

SHOTS EXPRESSIONS

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2017  
SLOHSEXPRESSIONS.COM

"I SPEAK FOR THE TREES,  
FOR THE TREES HAVE NO  
TONGUES."



"OH PLEASE DO NOT CUT  
DOWN ANOTHER ONE."

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# SLOHS Students Campaign to Lower Local Voting Age

By Oliver Hicks

Should San Luis Obispo High School sixteen and seventeen year olds be allowed to vote in local elections? A new local grassroots campaign is attempting to convince people that they should. Vote16SLO is a regional effort headed by four local high school students trying to pass a city ordinance that would lower the local voting age to sixteen. This ordinance would legally include sixteen and seventeen year olds in the San Luis Obispo city electorate, allowing them to vote in city council elections as well as for ballot measures. Although the campaign is still in its infancy, those who believe in its value are determined to make this into a widespread movement.

“Obviously this campaign is still in its early phases. We’re working on getting petitions out to students. Our plan is to show the city council that sixteen year olds actually want the right to vote with the petitions, but long term, our goal is to simply get more people involved in the political process,” said SLOHS senior and campaign co-founder Rutik Shinglot.

The ordinance, as argued by its advocates, locally and all over the country, is a simple way to get more people interested in politics

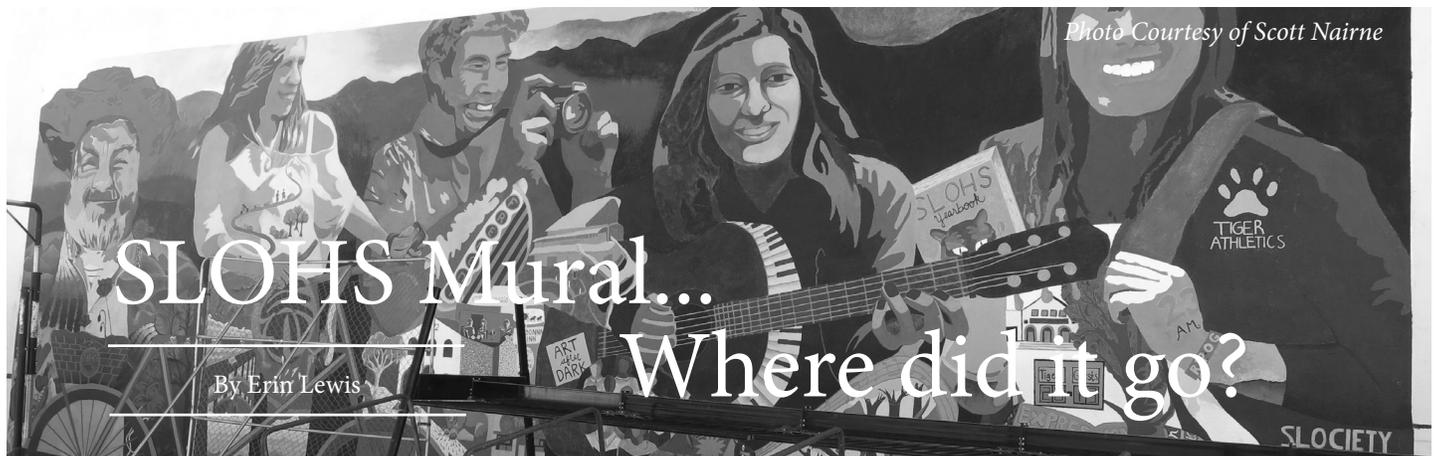
by expanding the right to vote and putting a greater emphasis on civics for the American youth.

“The concept of sixteen and seventeen year olds being able to vote excites me more than anything else,” said Arroyo Grande High School senior and campaign co-founder Clara Sperow.

“The decisions being made in local and school board elections are directly affecting us, so I feel like we should have a say in these decisions. We are old enough to drive, work, and pay taxes, but can’t change any of the legislation that influences these things. Plus, it’s important for us to pay attention to these issues and have a better understanding of the world around us,” said Sperow.

Moving forward, to become actual San Luis Obispo city law the ordinance would require official drafting (most likely with the help of a city attorney), a minimum number of petition signatures to be considered, and a majority vote of the city council before being put on the ballot for a citywide vote.

If students are interested, or would like to know more information, email [vote16slo@gmail.com](mailto:vote16slo@gmail.com)



By Erin Lewis

Over the past four years, the San Luis Obispo High School mural on the side of the old gym has remained untouched, displaying dedications and paintings that represent the school as a whole. However, this past summer, the school’s hidden jewel was painted over.

“The old gym is going to be the model standard building for our Measure D kind of look. It was tough to have a mural on the side wall when that was going to become the centerpiece of the design,” said principal Leslie O’Connor. The architects for Measure D also wanted the new buildings to mirror the old gym’s iconic 1934 mission style aesthetic.

The detailed mural took about a full trimester to paint and two art classes helped paint it together.

“We did a lot of planning. We drew it all out before. After all the planning we were out there every day,” said former SLOHS student

and muralist Emily Lewis.

The students who painted the mural picked four people as the silhouettes, and each person represented different aspects of SLOHS, and the town of SLO as a whole, including agriculture, music, and student life.

“It’s a bummer because we worked so hard. It really showed the students and their capabilities,” said Lewis.

Although it was sad to see it go, the mural had to be painted over.

“I’m saddened that it was painted over. I love the work that our students did back then. There was so much heartfelt effort poured in by the students and the teacher. I understand that sometimes progress needs to move forward with a building or a space, but I think that to be good citizens of our future, we have to be mindful of our past and where we are in the present,” said O’Connor.

Social trends for San Luis Obispo High School students have changed immensely over the course of the last few decades.

However, one unattractive cultural norm, the urge to smoke, has more or less stayed the same. This is largely contributed to the highly addictive properties of nicotine, which is ranked as the fifth most addictive substance in the world. In order to understand the problems nicotine may be causing at SLOHS, *Expressions* spoke with students who smoke or vape to see if nicotine has affected their life or caused them to become addicted.

“My brother, in the ninth grade, introduced me to [vaping], and I thought it was pretty cool,” said an anonymous SLOHS senior on how he began vaping. He said he does not believe he is addicted.

“It’s just a fun thing to do occasionally, but not all the time,” said the senior.

Another SLOHS student does not believe she is addicted to vaping.

“I only vape five times a day, usually whenever I’m stressed,” said an anonymous SLOHS junior.

“My cousin had a vape, and I was stressed out to the point I was crying and my cousin said ‘try this,’” said the junior about how she started. Nicotine has long been used to cope with environmental stressors. However, it has been found to increase stress levels in adolescents. The more nicotine one consumes, the more the body craves it, causing the individual to become agitated until they smoke again. The smoking isn’t relieving stress but simply suppressing a craving.

Vapes also contain a high percentage of nicotine. While a cigarette has between 4-14 mg, a single drop of vape juice contains about 24 mg. The potency of vape juice can cause users to become addicted faster.

“I don’t try to get nicotine in my juice so that I don’t get addicted,” said the junior. Even vapes without nicotine can still have detrimental health effects. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, inhalation of diacetyl and acetyl propionyl, which have been found in three quarters of flavored vapes, is associated with respiratory disease. Many of the juice flavorings are toxic, due to the chemicals used to create unique flavors.

Whatever the cause may be as to why students vape, there are alternative, legal, ways to cope with the stress of school and other life issues that benefit the body.

*sources: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov  
centeronaddiction.org  
e-cigaretteforum.com*

# Nicotine Addiction

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By Andrew Nash

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*“I do,”*

By Molly Foster

*But do you really?*

From Disney’s classic themes of ‘happily ever after’ to dreams of white picket fences, marriage has been lingering in the back of San Luis Obispo High School students minds since the age of pacifiers. A wedding is a concept that most people look forward to their entire lives, but they almost never anticipate the potential aftermath: divorce.

According to the American Psychological Association, about forty to fifty percent of marriages in the United States result in divorce. With the commitment of marriage being broken by a vast selection of people, it starts to lose its validity and becomes a case of the boy who cried wolf. Furthermore, the drastic effects of divorce transcend the emotional strain on parents even further to create long lasting effects on their children.

“I’ve witnessed the suffering of several marriages which have inspired me to marry only when I truly want to, not to feel rushed or uncertain, because relationships aren’t defined by their label,” said junior Jena Naficy. Many kids of divorce fear following in their parents’ footsteps of endless arguments and unhappiness.

Clearly, legally binding contracts and diamond rings do not guarantee a lifetime of true love and happiness.

“People who are committed enough to raise children, live together, share bank accounts, etc. don’t need marriage to validate their relationship,” said Naficy.

The origins of marriage can be traced back to ancient cultures and times. Although society has evolved since the initial creation of the traditional wedding, marriage ceremonies continue to include much of the same wording. Amongst these traditional wedding vows lies, ‘until death do us part.’ This line, derived from the Bible, is a promise between a couple to spend the remainder of their lives together. A commitment to this extreme may have been reasonable when the average life expectancy was thirty years old. However, in modern society the life span has increased by over forty years, leaving room for a much longer period of time for personal growth and development through circumstance and experience. Therefore, how can one be expected to love the same person for eternity in a fleeting twenty-first century world where the only constant variable is change itself?

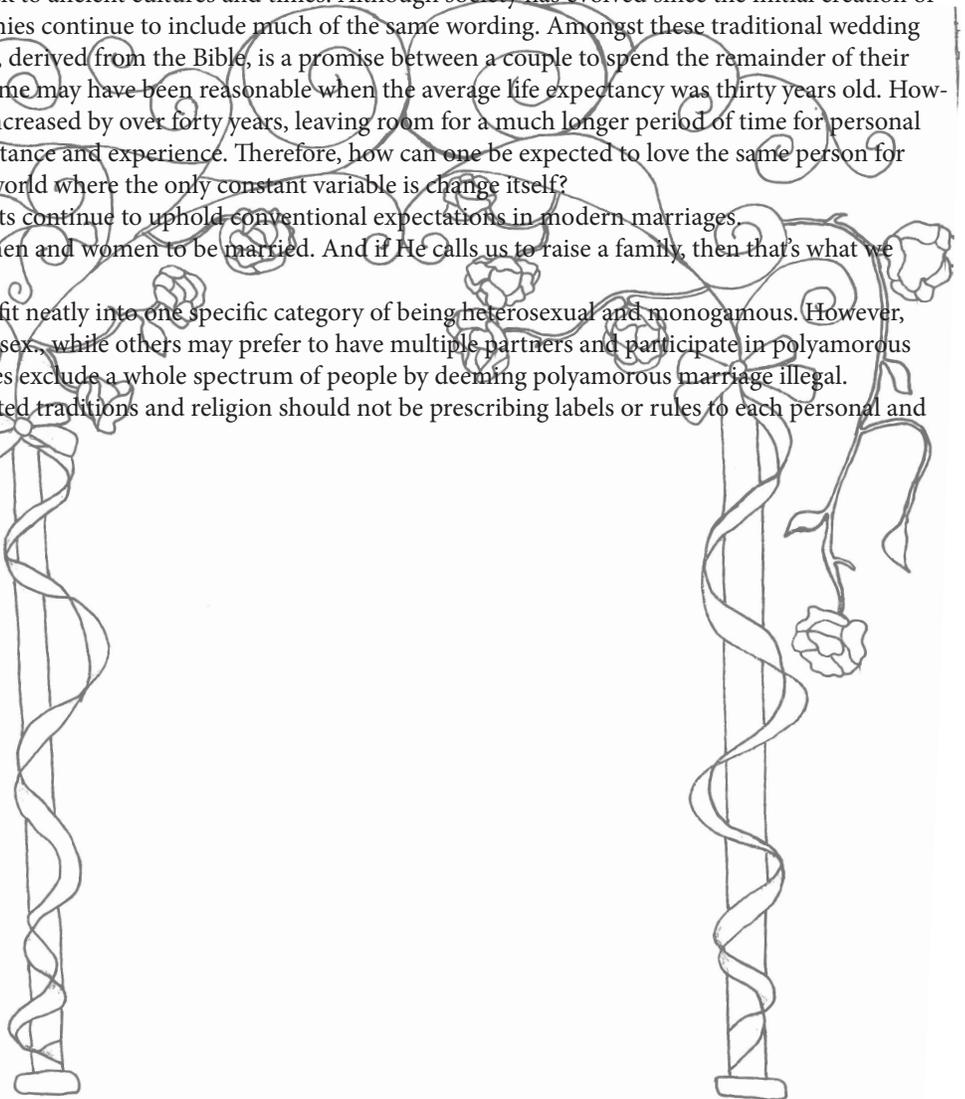
Similarly, many religions and governments continue to uphold conventional expectations in modern marriages.

“As a Christian, I believe that God calls men and women to be married. And if He calls us to raise a family, then that’s what we should do,” said junior Lily Hasley.

By this definition, people are required to fit neatly into one specific category of being heterosexual and monogamous. However, some people may be attracted to the same sex, while others may prefer to have multiple partners and participate in polyamorous relationships. Not to mention, all fifty states exclude a whole spectrum of people by deeming polyamorous marriage illegal.

Societal expectations derived from outdated traditions and religion should not be prescribing labels or rules to each personal and unique relationship between loved ones.

*Photo courtesy of Molly Foster*



## LGBT+ Education: Shouldn't We Know?

By Drew Vander Weele

Sexual education should better teach not only how the human reproductive system works, but also how to stay safe from sexual assault, STIs, and preventing pregnancy. The San Luis Coastal Unified School District curriculum is evolving, but it is incomplete when it comes to the LGBTQ+ community.

There are basic lessons which teach all students how to stay safe, but a lack of knowledge can cause students to be put in dangerous situations. If LGBTQ+ students happen to have underage sex without the knowledge about prevention, they run the risk getting an STI. At SLOHS we do have a new LGBTQ+ curriculum which includes teachings of diverse gender identities and definitions in the LGBTQ+ community.

"Prior to last year there was no mention of the LGBTQ+ community at all," said health teacher Daniel Monroe. This is huge because it means that if we made progress, we could easily get to where this community wants to be. Discussing the LGBTQ+ students will hopefully make it more accepted on campus.

"When we are talking about using protection, when talking about healthy relationships and comfort in relationships, and when we are talking about different STIs, I would argue that the curriculum that we cover can apply to all different types of genders," said Monroe. This is very hard because he has to follow federal, state, and local laws as well as having to teach diverse groups of students whose parents have different views on what they want their teenager to learn. "I think that when students in the community are taught about their bodies, their feelings, and how to act safely it will create a more positive atmosphere and student would feel less isolated and less strange. They would know that they are okay and that there is a community of people who feel the same way as them," said junior and GSA President, Lane Stephens.

Moving forward, we can continue to adopt a more accepting community here at SLOHS and eventually incorporate all sexual identities when discussing health and sex education.



Photo Courtesy of Emi Mulay

## Smells Like Teen Posers

By Will Anderson

Are we living in an age where our youth is grasping to latch on to the obsessions of the past? Is our generation so underwhelmed with our own media and artists that we seek the artistic medium of art we know nothing about? For example, a young person from our generation is walking around wearing a t-shirt with a "the Very Best of The Grateful Dead" album cover on it. In our day and age, it is not uncommon for someone to be able to walk up to someone else and ask about their shirt, only to receive the answer that the wearer knows nothing about said T-shirt. I believe that a person should be knowledgeable of the decade and subject they are promoting and advertising. However, let's look to other San Luis Obispo High Students to see their opinions on the matter.

"In today's world we are told it is so important to be ourselves and to stand out from our peers that people will do anything to be 'different' even if they are actually straying away from who they really are. I notice it most at school and on social media when girls are wearing old-school band t-shirts or are trying to prove that they listen to the most alternative indie music on Soundcloud. It's this underlying competitiveness of who can be the most different that makes us all the same," said senior Hayden Shannon.

Many people at SLOHS are noticeably irked when confronted with this situation. When the chances to expose these "posers" arises, many jump at

the opportunity to do so. While others silently watch and judge said "poser".

"In high school many people want to fit in. Some might go to the extent of pretending to like something they actually don't have any interest in. It seems like more and more you see people repping t-shirts of bands or artists. Although wearing a shirt for your favorite band is a good way to support them, some might wear it just to look cool or fit in. Many people might call out a fake fan of something or say they are being a poser. Right now it seems to be pretty trendy to wear alternative 90s bands shirts even if you couldn't name at least one of their songs. I think it's stupid to pretend to like a band or be a fan," said junior Kathrine Freeman. She went on to share her own experience, "Going through an emo phase from eighth grade to freshman year, I owned my fair share of band tees. I wore shirts for my favorite bands almost like it was my job. For some, stuff like that is important so seeing a poser would definitely upset or anger them," said Freeman. As you can see, being knowledgeable about the topic you are promoting is much more attractive than the topic itself, whether it be clothing, accessories, or attitudes. People should stop being posers, and either promote the pop culture they are familiar with or just plain research and establish a sense of knowledge within the subject they are promoting, and perhaps then the unknown pleasures will appear.

# WHERE HAS THE FOLIAGE GONE?

By Nabeel El Sayed

The San Luis Obispo High School campus has been home to a vast multitude of wonderful youths for decades. Flipping through old yearbooks, it is clear how much of an impact the natural landscape and beauty of the campus played in the students' and teachers' lives. Despite the black and white photos in some of the older yearbooks, you can feel the greenery seep through the pages.

Now, students on campus are greeted by a color palette of brown and muddled yellow. Furthermore, in the absence of the beloved big tree, which was chopped down for Measure D construction and safety reasons, the dull landscape of our campus is even more apparent.

Every Monday morning, students are greeted by a stubby tree stump symbolizing the crucifixion of the Loraxian ideals that most environmentally conscious teens revere. A healthy, foliage-filled campus that many seniors remember from their freshman year now only exists as an intangible memory of what once was.

"I really felt a spiritual connection with the foliage, especially the foliage between the 500s and the main building," said senior Gen Basich-Pease. It is apparent that some

students on campus were affected more than others and really need some more foliage in their school day.

Despite the emotions that the students often express, some are less concerned with the lack of foliage and are slightly irreverent towards the loss of the icon that was the big tree.

"I don't feel emotionally connected to that tree; it's not native. There's lots of native trees, like the California Live Oak. If that tree was there I would certainly miss it or raise a stink about cutting it down. But Eucalyptus trees are like weeds, and frankly, I don't miss it one bit," said English teacher Michael Lara.

Lara, although clearly connected to other trees emotionally, raises a somewhat disconnected view about the big tree that many others may share. His point is not entirely unfounded as the big tree was certainly causing some issues on campus. The unstable branches posed a potential aerial threat that should not be overlooked, nor should the thick roots causing some sewage issues that made the bathrooms what they are. However, it is school. We expect aerial attacks and subpar bathrooms just as readily as we expect good foliage.

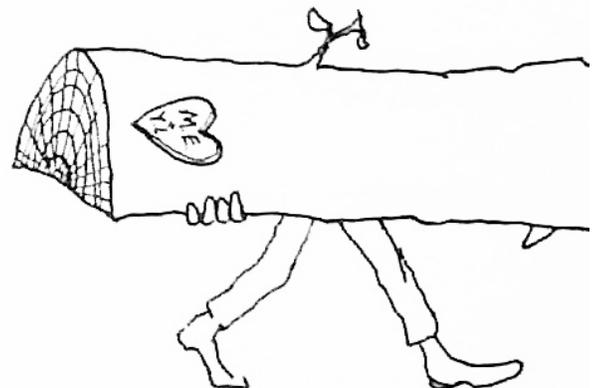
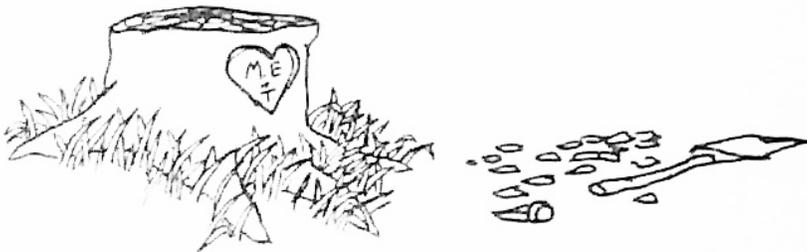
Although many veterans of the campus, students and teachers alike, share drastic

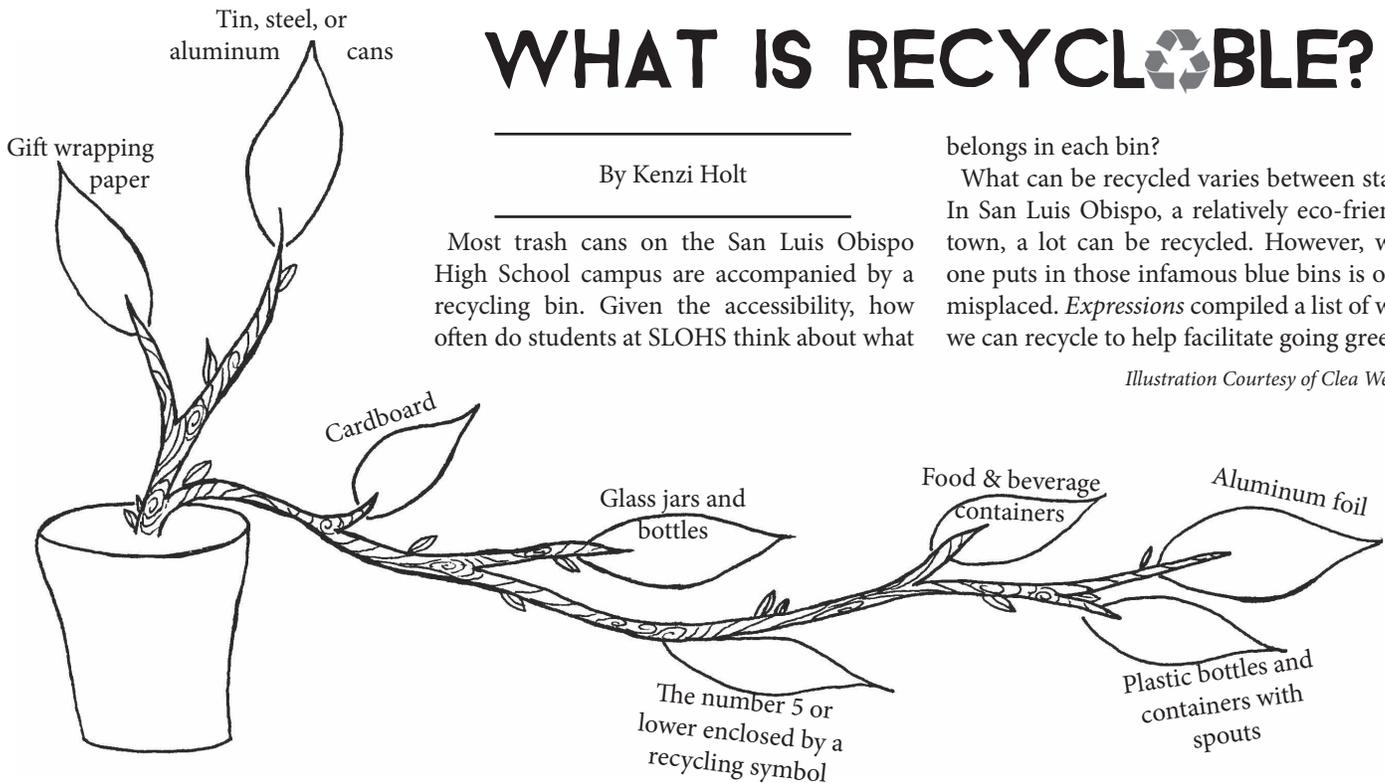
views on either side of the spectrum, some of the new faces on our campus had more reasoned and less emotionally clad feelings towards the greenery.

"The campus is beautiful, there's plenty of well developed trees and bushes...I'm from Fresno, so for the last ten years all I have seen is flat. Anything like this is nice," said new math teacher Mitchell McDuff.

McDuff's comments impart a sentiment that is often overlooked by each and every member of the campus and community as a whole to consider: relativity. San Luis Obispo is a beautiful place that many teens and adults take for granted. A microcosm of good weather and plenty of foliage to go around, each of us should indeed feel lucky to reside in such a place.

The fight for the safety of the big tree should not be belittled as it was a perfect demonstration of free thinking individuals trying to save something they loved, and the newfound lack of foliage certainly makes our campus less than what it used to be. However, the fight for the big tree was just a snapshot of students caring within our own little microcosm. We will all be in the real world soon enough, and hopefully the notion of fighting for what you care about persists long after graduation. For lack of a better metaphor, never stop fighting for your foliage.





## WHAT IS RECYCLABLE?

By Kenzi Holt

Most trash cans on the San Luis Obispo High School campus are accompanied by a recycling bin. Given the accessibility, how often do students at SLOHS think about what

belongs in each bin?

What can be recycled varies between states. In San Luis Obispo, a relatively eco-friendly town, a lot can be recycled. However, what one puts in those infamous blue bins is often misplaced. *Expressions* compiled a list of what we can recycle to help facilitate going green.

*Illustration Courtesy of Clea Wendt*

## LITTER-ALLY, PICK UP YOUR TRASH

By Delaiah Hastie

Across San Luis Obispo High School's beautiful campus, one will notice an issue that has slowly become more apparent in recent years. Strewn around the classrooms and hallways, you can see trash of all sorts: food wrappers, soda cans, old homework assignments, and more.

Littering has become a big problem on our campus, and despite trash cans and recycling bins being readily available to students, it seems to be getting worse. Many SLOHS seniors remember how the campus looked their freshman year, when the trees that have since been cut down were still here, and the littering situation wasn't nearly as bad as it is now.

"I have noticed a difference in the school. There were more trees and less trash, and the construction also definitely adds to the unattractiveness of our school," said senior Eve Hedges.

The parking lot is a receptacle of a lot of the trash that is floating around SLOHS. Students go off campus for lunch and do not pick up the garbage that they brought with them.

"In the parking lot I have definitely noticed that there is a lot of trash around cars, and people don't really pick it up," said Hedges.

SLOHS prides itself on being a beautiful campus, and the excess amount of litter takes away from that beauty. On top of this, the garbage that has accumulated on campus can end up in other places in the city, and eventually can have a broader effect than one may think.

"All of that litter piles up. Not only does it make the school look bad, but all of that trash will eventually travel to the roads and waterways," said senior Ellie Vendegna.

There is one group of students who are especially worried about the amount of trash floating around campus; the Environmental Club—started this year by se-

niors Emma Andersen, Ellie Vendegna, and Colby Gonzalez—focuses on helping the environment in our local community, starting with our own campus.

"I was inspired to start Environmental Club when I realized that there are so many people at SLOHS that love the environment and want to make a change, but no opportunities to express that, or no time to take the one environmental science class offered. I took it upon myself to create that opportunity for students," said Andersen.

Many students have different and creative ideas on how we can encourage students to keep the school clean, and in turn, take better care of our planet.

"We need to have more recycling bins and trash bins, but we also need to encourage people to put in the effort to throw away their trash," said Vendegna.

One way or another, the issue of trash at SLOHS needs to be tackled, and as Andersen said, "Awareness is the most powerful motivation."

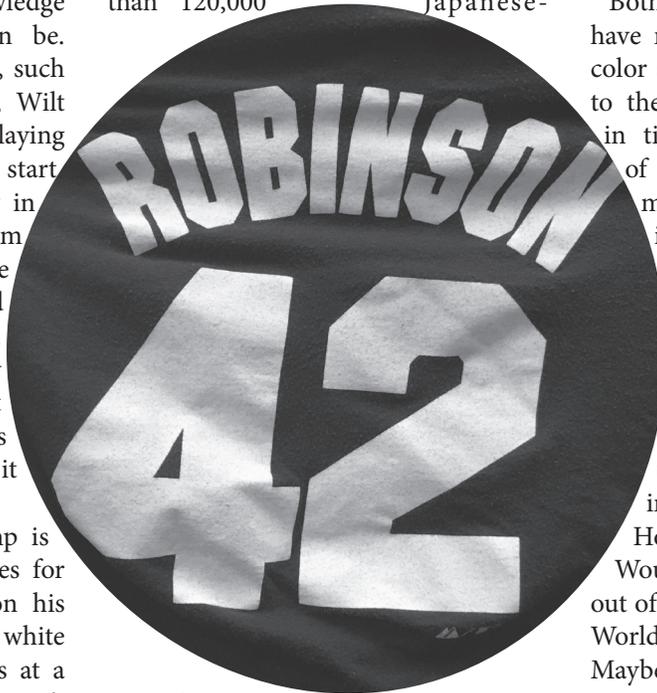
# WHAT WOULD 45 THINK OF 42?

By Max Lober

Picture yourself in the United States where there are only white people playing professional sports in the MLB, NFL, NBA, and NHL. Donald Trump, the President of the United States along with most others have no knowledge of how great international can be. Would he accept people of color, such as Jackie Robinson, Jim Brown, Wilt Chamberlain, and Grant Fuhr playing in professional sports? Would he start a series of negro teams to play in their own league, separated from the MLB? When asked about the topic, senior Wayne Garcia said President Donald Trump would, "be really shocked about it and try to make a big deal... if blacks just started to play professional sports I feel like a lot of people may find it strange or be shocked".

Many people question if Trump is respectful to all races or searches for equality for all people, based on his actions to not condemn the white supremacists and KKK members at a violent rally in Charlottesville, North Carolina. African Americans notably

started playing professional sports around the time that World War II ended. At the time, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was said to be racist, as he did sign the executive order to send more than 120,000 Japanese-



Americans to internment camps, isolated from the

rest of the country. He also did not invite Jesse Owens to the White House after the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany, when he historically won four gold medals in front of Adolf Hitler.

Both president Trump and Roosevelt have made remarks against people of color and those who have immigrated to the United States. As we go back in time, we see how the criticism of people like Jackie Robinson may have been influenced by the ideas and beliefs of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Could Trump possibly be as racist or even more racist to the point where if African Americans had never been in professional sports leagues up until now, would he have done the same thing? Would he have invited LeBron James to the White House if they win the NBA Finals? Would Aroldis Chapman have opted out of visiting Trump after winning the World Series with the Chicago Cubs? Maybe times have changed since 70 years ago or maybe they haven't.

Photo Courtesy of: Kara Hoover



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# Inequality Between Golf Teams?

By Sabrina Marks

The San Luis Obispo High School girls golf team has competed strongly in recent seasons, winning league last year. This being said, they aren't receiving the same privileges as the boys golf team, including access to nicer golf courses.

During the spring, the boys golf team occasionally gets to practice at the Country Club's golf course, while in the summer and fall, the girls team only practices at Dairy Creek.

"It's like playing golf in the middle of the desert compared to every other course we travel to for away matches. It's an issue because all of those practices eventually add up and help out when it comes to things like fairway shots and chipping, which should both be off grass.



The girls team doesn't get that opportunity, which is a bummer because we're good," said varsity girls golf player and junior Angelina Nash.

Nash also mentioned that Dairy Creek was much better maintained during the spring for the boys' season.

"They planted grass at the very end of our season so we couldn't play off it, kept it up and nice during the guys' season, then before our summer practices started again, let it die and turn back into rock-hard dirt. I'm not sure whose idea it was or if it was simply course funding and water shortage, but that was a major letdown," said Nash.

Whether it be intentional or merely coincidental, the girls golf team refuses to let these disadvantages affect their ability to win as they continue to dominate their league.



## COLLEGIATE SPORTS AT A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

By Max Lober

As professional sports have grown in popularity, it has become harder to land a spot on a team. Like most professional sports leagues, the NBA has an annual draft where they select players to be on their team. With only two rounds of selections, chances of getting selected are scarce, opposed to the MLB's draft, which has 40 rounds. With the NBA and MLB, you don't need to play on a college team to be drafted. It is quite common for baseball teams to draft high school athletes over college athletes and for NHL teams to draft players from club teams and junior hockey leagues over college athletes. This raises the question: is it better for someone to take one to four years out of their professional career to play in college or go to the pros straight out of high school?

**Expressions:** How do you think the competition and difficulty of playing a college sport has changed?

**Senior Lukas Mackin:** The competition for playing college sports

has changed dramatically with the introduction of club sports. Club allows people to play year round and become much better than if they were to only play during the sport's season. This increased talent has caused greater competition for a sports team.

**Junior Will Guy:** I would say playing a college sport has become much more sought out for and competitive. Since the cost of going to college has gone up, most student athletes are looking for a scholarship. Also, college coaches are much more proactive in recruiting today so the level of play is higher.

**Expressions:** How important do you think it is to play a college sport to get to the professional leagues?

**Mackin:** It's pretty crucial to play a college sport for two reasons. First, it's nearly if not completely impossible to make the pros from high school (excluding baseball). Second, it allows people to further develop their skills against greater talent before taking their skills to the best in the sport.

**Guy:** Playing a college sport is a great way to get recognized, but isn't completely necessary, since there are so many semi-pro organizations to play for in order to work your way into the professional leagues.

**Expressions:** If you were considered to be a top athlete, would you want to get drafted out of high school or go to college instead?

**Mackin:** I'd probably want to play in college so I could get acclimated to a higher level of competition.

**Guy:** Get it going right out of high school!

# The Growth of Unconventional Poetry

By Molly Foster



Poetry units at San Luis Obispo High School are often greeted with groans. Most students cringe at the thought of diffusing metaphorical bombs that manifest as endless stanzas of hidden symbolism. After all, it is much more appealing to binge watch one's favorite show on Netflix than to willingly decode lines of Shakespeare. Therefore, poetry has been forced to mold into various forms in order to thrive in popular culture.

In today's society, traditional printed books of poetry are unsuccessful: according to CNN, selling only 5,000 copies per individual compilation. As a result, many modern poets turn to social media outlets to share their art.

Self-published poet and illustrator Rupi Kaur initially started uploading poetry to her Tumblr blog. After gaining popularity, she moved on to Instagram where she currently has 1.6 million followers. This led to self-publishing a collection of her free-verse poems in "Milk and Honey", which has sold 1.4 million copies. Kaur's style is simplistic with overtones of prevalent topics like love, abuse, beauty standards, feminism, and racism.

Spoken poetry is making a comeback in the context of slam poetry competitions. During one of these performances, the poet performs their original work in front of an au-

dience of judges. Slam poetry has become a major platform for social justice.

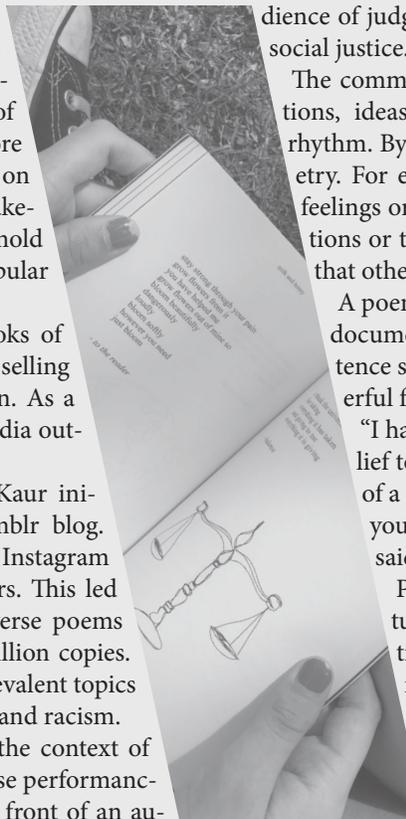
The common definition of poetry is the expression of emotions, ideas, or stories with unifying elements of style and rhythm. By this interpretation, music may be classified as poetry. For example, the verses in some rap songs emphasize feelings or experiences in order to illustrate the artist's emotions or thoughts, sharing them publicly with the intention that others will relate and connect to their vulnerability.

A poem holds the potential to tell stories, share ideas, and document emotions without the constraint of proper sentence structure or punctuation. It gives the author a powerful freedom to create something completely original.

"I have sixty pages of poems. I use poetry as a stress relief to vent my emotions. I write it all down in the form of a poem. My favorite aspect is that there are no rules, you just get to write whatever you feel like writing," said senior Kaylob Santos.

Poetry is beautiful and timeless in its ability to capture an audience by awakening their deepest emotions in a short span of time. Adapting to an evolving digital climate, poetry revitalizes itself amongst a new generation by being accessible on social media.

Photo courtesy of Molly Foster  
Source: [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)



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In the ring...

# Is good music dead?

By Drew Vander Wheele

The Beatles, The Jackson 5, David Bowie, Blondie, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, The Who, The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Queen, Nirvana, Elvis, Madonna... These musicians changed music. They were innovative, creative, and inspirational. They worked hard to play real instruments and sing with their own voices. But in the 2000s things changed.

More and more artists are coming out who produce the same sound over and over again, often with autotune or sampling, which becomes nothing but an expressionless mash of noise. Artists have started to steal musical sounds and expression from the past and countless artists are using autotune, which is computer generated. Even though there are still many good artists and musicians out there today, good music is being masked by these musical-wannabes. The people who claim that modern music is still amazing are the people who can't bring themselves to the cold hard truth: music is being killed by people who can't sing or play instruments well, and good music is going to be dead. Soon.

When people use music to gain popularity it causes trends that, in turn, deprive music of its artistic qualities. These qualities in music are needed because, not only are the artists expressing themselves, but they are also giving others an outlet to express themselves. Music is important to everyone. Many people have music that reminds them of a memory or feeling that is special to them alone. The bands and singers that create amazing music today are playing instruments and singing naturally without the help of computers to change their voices.

"I feel that a lot pop of music has very little creativity and is just played over and over again so it can't get it out of your head. Granted, there are pop artists who have tremendous skills, but a lot of it is just the same thing rebranded." said freshman Penny Dellapelle.

"There are so many amazing artists, and with the internet, it's much easier for them to spread their work. Music is more diverse and accessible than it's ever been. It's just that these artists aren't featured at the forefront of today's music, so the opposite seems true." said Dellapelle.

Some still feel that people with these views are elitist and stuck up, but really we just see the truth. We see that music needs to be diverse and full of new sounds, ways of expression, and feelings, just like it used to. It should be unique and artists should be true artists. So take time to sit down, steer away from the norm, and experience something that could open up your eyes.

By Noah Galambos

Music doesn't die and isn't born. It evolves, expands and contracts, wears different masks, and changes purposes. The media boom of the recent 2000s has caused the art as it exists today to swell to a new level of ubiquity, and with this, many of those raised by parents of a different time see the current state of the industry and wonder when it all went to hell. But there isn't a real answer to that question.

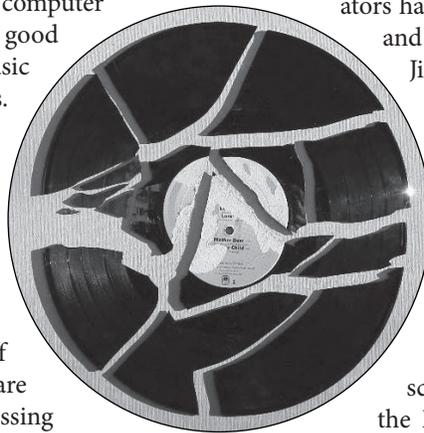
People who feel strongly about artistic integrity and musical truth have always railed against the system. The music industry has never entertained the same values as its artists, and conscious creators have always sought to produce more cutting edge

and honest art. One needs to look no further than Jimi Hendrix's incineration of the Star Spangled Banner, a musical reproach of the way things were, now so heavily referenced and sampled and covered that every B-list celebrity asked to sing the national anthem believes their rendition will become the new classic. This all occurs as audiences continue to either denounced the norm as "plastic" and "overproduced" or simply not care.

The same is true now, except on a far grander scale. Following the deregulation of the radio by the Reagan administration, the advent of internet streaming, and other industry changing events, music as an institution changed dramatically. As a result, fewer companies now own far more of the commercial market than ever have before.

This all chucks up to some major points that few people care to investigate when proselytizing the "death" of popular music. While on the surface, music as an industry seems to have swayed toward the ultimate money making machine, devoid of all artistic honesty. If one cares to actually examine the state of music today, one will find that there are more innovations taking place in the popular cannon than ever before. Artists like Kendrick Lamar, Snarky Puppy, Bruno Mars, Lin-Manuel Miranda (Hamilton), have made innovations in their respective genres, rap, jazz, pop, Broadway, that have reached out and affected society.

There has always been awful awful music backed by tons of money being produced and consumed. There have always been mediocre actors and actresses foraying into music because it "can't be that hard". There have always been artificial bands constructed for or from TV just like there has always been innovation and genius and art. Music is alive and well, and it's a mixed bag. It does one good not to denounce it outright.



# TRUMP PRESIDENCY: ONE YEAR SINCE IT ALL BEGAN

By Oliver Hicks

In the months leading up to last November's presidential election, Americans were pulled increasingly farther away from any centrist compromise by divisive rhetoric and extreme political views. After over a year and a half of political and social fervor manifesting in activism, heated dinner conversations, and long facebook posts, Election Day finally yielded President Donald Trump.

Elected in November and inaugurated in January, it's officially been a year since Trump's name has become synonymous with the highest office in the land. But what have we learned since then? Some San Luis Obispo High School students on campus have simply observed the effects of the Trump presidency and have strong opinions about his performance, while other feel more directly affected by his actions.

"The 2016 election as a whole to me showed that our country was going downhill," said senior Andrew Martin, "I was for Trump basically as the lesser of two evils, but I think I've been prov-

en wrong there. President Trump has shown me that he's not just putting on airs anymore. I actually legitimately think he's an idiot... I thought what he was doing was mostly just to get himself elected and he would clean himself up once he was, but clearly not."

While some have been disheartened in getting to know Trump as a President as opposed to a candidate, others remain enthusiastic about what he's set out to do for the United States of America.

"I think Donald Trump has made some mistakes, but there's no denying that social media and the news have taken things to their own side. So, I think it's just a huge cesspool of misinformation going to the American person. I do still support Donald Trump; he's still our Commander-in-Chief. I still think that some of his ideas are pretty good," said junior Cormac Jenkins.

"It's nice that we have a lot of Republican representatives in the Senate as well and a lot of Republican ideas are being represented because I'm kind of a minority here [in San Luis Obispo], even though I still have a genuine respect for people who see differently," said Jenkins.

Despite some people having strong opinions about national politics as a

whole, others have been more directly affected by the actions of the president.

"A lot of people that I know on food stamps and welfare are in danger, as well as people on Section Eight because it's so expensive to live out here in San Luis Obispo, even though a lot of people come here for SLO and a nice neighborhood," said junior Leiyahna Jefferson.

"I know student-wise cutting DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] is a big deal," said junior Joseph Castillo, "I personally know people that are affected by it, and it's scary."

Overall, it seems that our student body is divided over their views of Trump similarly to the rest of our nation. As for optics in general, students' opinions differ widely: he's either ruining the country or saving it. Opinions aside, however, some people's lives are changing drastically, and seemingly not for the better. Trump's actions have provoked plenty of activism, protests, and civic engagement from a multitude of adults and students alike. However, it does not change the fact that, despite long Facebook rants and heated discussions, policy is the end all be all of our society and our president is in fact a major player in directing it.



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## SLOHS Musicians Working in the Underground

By Noah Nelson

At a school where the arts are underfunded, it may come as a surprise for some to learn that a multitude of the peers they interact with everyday are quite explorative in their exhibition of individual creative talent. From primarily taking to the internet to grow a following, to gracing the stages of as many intimate venues as the timespan of a calendar year may permit, several students at San Luis Obispo High School are grinding day in and day out to express themselves in the highly personal way one only can through music.

*Expressions* recently met with several exceptionally gifted students to discuss their work. This is what transpired.

**Expressions:** What musical acts are you a part of outside of school?

**Junior John Foster:** I play drums in the black metal bands 'Nan Elmoth' and 'At Dusk,' the grindcore band 'xLesionsx,' and the web powerviolence band 'Decrepit Waifu.' My friend Kurtis and I are soon starting a new sludge project called Tarred and Feathered too.

**Expressions:** Who else joins you in comprising the aforementioned acts?

**Foster:** The two black metal bands I play

in are fronted by my lovely friends Torrey and Ross playing strings. My boys Rudy and Jesse head 'xLesionsx' and 'Decrepit Waifu' is lead by the Zaibatsu Crew.

**Expressions:** What do you plan to do with your ensembles in the future?

**Foster:** Our plans for the future are to make as much music and play as many shows as humanly possible. Catch us in some garages and livingrooms. Get at me for an address if you really really want to come. I don't think you do. You'll regret it. I swear.

**Expressions:** What do you do under the alias of 'Street Kid' and where can students find your material?

**Senior Robert Marin (Street Kid):** Youtube, Soundcloud, and Facebook. I'm a rapper.

**Expressions:** Do you produce as well?

**Marin:** I produce some stuff but I'm really not much of a producer. I have my own producer.

**Expressions:** What inspired you to rap?

**Marin:** I actually used to want to be a DJ and, I don't know, I just like music in general. I kind of just had a thing for rhyming words. It was like puzzles to me.

**Expressions:** Where do you plan to take the 'Street Kid' project in the future?

**Marin:** Try to make it go big. Put my name out there. I definitely want to get the key to this city.

**Expressions:** How long have you been producing as 'Red Limits'?

**Freshman Dylan Reiss (Red Limits):** I've been producing as Red Limits since I was 13. I started making music when I was ten; I made a Soundcloud and everything. I didn't have the name Red Limits yet and I wasn't very good at it [making music] so I took a break for about a year. Then I started back up when I was almost twelve and that's when I created Red Limits and started getting a lot better.

**Expressions:** What program do you use when creating your music?

**Reiss:** I use a program called Ableton Live.

**Expressions:** Have you experimented with any other programs in the past?

**Reiss:** I started off using Garageband which is just a free program that comes with an Apple Computer. But, I've just been using Ableton the whole time.

**Expressions:** Do you aspire to produce for big name artists someday? If so, who?

**Reiss:** I'm not sure yet where I'm going, but that would be pretty cool if that would happen. I'm not sure who, though.

**Expressions:** Where can students find your material?

**Reiss:** Youtube, Instagram, and Soundcloud.

**Expressions:** Under the name 'Red Limits'?

**Reiss:** 'redlimits' and 'redlimitssound'.



Photo Courtesy of John Foster

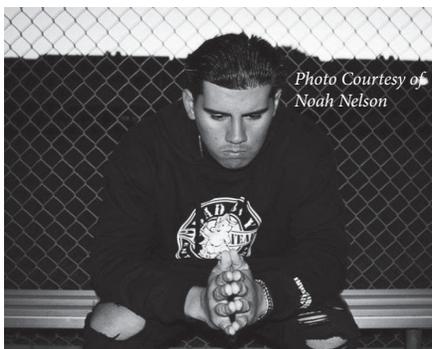


Photo Courtesy of Noah Nelson



Photo Courtesy of @redlimits instagram

**black metal:** a type of heavy metal music having lyrics that deal with Satan and the supernatural  
**grindcore:** an extreme genre of music that draws inspiration from some of the most abrasive-sounding rock and heavy met-

al subgenres, including hardcore punk, extreme metal, industrial and noise rock  
**web:** a person that is not Japanese but is obsessed with Japanese culture  
**powerviolence:** an extremely dissonant and fast subgenre of hardcore punk

which is closely related to grindcore  
**sludge:** an extreme style of music that originated through combining elements of doom metal and hardcore punk  
**Zaibatsu:** a large and powerful Japanese industrial business conglomerate

# Overthrow the Monarchy: A Look at School Dance Royalty



By Kailee Browning



San Luis Obispo High School dances, notorious for booming music, flaming temperatures, and a stern “no freaking” policy, are wildly popular among students. ASB works hard to average four dances per school year, and with a high turnout each time, the events are greatly successful in promoting school spirit. Of these, homecoming and prom are the only dances to crown a king and queen. Preceding the festivities, a school-wide election takes place and students are appointed to take part in the royal court. Is this a timeless tradition worth keeping, or an unreasonable popularity contest that undermines our school’s attempt to foster a community of equals?

Though SLOHS instigated the gender-neutral nomination policy just this past year, the practice of school dance royalty has existed for decades.

“It’s kind of meaningless, but at the same time, it’s a really nice to know you’re loved by the school,” said senior Stephen ZagRodny, who was recently crowned homecoming best actor. Though most students are aware of the frivolity of the tradition, few are actively motivated to discontinue the ritual at SLOHS.

“I think it’s a situation that you can’t really get rid of because it has so much support, though that really depends on which social

caste in the school you’re asking. Essentially, it’s a big popularity contest, but it only becomes a problem when you ascribe too much meaning to it,” said senior Maya Hampsey.

ASB adviser Jim Johnson has a rather negative view of the process.

“I do not like it. I think there are major problems with it, and it is still in existence out of tradition, which is not a good reason to do anything; things should be done because they are of value. ASB has made some changes to the homecoming festivities over the past five years to try to give it more value and be respectful to all,” said Johnson.

There’s no doubt that the tradition is well-intended, but it’s important to contemplate the darker theme embedded within such a glorified process. To handpick a few students and announce their supremacy over the rest sends a message that our school has little regard for the valuable idiosyncrasies of each individual on campus.

This exclusivity doesn’t coincide with the overarching ideals of our society, where equal treatment of everyone should be a firm requirement. Why, then, hasn’t school dance royalty been abolished? Photo Courtesy of Stephen ZagRodny



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