the acceptance of lesbian and gay people, and being transgender is starting to become more prevalent as well as bisexuality and pansexuality... We're getting there, and I think [Trump's statement] is a good start," said Thompson.

They seemed to have a similar opinion to that of the National Football League who recently erased North Carolina off the list of candidates for hosting the Superbowl for keeping their laws against

letting transgender people use whichever bathroom they choose, currently threatening to do the same to Texas.

Junior Luca MacDougall felt less confident than Gargano and Thompson about his security.

"I don't feel confident at all in anything he says...The first time he ever even mentioned the LGBTQ+ community in a good light was at the [Republican] convention a year and a half after he started his campaign. That's too long," said MacDougall.

Many other people in the community share his opinion. To some students at SLOHS, his most recent words are very surprising after accepting a somewhat "anti-Gay" platform. Trump has promised to release his tax returns, but has not done so yet; on the other hand, he also promised to enact a travel ban and delivered. Because of these things, some are saying he is unpredictable, but members of the community are staying hopeful.

# Media Literacy in the United States

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By Zach Wise

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Many of us at San Luis Obispo High School read the news every day, accepting the things presented as the facts going on in the world. We do this, however, often without knowing the true reliability of these sources.

With all the political bias and various fake news outlets, often times the news we pick up ends up being not entirely correct or completely invalid. This is why being able to determine a news source's validity is so important.

"I look for something that's entertaining to read, like just skimming, and usually what's entertaining is what gives pretty strong emotions about things that are happening.

My political views are constantly swinging like a pendulum, so it's hard to pick a news outlet based off of their political affiliation," said senior Sofie Janette.

It is difficult to find any news source that is unbiased in their reporting of worldly affairs, this of course being particularly true about politics. It's not that the news some of these sources report is fake, it's that it might often slant the amount of facts reported so that it doesn't have anything that could harm its aligned political party. This makes locating reliable news sources harder than ever today with the drastic split that has developed politically in the United States.

Other media outlets are simply fake, but have made an effort to seem as close to a legitimate source as possible so effectively that people end up mistaking these stories

for real ones. I recall several years ago when The Onion named Kim Jong Un the sexiest man alive, and pictured him majestically riding a horse in classic sexiest man alive fashion. Naturally, the article was picked up by Chinese news sources and reported as a legitimate story in China, despite how preposterous the concept of it was and how utterly obvious it could not be a real story.

So, when you are reading the news next time, try to take into account both the legitimacy of the report as well as the biases that might come with a particular source. To ensure we are getting the most out of what we have access to, we have to recognize these facts and form our own evaluations without letting a news source assert one for us.

Source:  
*Medialiteracyproject.org*

# The Reality of Cal-exit

By Danielle Halen

If enough people sign the Yes California petition, the 2018 ballot will ask a tough question: will California leave or stay in the United States? Shortened to Cal-exit, this idea first became a possible reality almost immediately after president Donald Trump was sworn in.

“It easily could happen, I mean, I’m not ruling anything out because nobody thought Trump would be president and yet here we are,” said junior Lauren Hatcher.

Social media sites like Twitter blew up with the trending tag #Calexit. Such large numbers of supporters soon changed this fad into a potential idea. In order to put it on the ballot, the Yes California petition

needs at least 585,407 signatures by July 25.

“I think California has a really good influence on this country. I feel that just because Trump is the president, we shouldn’t just be giving up and leaving. We should stand up to him,” said junior Elena Cota.

It’s important to learn the details of the Yes California movement. The president of the the Cal-exit movement is Louis J. Marinelli, who now currently lives in Russia, and is receiving help from the Russian government to promote the campaign. The vice president of the campaign is Marcus Ruiz Evans. Both Evans and Marinelli are former Republicans.

In order for California to fully secede from the United States, it has to be made an amendment. The amendment needs approval from at least 38 out of the fifty states.

“I feel it is a good idea, but... With all this turmoil it’s better off to see where it goes rather than jumping ship before we know it’s sinking,” said senior Carissa Denehy.

Some voters want to leave the United States and form their own countries, while others feel obligated to stay, stand up for their beliefs, and keep the country together.

Source:  
*Yescalifornia.org*

# California Drought Update

By Zach Wise

With all the rain that has already fallen this year, many are wondering what effect this has had on the California drought. A large number of San Luis Obispo High School students believe that the water shortage is no longer an issue with the excess of rainfall we have been getting, yet the drought is actually somewhat far from over.

“With all the rainstorms over the past couple of months, I’d be surprised if we are still in a drought,” said senior Sean Keane.

It’s hard for a single person to be able to see the true impact of the drought, because despite the stigma around a drought

being completely dry, limited rainfall does continue to happen in periods of drought. In San Luis Obispo especially, with the effective methods of conservation our city had already set in place prior to the water shortage, we really feel limited damage in comparison to the rest of the state.

According to Mercurynews.com, the drought is now gone from 53 percent of the state, a massive improvement over the state of things approximately a year ago. Much of this can be attributed to the large waves of storms that have been hitting California lately, causing a drastic increase in rainfall that we desperately needed, but also leaving behind a path of destruction

including flooding devastation.

“I think it’s a really good thing we are finally getting all this rain, but it’s important for us to remember that the drought isn’t over yet,” said senior Maxim Dahan.

So while the drought proceeds to be a factor in a large portion of California, things do seem to be improving thankfully. This doesn’t mean that we should all stop our efforts to conserve water however, as even though we are seeing an increase in rainfall, we are not officially out of being considered in a period of drought.

Sources :  
*Ca.water.gov*  
*Mercurynews.com*



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# How Does Political Affiliation Affect Our Society?

By Sean Kucer

With the divide between Democrats and Republicans growing wider by the day, it is important to understand the relevant mechanics of our psyches and the destruction that our innate biases can cause. The most salient bias is how group identification hinders our ability to reason honestly, and, as a result, slows--or worse, reverses--our progress as humans. Group identification causes us to hold more tightly onto our beliefs, usually without reason, and sets us against those we perceive as being outside of our cliques. This directly blocks off open-mindedness, an absolutely essential trait in a forward-thinking society. It's time to swallow our pride and admit that we have sloppy ape brains with many design flaws and realize that we can overcome our imperfect biology and make the relevant changes to our minds.

Although in-group and out-group thinking damages our lives in many ways, it probably does the most harm in the political arena. With the huge, sweeping effects of laws, whether they regard abortion, guns, or drugs, this is not a place where we can afford to indulge our biases. Although having some fun rivalry between sports teams can be amusing, we must train ourselves to compensate for our habit of demoralizing those who disagree with us and glorifying those who agree with us. This is, without a doubt, essential to our success as a species.

"I think we need to talk. We need to have constructive conversations. We need to

start listening. We should try and be open to other people's points of view instead of forming echo chambers," said senior Jacob Peterson.

The idea that in-group out-group thinking degrades our quality of thought has solid evidence behind it. In fact, a recent neuroscience study showed the issue we are dealing with as a matter of brain activity. They took forty subjects and scanned their brains while presented with evidence



Photo Courtesy of Luca MacDougall

counter to their political beliefs, as well as less emotionally-charged beliefs. The (irrelevant) areas of the brain dealing with self-representation and disengagement from the external world lit up more when their political beliefs were countered than with the more benign beliefs. This highlights the human tendency to include one's sense of identity in intellectual

matters instead of staying logical.

Once we admit our typical ineptitude at productive conversation, it becomes a matter of undermining our biases. One of the most potent ways to do this, explained by senior Westen Meyer, is realizing that both sides are "fighting towards the same goals." This technique directly neutralizes the in-out group bias, as it unites one with the 'other side.' If you actually think about it, it's pretty obvious that no matter who we are talking about, whether it be a Democrat, Republican, Muslim, or Atheist, these divisions are, in all the important ways, purely semantic. Almost every person interested in politics, no matter what side they fall on, is working towards a happier world. Once one admits this, there is no longer a concern of fighting against another person or group. The issue becomes finding out who has the better ideas, whose beliefs will actually amount to a better Earth.

One day we might have machines making all the hard decisions for us, but for now, it's up to us to shoulder the burden. We cannot count on success if we fail to take responsibility for our own biases and work towards making ourselves more rational, instead of being more comfortable among like-minded political thinking people. For this reason, each of us must be painfully honest with ourselves, and be sensitive to the mind's tendency to make poor justifications for our beliefs. This is how we progress as a species.



Photo Courtesy of Matteo Cicognani

# An Honest Conversation About Religious Terrorism

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By Logan McNichols

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In this conversation with a Muslim student, senior Jibreel Abdul Cader, I try to make the case that, at this point in history, it is appropriate to be criticizing the fastest growing religion in the world: Islam. I summarized parts of this conversation, but the full unedited dialogue is available on [Slohsexpressions.com](http://Slohsexpressions.com).

Initially, I argued that religion influences people's behavior and some religions are more harmful than others. Abdul Cader said that how people act is dependent on their values, not on religious beliefs.

I said, "It almost sounds like you don't think the content of the religion matters, but it does. Take Jainism, for example. Jainism is based on not harming. Extreme Jains carry around brooms to avoid stepping on bugs. So as it turns out the more extreme you are in Jainism the less of a potential danger you are. Are you saying

that I should criticize that religion to the same degree that I criticize Islam?"

"Yes, if you are going to scrutinize one faith, it is only fair to apply equal scrutiny to all others," said Abdul Cader.

I then argued that right now, the doctrine of Islam is inspiring a rise in terrorism, citing the ISIS document "Why We Hate You and Why We fight You" as evidence of this. He rebutted saying that giving credence to ISIS's interpretation of Islam is akin to doing the same for the Ku Klux Klan and Christianity, the Jewish Defense League and Judaism, or the actions of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka and Buddhism. He insisted that in full truth these were all religions of peace and beauty.

"If you are asking me if I think terrorism is an issue that globally we face today, then yes, I think there is an issue with terrorism and the loss of innocent life, but if you are trying to convince me that my religion to me is one of anything but beauty and peace, then your efforts will go without success because, as I have said earlier, the

values of a religion are dependent on the individual," said Abdul Cader.

Abdul Cader then asked me what my solution to the supposed problem was. I said that I was trying to stand up for speaking honestly about Islam to lay the groundwork for moderate Muslims to reform the faith. I noted that Maajid Nawaz, a moderate Muslim who was a former extremist, had been labeled an anti-Muslim extremist by some left wing media for suggesting a link between ISIS and Islam.

"Ultimately, everyone has the right to criticize religion, especially in the U.S. The way that people interpret a religion changes through time and the morals people draw from their faith depends on a variety of influences far more than the religion they were brought up in. In truth, many acts of violence are committed by people under the pretense of following a religious code, but are actually done for the purpose of gaining land money, or power," said Abdul Cader.

## Does Our Dress Code Actually Accomplish Anything?

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By Zoey Nitzel

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Most San Luis Obispo High School students have experienced the back to school lecture that school administration gives to each grade about dress codes. This lecture is usually given to us in 85 degree weather, while we're sitting in bleachers squished up against each other in a stuffy gym, during the tail end of summer. The worst part is that this lecture is directed mostly at teenage girls wearing low cut spaghetti strap shirts and short shorts. While I sat in the midst of hundreds of students and the administration in front of me talking about teenage girls in booty shorts, their words burned in my mind along with the other objectifying things authority figures have used their loud voice to tell me. I wondered: Why does what I wear affect them?

"I'm happy our school doesn't strictly enforce a dress code because I'd be pretty mad if I was told I couldn't wear something," said junior Cammy Piette. Our school is pretty lenient when it comes to enforcing a dress code, which most students think is

good.

Something else *Expressions* wrote about in a January issue article was that when a guy dressed up in a crop top and skinny jeans, exposing his midsection, he was told by a teacher that his outfit went against the dress code. Clearly we have all seen girls wearing similar outfits without getting any back-handed comments from teachers, so why was it happening to a boy?

When a girl or boy is told to change or go home because their clothing choice is distracting other students, it's humiliating. It's also teaching them that their education isn't as valuable as the person's they are distracting. If someone is so easily distracted by the human body, that's their problem.

No one should have to miss class just because what they're wearing is deemed inappropriate by a group of out-of-touch school administrators. Students should be able to wear what they want to come to SLOHS and learn. A dress code that prevents this is counterproductive.

# SITTING DOWN WITH SIMON

By Lisa Halvorsen, Stephen ZagRodny, and Emma Jane Haas

## *Favorite*

*Book:*  
“The Elements of Style” by William Strunk Jr and E.B. White



**Expressions:** How many years have you been teaching?

**English teacher Ivan Simon:** Starting at George Washington Carver in South Central Los Angeles, I have been teaching since 1983, and at San Luis Obispo High School since 1994 (23 years).

**Expressions:** What is your life motto?

**Simon:** Life motto is either “Tighten, Brighten, and Sharpen” or “I’ll spoon feed, but won’t pre-chew.”

**Expressions:** Do you identify more with Holden Caulfield, Heathcliff, Pip, or Boo Radley, and why?

**Simon:** I identify with Pip as I have “Great Expectations” for the students in my classroom.

**Expressions:** What is the most embarrassing thing that happened to you while you were teaching?

**Simon:** The most embarrassing thing that happened while I was teaching occurred this year the morning of January 20 when Donald Trump was sworn in as the President of the United States.

**Expressions:** What is the worst thing a student has done?

**Simon:** The worst thing a student has done also occurred this school year when I asked my students who had read “Siddhartha” in tenth grade, and a junior exclaimed, “Siddhartha sucks!” Ask

Augusta Holyfield, Shane Russett, or any of my third period first trimester students how I dealt with this student.

**Expressions:** Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan?

**Simon:** Tough call but I would go with Bob Dylan. Why? The answer is ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’.

**Expressions:** Miles Davis or Thelonious Monk?

**Simon:** Thelonious Monk over Miles Davis because Monk and I both play piano and are said to be under-appreciated geniuses who see the world from a unique perspective.

**Expressions:** If you could teach another subject, what would you teach and why?

**Simon:** I would teach a subject where I don’t have to administer District Assessments. I also would consider teaching the integrated American Literature and History course that I previously taught for ten years where I was able to show connections with American music, culture, art, and other disciplines.



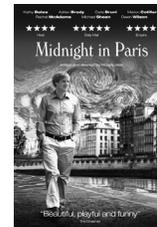
*Favorite Visual Artist:*  
Marc Chagall



*Favorite Author:*  
Philip Roth



*Favorite Band:*  
Very Big Fire



*Favorite Movie:*  
Woody Allen’s “Midnight in Paris”



*Favorite Album:*  
“Malvina Reynolds Sings the Truth”



*Favorite Poet:*  
Kevin Patrick Sullivan

## A PEEK INSIDE SIMON'S VAULT

San Luis Obispo High School's English teacher Ivan Simon, is known for his sense of humor and eclectic classroom, but what secrets lie inside the famed Pleasure Palace of Learning? Mr. Simon took SLOHS *Expressions* inside "the vault" to reveal some of its deepest mysteries.

"A student in prison, reading chapter three of *Grapes of Wrath*, 'The Turtle', carved this out of soap... I think it's Irish Spring."



"This one is of Novo. I've been compared to the artist Chaim Soutine, he was known for his carcasses of beef paintings, usually my portraits are compared to his work... I have a painting of Mr. O'Connor..."



"These are leeches. I think some of my colleagues in the department have tried to leech my wisdom."



"I have these Abraham Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth assassination dolls, someone tried marketing it for a children's gift, but I don't think it went over that well..."



"A student I had at George Washington Carver Junior High School, in south central Los Angeles, made this break dancing doll of me."



"I used to feel that I'd have to clear out this room at some point because Measure D was going to rebuild the school, but when I saw how long they took to finish the tennis courts I realized I'm not going anywhere soon."



## New Coach, New Rules for Girls Swim

By Shannon Donahue

This season, the San Luis Obispo High School girls varsity swim team gained a new coach. This shake up in authority has brought change to the pool for SLOHS swimmers.

“Jud Clark has an experienced background in swimming and a very positive attitude towards this season,” said varsity swimmer senior Emily Stephens.

“He’s a really good coach from what I’ve seen, and he’s better than our past coaches,” said varsity swimmer junior Maliah Miller. Some swimmers, however, have been feeling lukewarm about this new coach, as he implemented a new rule banning two-piece swimsuits during practices.

“It came as a shock to all of us,” said Stephens when asked how the future team was handling the ban.

“Everyone’s first reaction was to complain about the unequal gender codes and the detriment this will pose to tan lines; however, I trust that the team will eventually calm down and get over it because there are more important things to worry about and complaining gets us nowhere,” said Stephens. While many swimmers own and compete in one-pieces, some have one or more two piece suits.



“I like wearing a two piece in practice so I didn’t really agree with the rule,” said Miller. Wearing two piece suits has the advantage of being able to avoid the inevitable tan-lines that female swimmers are subjected to when in the pool. Male swimmers, with their Speedos, have little to no problem with tan-lines, and having women wear one-pieces clearly shows the divide between the genders.

The more prevalent issue is the abyss between the expectations for females and males. The main reason for instituting dress codes anywhere, whether it is in a classroom or in the pool, is that some authorities find the female body to pose as a distraction to others and hinder the competitive environment.

This objectification of girl swimmers may not be fair, but the rules are the rules, and if a coach institutes a new rule, it has to be followed for a swimmer to be eligible to practice.

Despite this, the varsity swim team continues to maintain high hopes for the year and upcoming season.

“I hope that the season will be super fun, that there will be no divisions in the team, and that we will all try our best. Jud seems to have a goal to win at League Finals and I think it’s possible if we have the right attitude and will to work,” said Stephens.

## A Sport of Silks Instead of Shots

By Malin Roeli

It’s not uncommon to participate in sports during one’s time in high school. Most students might try common sports such as soccer, tennis, football, volleyball or basketball. However, some students take a different path and participate in sports that are not as typical. Junior Maya Hampsey is one of those students, spending her free time doing aerial silks.

**Expressions:** How did you start doing aerial silks?

**Junior Maya Hampsey:** I saw my studio performing in Mitchell Park, actually, at the gazebo, and I thought it was fascinating. I went up to them and said, “Oh my gosh, where do you guys practice? I wanna do this.” My dad signed me up for classes a couple of weeks later, that was four years ago.

**Expressions:** How is it different from other types of sports?

**Hampsey:** A lot of more traditional sports that people play are competitive sports, you are on a team and you’re trying to win. Silks is unique in the sense that you’re not necessarily competing, you are performing. That’s why I enjoy it, because

you are performing with other people, so you still have that team and working with others, but you are doing it to show people what you are capable of. It’s almost an art in the sense to put on this performance and this dance in the air.

**Expressions:** Would you recommend it to other students?

**Hampsey:** Yes, I definitely would. On the physical side, it’s a great workout for your whole body. It works a lot of upper body strength, and it also teaches you to have grace while having strength. I think it’s a really unique way to exercise and also perform and dance, and I think everyone should try it.



Photo Courtesy of Kaitlin Lynch

## The Life of a SLOHS Cheerleader

By Matteo Ferranti

At San Luis Obispo High School, the cheer team is doing a great job with their performances in different games at school, such as football and basketball. *Expressions* interviewed senior varsity cheerleaders Sidney Veneris and Kaitlin Lynch to learn more about the life of a SLOHS cheerleader.

**Expressions:** When did you start your cheerleading career?

**Senior Kaitlin Lynch:** I started in eighth grade.

**Senior Sidney Veneris:** I started mine when I was in third grade.

**Expressions:** Why did you choose to be a cheerleader?

**Veneris:** I had friends who were doing it and I wanted an activity to do.

**Expressions:** What is an average day

during practice?

**Lynch:** We start by running around the baseball field, then we stretch and warm up, and we do some different exercises. It can be really tiring and hard.

**Expressions:** How many times do you practice per week?

**Veneris:** I'm on two different teams, one at school and the other one is a club team, so I practice every day. But our school team practices two times a week, sometimes three.

**Expressions:** Is it dangerous to do your performances?

**Lynch:** It's very dangerous and so many people get injured. I got a concussion from a routine, in front of the whole school.

**Veneris:** In a sense yes, but we do a lot more acrobatic, gymnastic skills, and we also dance.

## Soccer Scored Big in League

By Sawyer McSorley

In the past few years, San Luis Obispo High School's soccer teams have had great success, and this most recent season has been no different. Both teams worked hard to win game after game both home and away, ending with the boys and girls league records of 12-1-1 and 13-1-1 respectively. Soccer has two more PAC 8 league wins repeating the same success of last year.

*Expressions* asked a few of the players what they felt brought their teams to victory time and time again.

"We're all really passionate about [soccer], so I think that plus hard work led us to winning league again," said sophomore varsity player Lauren Erickson.

"We're not only really strong soccer players, but our relationship off of the field is really strong as well," said senior forward Susanna Scalon.

Senior Amando Garza, who helped lead the boys team to victory both last year and this year, explained what he thought made this year's team so special.

"I feel like we work really well as a unit... we always stay mentally prepared," said Garza.

The numbers agreed with him.

Last year, the girls went undefeated with a record of 14-0, the boys excelled as well going 11-1-2. With another repeat of their two-in-one PAC 8 wins, SLOHS soccer clearly has a rhythm going. Look out, the Tigers are not to be messed with.



Physical Therapy

**Tyrone G. McSorley**  
Physical Therapist  
Orthopaedic Certified Specialist  
Certified Athletic Trainer

## Student Photography Spotlight

By Haley Block

### Junior Bella Zuniga



**Expressions:** What type of photography do you do?

**Junior Bella Zuniga:** I mostly do portrait photography of people who are willing to model. I also sometimes do sports.

**Expressions:** Do you want to pursue this as a career?

**Zuniga:** Not necessarily as my main career since the industry is really difficult right now, but definitely as a hobby or a part-time job while in college.

**Expressions:** How long have you been doing this? How did you get started?

**Zuniga:** I have been taking pictures for my whole life, but got really serious about four years ago. I started with a regular Nikon and then graduated to a Nikon DSLR.



### Junior Noah Cracknell



**Expressions:** What type of photography do you do?

**Junior Noah Cracknell:** I am into all types of photography including action, nighttime, portrait, and landscape photography.

**Expressions:** Do you want to pursue this as a career?

**Cracknell:** I plan on using photography professionally later in life as a hobby where I can make a little side money.

**Expressions:** How long have you been doing this? How did you get started?

**Cracknell:** I started to get really into photography when I received my first iPod touch with a camera... which was about eight years ago.

### Senior Matteo Cicognani

**Expressions:** What type of photography do you do?

**Senior Matteo Cicognani:** "Club" photography. I used to work at different clubs when I was in Italy. It's just a way you take pictures: they usually look dark with lights coming from uncommon points and brightened people and objects on the foreground, with a dark background.

**Expressions:** Do you want to pursue this as a career?

**Cicognani:** I don't think I will want to do this. I thought about it sometimes, but I don't think I'm going to pursue this career.

**Expressions:** How long have you been doing this? How did you get started?

**Cicognani:** I've worked in clubs for about a year. I took up photography just for fun.



## Students weigh in on the trend of being *petty*

By Lili Turner

Being petty was an apparent trend in 2016, and may have well carried its way into 2017. When petty is officially defined, it means “of little importance”, but when defined by teens on social media it is an action of someone doing something to get back at an ex friend, ex partner, or anyone in general. SLOHS teens have seen pettiness demonstrated in subtweets, memes, and everyday life, but it is never really questioned on how it affects them and their personal relationships.

“People being petty has made me feel bad about myself. I see it as extremely childish. If you have an issue with someone, be mature and talk to them about it,” said

junior Delaiah Hastie when asked how pettiness has affected her friendships and relationships.

“You should just talk about the way you feel instead of dragging on the issue. Pettiness just makes everything worse and doesn’t show the support we need for each other,” added junior Amber Andreozzi.

It is very easy to fall into immature acts when you’ve had your pride or feelings hurt, with the validation from social media that these acts are okay, it makes it even easier.

When asked if he has ever been petty himself, junior Noah Nelson said, “Yes I have, but my mind tends to block out some of those memories, so I cannot remember exactly why, but I know that I’ve just felt horrible afterwards because no

matter the person, respect is deserved and expected.”

When seen on various social media outlets, pettiness is a way of taking out anger towards someone who has made you feel as if your self-worth has been lowered, in an attempt to bring it back up. Some argue that in this case, it is way of empowerment, but empowerment hasn’t usually come from a total lack of communication in a self-seeking act. Also, bringing others down when they are trying to better themselves doesn’t typically better oneself. The anger, or the ego, is speaking. There is really no communication at all, which is ironic when social media itself was designed for communication and to bring people together in a positive way.

## Photography Spotlight Continued



Senior  
Nicole Kasper

**Expressions:** What type of photography do you do?

**Senior Nicole Kasper:** Digital, I shoot with a Canon 60D.

**Expressions:** Do you want to pursue this as a career?

**Kasper:** I would definitely want to pursue photography in the future, but I want to also explore other career options.

**Expressions:** How long have you been doing this?

**Kasper:** Eighth grade.



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# An Interview with Grace and Bryce

By Haley Block



Photo courtesy of Matteo Cicognani

Dating during high school is a phenomenon that many experience in their four years at San Luis Obispo High School, but most enjoy month long relationships, at best. Senior couple Grace Park and Bryce Ramirez have been dating since freshman year, and *Expressions* interviewed them about their memories and to see how much they know about each other after spending four years together.

**Expressions:** What did you do on your first date?  
**Senior Grace Park:** We didn't really have a first date because we were in eighth grade. My earliest memory was over Christmas Break freshman year, and he came over and we played ping pong.

**Senior Bryce Ramirez:** We went to her house and we played ping pong on this mini ping pong table in her living room.

**Expressions:** How long have you been dating?  
**Park:** Three years officially dating, but we've been together for four.  
**Ramirez:** Three and a half years.

**Expressions:** What is your significant others' least favorite food?  
**Park:** Seafood  
**Ramirez:** Any seafood, we went to Giuseppe's one time and got calamari, and it, it was bad.

**Expressions:** When is your partner's birthday?

**Park:** November eleventh.  
**Ramirez:** September first.

**Expressions:** How did you meet?  
**Park:** We just met at school.  
**Ramirez:** We met at school.

**Expressions:** What is their favorite color?  
**Park:** White.  
**Ramirez:** Yellow.

**Expressions:** When was your first kiss and where was it?  
**Park:** It was in my neighborhood, on the corner of my street. It was the first week of summer before freshman year.

**Ramirez:** It was on the corner right in front of her house, and I don't remember the date, but she probably does.

**Expressions:** Who said "I love you" first?  
**Park:** I don't know.  
**Ramirez:** I don't remember.

Both Park and Ramirez had answers that aligned perfectly with each other with only one exception. Park's birthday is in fact on September first, her favorite color is yellow and she abhors seafood. The same goes for Ramirez whose birthday is November eleventh, hates seafood as well, but his favorite color is not white, in fact he does not have one. This couple proves to know each other quite well after spending these past four years together.

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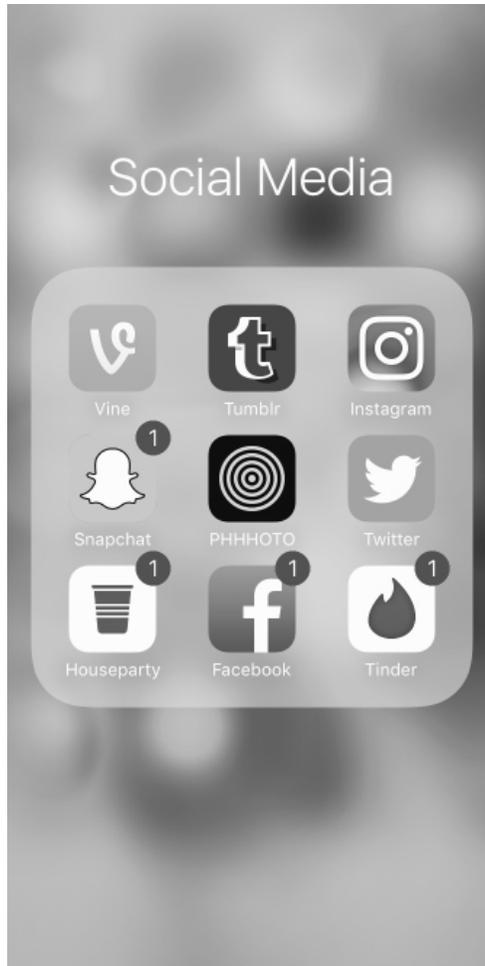
# A week without social media

By Zoey Nitzel

Ever since I made my first Instagram account in sixth grade, I have been obsessed with social media. While I have slowed down the amount of posting, on an average school day I spend five hours scrolling through the lives of my peers. Wondering how detrimental this habit has been on my time management and overall quality of life, I decided to quit social media for a week.

On a rainy Tuesday afternoon, I deleted the apps Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Phhphoto from my phone. I didn't delete Snapchat because I had a 156 day streak that I wasn't willing to give up. Snapchat is also one of my main ways of communicating with most of my friends. I didn't post on my story, but I did check snapchats from time to time. When I deleted all my social media, I didn't post about my hiatus or say goodbye. I went cold turkey so that I could get a more realistic idea of how people would react.

No one really noticed that I was gone. However, I quickly realized how compulsively I pulled out my phone between passing periods to check Instagram



throughout the day. I also noticed how disconnected I felt from news and pop-culture. I know that social media isn't the best place to get news, but if I had done this one week earlier, I would have never known Beyonce was pregnant with twins.

After being able to re-download my apps, I was kind of hesitant to log back into everything. I had a good excuse to not participate in drama, and I enjoyed the time by myself. I think most people, especially adults, would expect me to not be able to live without social media for a week. It wasn't that hard, but it wasn't life-changing either. I still procrastinated, I still stayed up late, I still had the same conversations with my friends. The only difference is that I procrastinated by watching Netflix instead of being on social media.

Now that I have lived life without constantly checking Facebook and Twitter, I decided to keep some apps deleted because they're frustrating and a waste of time. I'm proud of myself for doing this, but also kind of embarrassed that I thought it was going to be such a big deal. Social media can be a fun way to connect with friends and document your life, but we have to be careful not to let it control us.

*Photo courtesy of Emi Mulay*

## Are "things" the new thing?

By Sam Wendt

In the emotionally turbulent storm that is high school romance, transparency and civility are a rarity. Fearing commitment and driven by uncontrollable hormones, San Luis Obispo High School students are notorious for avoiding serious relationships, choosing instead to remain in a "twilight zone" between friendship and relationship: the infamous "thing".

"Having a thing with someone is when you and another are on the scheme in tandem. It is commonly confused with an official relationship but is less binding and

more common in the modern world of relationships," said senior James Higgins.

Although this definition may seem straightforward enough, every student seems to have a slightly different perception of what a "thing" entails.

"A thing is untitled commitment, where you both know and all your friends know you like each other and won't hook up with someone else, yet it's not official," said junior Dasha Novotny.

Despite the lack of consensus on the exact definition, everyone can agree that "things" are based on some sort of mutual attraction, whether it be physical, emotional, or a combination of the two.

The very nature of "things" is rooted in ambiguity and, as a result, miscom-

munication and confusion are all too common for those involved. However, despite the often unavoidable emotional distress that comes from a nondescript connection, "half baked" relationships or "things" stage may be a necessary evil.

"I think it is an important stage, no matter what the label is, because going from just friends to a serious relationship is a huge jump. Testing out your compatibility and discussing future intentions early is essential for a developing relationship," said junior Anna Waldorf.

Regardless of your personal definition of a "thing", open communication is crucial to any successful relationship, whether it be a casual hookup or a committed marriage..

# WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT SIMON



"I think he's the funniest teacher I've ever had and he reminds me of a mad scientist but like a mad literature scientist,"  
said senior Sofie Janette.

"I think Mr. Simon - Ivan - is one of the best on campus because his classes don't feel like a school class because we actually discuss real life ideas that are important and applicable and he's also a gorgeous and attractive man,"  
said junior Nabeel El-Sayed.



"He's a big 'ol weirdo but I love him for exactly that reason,"  
said junior Noah Nelson.

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