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**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

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CAMPUS CULTURE

Warriors Share Their Valentine's Day Plans



As Valentine's Day approaches, Stan State's students, faculty and staff eagerly share their plans for the day of love and affection.

STAN STATE NEWS

RIP Daisy



The Stan State campus community and animal lovers everywhere are shocked and heartbroken upon hearing the news of the sudden passing of Daisy, one of the many beloved campus cats.

CAMPUS CULTURE

Downtown Art Space Showcase



Stan State's Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program hosted its monthly art show and reception at the Art Space in downtown Turlock. Hundreds of Stan State students gathered in curiosity and awe as they listened eagerly to artists like James Deitz and Elizabeth Ruvalcaba...

Our Mission

Signal news strives with its reporting to **empower** fellow Stan State students and our community by **advocating** for **truth** and **equality** while **celebrating** our **diversity**.

We want to formally and with great respect acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Yokut Nation. Our campus, Stanislaus State, is built on the unceded ancestral lands of these Indigenous tribes. Thank you for letting us honor them and give our thanks to their ancestors and descendants for their constant and careful stewardship of this land.

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Cover Art by Ethan Hunt



Superheroes Spring Into Action at Turlock Comic-Con

by Connor Demings



Heroes and villains were able to settle their differences for one day to give their fans the opportunity to meet with them at this Sunday's Comic-Con at the Turlock Fairgrounds. The annual Turlock Comic-Con brought everyone together to dress as their favorite characters, meet celebrities, and wander through the treasure trove of various memorabilia. The convention also provides an outlet for local artists to promote their creations.

Trevaughn Malik Roach-Carter, author of *The Marked One*, is one of the many artists who attended the convention. His love for the science fiction genre has ignited his pursuit to create a series of his own.

"I've always liked to read and I've enjoyed writing as a hobby," said Roach-Carter. "I like science fiction and fantasy as well. When I started to write, I naturally gravitated towards science fiction."

Roach-Carter discussed his book in further detail. "In the book, there are super-powered humans who have been captured and hunted. This book was inspired by the issues of racism and the events of the Holocaust. Situations where groups were targeted and oppressed by the majority," Roach-Carter explained.

While the convention helps promote the endeavors of local artists, celebrities were also in attendance. One of those celebrities is C. Andrew Nelson, who is most known for his physical portrayal of Darth Vader in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Nelson worked in the special effects industry as well.

Nelson described his work in special effects as, "a perfect experience working in Industrial Light Magic." Nelson also expressed his joy towards working on the effects for the Star Wars prequels, *Galaxy Quest*, and *The Perfect Storm*.

Nelson's work in the special effects industry can be seen in a wide array of movies. He has done work for films like *Enchanted*, *Rocky Balboa*, *Jurassic Park 3*, and many more.

Nelson believes that the behind-the-scenes work for films is not always treasured or recognized by the general public. "It may be beautiful cinema magic when you see it all projected and when you finish the project, but it is also done in many months, and it's a very tedious process. Sometimes your work makes it into the final film and sometimes it doesn't. Despite all that, it is an incredible adventure that I am very happy to be apart of," Nelson said.

The Turlock Comic-Con provides a space for the community to bond over a love for movies, comics and television shows. It also gives the fans a chance to meet the people who were responsible for creating these beloved projects.

The Love Doctor

by Kerry Young



Relationships are complicated. While most of us settle to Google the answers to love's persistent questions, one Stan State professor has devoted years of her life to researching the science behind intimate relationships.

Dr. Annie Guichard earned her Ph.D in Social Psychology, focusing specifically on close relationships and the dynamics within those relationships. Dr. Guichard shares her extensive knowledge of relationship dynamics in her course, Intimate Relationships, at Stan State.

Arguably one of the more relatable classes on campus, Intimate Relationships explores issues ranging from dating apps to maintaining intimacy through old age. No matter your major or your career goals, Dr. Guichard's field of study is likely to intrigue you.

As Dr. Guichard explained, the interest in relationships is a common thread that links all humans together. "Almost everyday, all of us have these opportunities to interact with others...we're always trying to figure out other people and the impact we're having on them, and I think we all have our own experiences, so we interpret those things based on our history and our unique perspective of looking at the world, then there's the science underlying these things."

The underlying science is where Dr. Guichard's field of study lays. She described how questions regarding relationships are researched using the scientific method.

Dr. Guichard said that scientists attempt to answer these questions by "looking at patterns that are generally true for most people, which can give us information about what the data suggests about how we form relationships."

With Valentine's Day fresh in our minds, the curiosity surrounding relationships

may be especially strong this month, so Dr. Guichard agreed to share some of her knowledge with us.

First, she explained what intimate relationships really are. "When people in our culture hear the words 'intimate relationship,' they make that leap to romantic relationship, and that isn't always the case. 'Intimate relationship' is a broader term that applies to both close romantic relationships [and] our close friendships."

Dr. Guichard described some of the elements that make a relationship intimate. These elements include intimacy, trust and interdependence, the idea that your actions affect the other person and vice versa.

"I think that there's a lot that goes into an intimate relationship, but I think it boils down to the closeness you feel, and the trust. Without trust, it's hard to have any kind of relationship with someone," Dr. Guichard explained.

On the subject of trust, Dr. Guichard explained why certain people tend to be more jealous and have more trouble trusting their partners than others, saying that a person's history, both in relationships and in childhood, can greatly contribute to their attitudes towards relationships in the future.

If someone was cheated on or lied to in a past relationship, they are much more likely to be suspicious of their partners moving forward. If you have been cheated on, Dr. Guichard explained that "your fears were validated," and that "going into your next relationship, that might make you a little more vulnerable to [questioning] 'Can I really trust what my partner is saying?'"

In addition to the affects of past relationships, one's childhood experience can also contribute to behavioral tendencies within a romantic relationship.

Dr. Guichard described the findings of psychologist John Bowlby. "One of the key aspects of child development is their development of a particular attachment style, which is formed through repeated interactions between the child and their primary caregiver or caregivers."

According to Bowlby, an infant whose needs were met appropriately and



Illustration by Peter Shalllow

consistently will develop a secure attachment style. However, an infant whose needs were met inconsistently or not at all is more likely to develop an insecure attachment style.

"It tends to be the insecure, anxiously attached individuals who are more vigilant for signs that their partner is losing interest in them or developing interest in someone else," said Dr. Guichard.

The good news is that your attachment style is not set in stone. Someone who has an insecure attachment style can develop a secure attachment style if they enter into a healthy and supportive relationship during adulthood.

Developing a healthy and fulfilling relationship takes work, though. This is something that Dr. Guichard greatly emphasized.

"We grow up believing in the happily ever after, and we are often not prepared for the work that being in a relationship actually takes," said Dr. Guichard. "You can get your happily ever after, but it takes work. It's an everyday commitment to this relationship, this partner and making choices that will

help maintain the relationship rather than undermine it,” she continued.

When thinking about what makes a relationship work, researchers turn to those who have had years of experience. Couples who have been together for decades are the perfect sources for answering questions about what it takes to maintain intimacy over a lifetime.

According to Dr. Guichard, the answer that is most often given by these couples is that they feel as though they are married to their best friend.

Since our society puts so much importance on the role that sex and attraction play in relationships, this answer may come as a surprise, but Dr. Guichard explained that simply enjoying your partner’s company is more important in the long run.

“It’s not that at 80 years old, they are having mind blowing sex (which they might be), but it’s that ‘I am married to someone [and] I like their company,’” explained Dr. Guichard.

Another key to a long and healthy relationship is open communication. Being able to talk to your partner about the things that you like and dislike about the relationship is hugely important.

Dr. Guichard said that problems in relationships often occur because people do not address the issues that come up.



Ryan Pust and Kerry Young. (Photo courtesy of Ryan Pust)

We are often taught that we should avoid conflict at all costs, but Dr. Guichard argued that conflict, as long as it is not abusive, is actually helpful.

If we choose to ignore all of the issues that come up within our relationships, resentments will soon begin to build up. The more problems that we ignore, the more passive aggressive we will become. This is

not fair to our partners because they may not even know what they did to bother us.

Rather than letting resentments build up and turn into an even bigger problem, it is best to address each conflict as soon as it occurs.

This is another area where the elements of trust and communication play a role in intimate relationships. “I have to trust my partner enough to have those hard conversations,” said Dr. Guichard, adding that, “If you think bringing up something that bothers you is a threat to your relationship, then you need to look at the foundation of your relationship.”

According to Dr. Guichard trust and communication form the basis for many of the solutions to relationship challenges.

As students, we face unique challenges in our relationships. Dr. Guichard described some of these challenges. “Many of our students are trying to balance full-time college status with full-time work, and that leaves very little time leftover to pursue their own interests and hobbies let alone maintain a relationship.”

It can be hard to find the time to put in the work that is necessary for maintaining a relationship, while simultaneously trying to meet your own needs. Dr. Guichard explained that relationships require a constant push and pull between what is good for you personally and what is good for the relationship as a whole.



Adrian Gutierrez and Ciara Rios Colon. (Photo courtesy of Ciara Rios Colon)

Although those decisions can be hard to make, it may feel easier to handle if you have open communication about it with your partner. Understanding their expectations for the relationship and communicating your own personal needs goes a long way in navigating these tough decisions.

Another challenge that couples may not have faced before college is the increase in potential partners that occurs when moving to a larger campus. “The dating pool has expanded greatly. You have more dating options, which could have a negative impact on a relationship,” said Dr. Guichard.

This could be a problem because the more attractive you find the alternative options, the less likely you are to be committed to your current partner. However, the good news is that if you have already become emotionally committed to your partner, your brain does some of the work for you.

Dr. Guichard explained that our perceptions actually shift once we are committed to a partner. “The more committed we are to someone, usually because we like them and we are invested in our relationship, the less attractive we find other people.”

In fact, our brains perceive objectively attractive people as less attractive. “There’s this really interesting cognitive shift that happens where I find my partner more attractive over time and I find people, who I would have found physically attractive, less attractive,” Dr. Guichard says.

However, Dr. Guichard pointed out that you will always find a variety of people attractive, and accepting this as a fact of life rather than a threat to your current relationship will go a long way in easing your stress. Trusting that you and your partner are committed enough to find others attractive and continue to choose each other is key.

Although physical attraction may be the thing that encourages us to get to know a potential partner, their personalities are, ultimately, the most important thing.

“I love that our brains, without us even being consciously aware of it, are altering perceptions to enhance our relationship and give our relationship a better chance at lasting,” Dr. Guichard said.

As we struggle to navigate the confusing reality of relationships, Dr. Guichard has given us some valuable advice to consider. Communication, respect, honesty and trust are all extremely valuable, but the most important thing to remember is to cherish the simple pleasure of being together because, in the end, that’s all that really matters. ■



Illustration by Peter Shalllow

La Doctora del Amor

por Kerry Young



Relaciones son complicadas. Mientras la mayoría de nosotros nos conformamos en buscar las respuestas de nuestras cuestiones de amor por internet, una profesora en la Universidad de Stan State ha dedicado su vida a investigar la ciencia detrás de las relaciones íntimas.

La Dr. Annie Guichard obtuvo su doctorado en Psicología Social, enfocándose específicamente en relaciones cercanas y la dinámica entre las relaciones. La Dr. Guichard comparte su amplio conocimiento de la dinámica entre relaciones en su curso, Relaciones Íntimas, en Stan State.

Posiblemente una de las clases más relatable en la universidad, Relaciones Íntimas explora problemas, de aplicaciones de citas por internet a mantener intimidad en la vejez. No importa tu enfoque de estudio o objetivos profesionales, es probable que el enfoque de estudio de la Dr. Guichard te intrigue.

Como explicó la Dr. Guichard, el interés en relaciones es un hilo conductor que une a todos los humanos. “Casi cada día, todos tenemos oportunidades a interactuar con otros...siempre estamos tratando de entender a otras personas y el impacto que tenemos en ellos, y yo creo que todos tenemos nuestras propias experiencias, entonces interpretamos todo basado en nuestras historias y nuestro propio perspectiva de ver el mundo, y luego está la ciencia que subyace a estas cosas.”

La subyacente ciencia es donde cae el enfoque de estudio de la Dr. Guichard. Ella describe como cuestiones sobre relaciones son investigadas usando el modo científico.

La Dr. Guichard explicó como científicos intentan responder las cuestiones “estudiando similitudes que generalmente son ciertos para la mayoría de la gente, y que nos puede dar información de que la data sujeta de cómo formamos relaciones.”

Con el Día de San Valentín fresco en nuestras mentes, la curiosidad alrededor de relaciones puede ser especialmente fuerte este mes,



Sabrina Garcia y Andrew Vazquez. (Photo courtesy of Sabrina Garcia)

entonces la Dr. Guichard aceptó prestar parte de su conocimiento con nosotros.

Primero, ella explica que realmente define una relación íntima. “Cuando gente en nuestra cultura oye las palabras ‘relaciones íntimas’, ellos hacen un salto a relaciones románticas, y eso no es siempre el caso. ‘Relaciones íntimas’ es un término más amplio que aplica a relaciones románticas cercanas [y] a nuestras amistades cercanas.”

La Dr. Guichard describe que son unos de los elementos que hacen una relación íntima. Estos elementos incluyen la intimidad, confianza y interdependencia, la idea que tus acciones afectan a la otra persona y viceversa.

“Creo que hay mucho que entra en una relación íntima, pero creo que se reduce a la cercanía que sientes, y la confianza. Sin confianza, es difícil tener cualquier tipo de relación con alguien,” dijo la Dr. Guichard.

En el sujeto de confianza, la Dr. Guichard explicó por qué ciertas personas tienden ser más celosas y tienen más dificultad confiando sus parejas que otros, diciendo que el historial de una persona, tal en relaciones y en la infancia, puede contribuir a sus actitudes en cualquier relación en el futuro.

Si a alguien le fueron infiel o les mintieron en una relación pasada, ellos son más probable a ser sospechosos de sus parejas en el futuro. Si te han sido infiel, la Dr. Guichard explicó que “tus miedos son válidos,” y que “entrando en tu próxima relación, te puede hacer más vulnerable a [cuestionar] ‘Puedo confiar lo que mi pareja me dice?’”

Además de los efectos de relaciones pasadas, nuestra experiencia en la infancia puede contribuir a tendencias de comportamiento entre una relación romántica.

La Dr. Guichard describió los hallazgos de el psicólogo John Bowlby. “Uno de los aspectos claves en el desarrollo de un niño es su desarrollo de un particular estilo de apego, que es formado por interacciones repetidas entre el niño y el cuidador primario o cuidadores.”

De acuerdo a Bowlby, un infante del cual sus necesidades se cumplieron inconstantemente o no se cumplieron es más probable a desarrollar un estilo de apego inseguro.

“Tiende ser los individuales que son inseguros o ansiosamente apegados, que son más vigilantes en señales que su pareja está perdiendo interés en ellos o desarrolla interés en alguien más,” dijo la Dr. Guichard.

La buena noticia es que tu estilo de apego no está grabado en piedra. Alguien que tiene un estilo de apego inseguro puede desarrollar un estilo de apego seguro si entran a una relación saludable y llena de apoyo durante su edad adulta.

Desarrollando una relación de apoyo y saludable toma mucho trabajo. Esto es algo que la Dr. Guichard enfatizó mucho.

“Crecemos creyendo en un feliz para siempre, y no siempre estamos preparados a cuánto trabajo se requiere en una relación,” dijo la Dr. Guichard. “Puedes obtener tu feliz para siempre, pero requiere trabajo. Es un compromiso de cada día a esta relación, esta pareja y tomar decisiones que te ayudan mantener la relación en vez de destruirla,” ella continuó.

En cuanto pensar en que puede ser una relación funcionar,



Imelda Suarez y Isaac Gonzalez. (Photo courtesy of Imelda Suarez)

investigadores recurren a personas que tienen años de experiencia. Parejas que han estado juntos por años son las fuentes perfectas para encontrar respuestas a cuestiones de que se debe hacer para mantener la intimidad toda la vida.

De acuerdo a la Dr. Guichard, la respuesta más común entre las parejas es que ellos sienten que se casaron con su mejor amigo.

Nuestra sociedad pone mucha importancia en el papel que sexo y atracción juegan en relaciones, la respuesta puede sorprenderlos, pero la Dr. Guichard explicó que simplemente disfrutar la compañía de tu pareja es más importante a la larga.

“No es que a los 80 años, ellos están teniendo sexo increíble (que puede ser), pero es que ‘Me case con alguien [y] me gusta su compañía,’” explicó la Dr. Guichard.

Otra clave a una relación larga y saludable es comunicación abierta. Poder hablar con tu pareja de cosas que te gustan o disgustan de la relación es muy importante.

La Dr. Guichard dijo que problemas en relaciones ocurren porque hay gente que no les gusta hacerse cargo del problema que resulta. Nos enseñan que el conflicto debe ser evitado a todo costo, pero la Dr. Guichard argumentó que conflicto, mientras no sea abusivo, ayuda mucho en una relación.

Si decidimos ignorar todos los problemas que surgen dentro de las relaciones, resentimientos nacen y crecen. Lo más que ignoramos los problemas y no nos comunicamos, lo más que guardamos resentimientos. Esto no es justo para nuestras parejas porque ellos ni se dan cuenta de que nos que molesta.

En vez de guardar resentimiento y crearlo en un problema más grande, es mejor abordar cada conflicto a medida que ocurre.

Esta es otra área donde los elementos de confianza y comunicación juegan un papel en relaciones íntimas. “Tengo que tener suficiente confianza en mi pareja para tener conversaciones difíciles,” dijo la Dr. Guichard, añadiendo que, “Si tu creas que hablar de algo que te molesta es una amenaza a tu relación, tienes que mirar la fundación de tu relación.”

De acuerdo a la Dr. Guichard, confianza y comunicación forma la base para muchas de las soluciones a los retos de las relaciones.

Como estudiantes, enfrentamos desafíos únicos en nuestras relaciones. La Dr. Guichard explicó uno de estos desafíos. “Muchos de nuestros estudiantes están tratando de balancear ser estudiante de tiempo completo y trabajar tiempo completo, y eso deja muy poco tiempo para perseguir sus propios intereses y pasatiempos y menos tiempo para mantener una relación.”

Puede ser difícil encontrar el tiempo que se requiere para mantener una relación y a la misma vez tratar de satisfacer tus necesidades. La Dr. Guichard explica que relaciones requieren una constante batalla entre lo que es bueno para ti personalmente y lo que es bueno para la relación entera.

Aunque estas decisiones pueden ser difíciles, puede sentirse más fácil para manejar si tienes comunicación abierta con tu pareja. Comprendiendo las expectativas para la relación y comunicando tus necesidades personales recorre un largo camino en la navegación de estas decisiones difíciles.

Otro reto que parejas no enfrentaron antes de empezar la universidad es el aumento de posibles parejas diferentes que el individuo enfrenta al mudarse a la universidad. “El grupo de citas se ha expandido enormemente. Tienes más opciones, que puede tener un impacto negativo en tu relación,” dijo la Dr. Guichard.

Este puede ser un problema porque lo más atractivo que encuentras a las parejas alternativas, lo menos que te compromises a tu pareja actual. Lo bueno es, si ya estás emocionalmente comprometido a tu pareja, tu cerebro hace parte del trabajo para ti.

La Dr. Guichard explicó que nuestras percepciones cambian cuando nos comprometemos con alguien. “Lo más comprometido que estamos con alguien, usualmente porque los queremos o estamos invertidos en la relación, lo menos atractivo que hallamos a otras personas.”

De hecho, nuestros cerebros perciben a las personas objetivamente atractivas como menos atractivas. “Hay un interesante cambio cognitivo que ocurre donde yo encuentro mi pareja más atractiva al pasar el tiempo y encuentro personas, que usualmente encontraba físicamente atractiva, menos atractiva,” dijo la Dr. Guichard.

Sin embargo, la Dr. Guichard señaló que siempre encontraremos una variedad de personas atractivas y aceptando esto como parte de la vida en vez de una amenaza en tu relación actual ayudará a aliviar el estrés. Confiando que tú y tu pareja están cometidos suficientemente para encontrar a otras personas atractivas y continuar a escoger uno al otro es clave.

Aunque atracción física puede ser la cosa que nos alenta a conocer una pareja potencial, su personalidad, últimamente, es lo más importante.

“Amo que nuestro cerebro, sin que seamos consciente de él, está alterando nuestras percepciones para mejorar nuestra relación y darle a nuestra relación una mejor oportunidad de florecer,” dijo la Dr. Guichard.

Mientras luchamos por navegar la confusa realidad de relaciones, la Dr. Guichard nos ha dado consejos valiosos para considerar. Comunicación, respeto, honestidad y confianza son extremadamente valiosos, pero lo más importante es recordar a disfrutar el simple placer de estar juntos porque, al final, es lo que verdaderamente importa. ■



Sabrina Garcia y Andrew Vazquez. (Photo courtesy of Sabrina Garcia)

Sweets by Ang: Warming Hearts One Baked Good at a Time

by Christopher Correa



As holidays like Valentine's Day near, many people struggle to find gifts that will satisfy their significant others. Luckily, the struggle is over as Stan State student Angelique Baptista (sophomore, Liberal Studies) has recently launched her small pastry business, Sweets by Ang!

Baptista explained that she has always had a passion for baking. She began baking in high school for her loved ones and herself, just for fun. Her baked goods would end up becoming so popular and loved among her family and friends, that they soon recommended that she start selling her creations.

"I've always baked for my family and friends for special occasions like birthdays, holidays and simple get-togethers," Baptista explained. "They've always encouraged me to start selling my baked goods, so over the break, I had more time on my hands to actually consider it and thought it would be fun," she continued.

Baptista runs her small business strictly through Instagram, posting pictures of some her most recent creations.



Angelique Baptista (junior, Liberal Studies) has turned her hobby of baking into a small business. (Photo courtesy of Angelique Baptista)



Sweets by Ang has received a growing number of orders as Valentine's Day approaches. (Photo courtesy of Angelique Baptista)

Some of the many pastries and desserts that Sweets by Ang has to offer include: cookies, cake pops, chocolate covered strawberries, pies, cakes, cupcakes, French macarons and so much more. Baptista also offers customized items, including special occasion boxes and dessert tables.

Of her wide variety of delectable offerings, Baptista says that her most popular items thus far are her Oreo cupcakes and cheesecake. She also added that her chocolate covered strawberries have become a hot commodity during the Valentine's season.

Baptista sells her creations individually and in bulk. The prices range between \$2-\$35 depending on the product, size and quantity.

Sweets by Ang has only been in business for a couple of months, but Baptista says that she has been met with a plethora of positive feedback and support. Although she has achieved quick success, Baptista is trying to stay true to herself and her genuine love for baking. "I've received such a positive reaction, but my hope is to keep it small, but only time will tell," Baptista said.

For more information or to place an order for any event, holiday or occasion, follow Baptista's business on Instagram: [@sweetsbyangg](https://www.instagram.com/sweetsbyangg).

Black History Month: Uncovering a Harsh Reality

by Aliyah Stoeckl



According to research conducted by Data USA, the enrolled student population at Stan State in 2017 for both undergraduate and graduate African American students was a shy 2.35 percent. Today, African American students continue to suffer in silence as they still face these troubling statistics, and because of this, are using Black History Month as an opportunity to spread awareness.

Stan State Black Student Union (BSU) secretary Aliyah Johnson expressed her concern for the lack of student engagement and inclusion of African American students.

“We have a high minority count for Hispanic-Latino culture, which is nice when it comes to big events and outcomes for them. We do try to have those events on campus too, but a lot of times, those students are so focused on just the school aspect because they got into college,” said Johnson.

The fact that the number of black students on campus has remained complacent, and that these students continue to be underrepresented, might cause a decline in future enrollment.

“When I first got here, I thought it would be a diverse campus because of [its] concentration on Hispanics... I thought it would be the same amount for black people, but it was very outnumbered. I’m the only black person in all my classes,” explained BSU member Sasha Thompson (freshman, Fine Arts).

As a freshman, Thompson hoped that other students and professors would be inclusive, but that was never the case.

“It gets so awkward. They talk about blackness and everyone expects a black person to have an opinion on everything. Everyone stares at me as if I have to say something. It shows around the whole campus too,” said Thompson.



Members of the Black Student Union discuss the importance of representation and inclusion on campus at their meeting in main dining. (Signal photo/Aliyah Stoeckl)

Thompson sadly admitted that while searching for sororities, there were none that she could culturally relate to.

“[The school] says [they] appreciate diversity, but then you’re going to be the only black person there, so you become the token, and no one wants to feel like that,” explained Thompson.

As a Hispanic-serving institution, questions of “do we matter” are still being left unanswered to other cultures.

In the midst of Black History Month, the celebration for culture is being appreciated, but actions are being demanded for the sake of African American students.

“It’s so important to spread our culture, especially on this campus because we are so underrepresented. This is a time [when] we get together to celebrate our blackness and achievements,” said Christen Wynne (senior, Communication Studies).

For Wynne, one month to appreciate her culture at school is simply not enough.

Although there is plenty of work to be done, there is still hope for moving past being seen as an outcast. The steps are slowly being taken through the honoring of legacies, which in many cases take the form of inspirational speeches targeting black students and their communities.

It is crucial for the African American student population to feel empowered and supported by their educators, which is why many campus departments have come together to host more culturally diverse events in the future.

On February 28, Stan State will be hosting a free public event in honor of track and field gold medalist Dr. Tommie Smith, where he will also be giving a speech. Dr. Smith is well-known for his black power stance at the 1968 Summer Olympics, which was a monumental moment for pushing against racism and injustices towards African Americans.

History professor, Dr. Bret Carroll helped in the efforts of bringing Dr. Tommie Smith to Stan State for Black History month.

“His appearance here will help our students and members of our wider regional community connect to a now-older generation of leading activists and learn important historical lessons about the politics of race as the Black Lives Matter movement and the example of Colin Kaepernick inspire a younger generation”. ■

Mes Historial de Afroamericanos: Descubriendo una Dificil Realidad

por Aliyah Stoeckl



De acuerdo a una investigación conducida por Data USA, la población estudiantil matriculada en la universidad de Stan State en el 2017 para pregrado y posgrado estudiantes Afroamericanos era 2.35 por ciento. Ahora, estudiantes Afroamericanos continúan sufriendo en silencio mientras se enfrentan a las estadísticas preocupantes, y por esto, usan el Mes Historial de Afroamericanos como una oportunidad para dar reconocimiento y hablar sobre el problema.

La secretaria de La Unión Estudiantil de Afroamericanos (BSU) Alliyah Johnson expresó su preocupación por la falta de compromiso y inclusión estudiantil de estudiantes Afroamericanos.

“Tenemos un alto número de minorías para la cultura Hispano-Latino, que es bueno cuando llega a eventos grandes y tienen buenos resultados. Nosotros también tratamos de tener estos eventos en campus, pero muchas de las veces, esos estudiantes están tan enfocados en la escuela porque los admitieron a la universidad en primer lugar,” dijo Johnson.

El hecho de que el número de estudiantes Afroamericanos en el campus se haya mantenido complaciente, y que estos estudiantes sigan sin representación, puede causar una disminución en matriculaciones en el futuro.

“Cuando de primero llegue, yo creí que iba ser un campus diverso por [su] concentración en Hispanos...Yo creí que iba ser igual para los Afroamericanos, pero estaba equivocada. Yo soy la única Afroamericana en todas mis clases,” explicó miembro de BSU Sasha Thompson (primer año, Artes Finos).

Como estudiante de primer año, Thompson esperaba que otros estudiantes y profesores serían más inclusivos, pero eso nunca fue el caso.

“Se pone tan incómodo. Ellos hablan de lo que es ser Afroamericano y todos esperan que un Afroamericano tenga una opinión en todo el sujeto. Todos me miran como si tuviera algo que decir. Esto se mira en todo el campus también,” dijo Thompson.

Thompson tristemente admitió que mientras buscaba hermandades, no había ninguna en la cual ella culturalmente se relacionaba.

“[La escuela] dice [que ellos] aprecian la diversidad, pero luego vas a ser la única Afroamericana ahí, entonces te haces un premio, y nadie quiere sentirse así,” explicó Thompson.

Como una institución que sirve a los Hispanos, cuestiones de “en verdad importamos” todavía no tienen respuesta para otras culturas.

En el medio de el Mes Historial de Afroamericanos, se aprecia la celebración por la cultura, pero se demandan acciones por el bien de los estudiantes Afroamericanos.

“Es muy importante repartir nuestra cultura, especialmente en este campus porque somos subrepresentado. Este es el tiempo [que] nos juntamos para celebrar nuestra cultura y logros,” dijo Christen Wynne (cuarto año, Estudios Comunicativos).

Para Wyne, un mes para apreciar su cultura en la escuela no es suficiente.

Aunque hay mucho más trabajo que se tiene que hacer, todavía hay esperanza de pasar de ser visto como una persona marginada. Los pasos han sido lentos en honrar los legados,

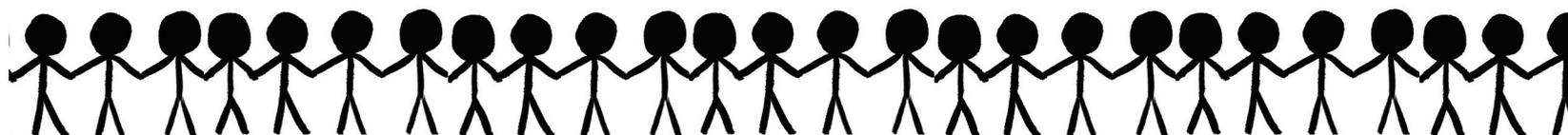
que en muchos casos toman la forma de discursos inspiradores dirigidos a estudiantes Afroamericanos y sus comunidades.

Es crucial que la población estudiantil de Afroamericanos se sientan empoderados y apoyados por sus educadores, es por eso que departamentos de la universidad se han unido para organizar eventos culturalmente más diversos en el futuro.

El 28 de Febrero, la universidad de Stan State será anfitrión a un evento público honrando medallista de oro en pisto y campo, el Dr. Tommie Smith, donde el también dará un discurso. El Dr. Tommie Smith es conocido por su postura de poder negro en las Olimpiadas del Verano del 1968, que fue un momento monumental para luchar contra el racismo y las injusticias hacia los Afroamericanos.

El Dr. Bret Carroll, profesor de Historia ayudó en los esfuerzos en para traer al Dr. Tommie Smith a la universidad de Stan State para el Mes Historial de Afroamericanos.

“Su apariencia aquí va a ayudar a nuestros estudiantes y miembros de nuestra comunidad regional a conectar con una generación más mayor de activistas y aprender históricamente importante lesiones en la política de raza, como el movimiento de Black Lives Matter (movimiento en contra de la brutalidad policial) y el ejemplo de Colin Kaepernick que puede inspirar a la generación más joven.” ■



Campus Community Stays Connected Through Questionable “Wildfire” App

by Christopher Correa



There are a number of existing social media platforms available in the palms of our hands. As time goes on, more and more of these platforms and mobile applications are being invented. One social app that has grown in popularity among several students at Stanislaus State is Wildfire.

Wildfire is a location-oriented, safety alert application that was created by a group of four friends from UC Berkeley after one of the friends, Wildfire CEO Hriday Kemburu, was attacked by masked men at night, while walking home. Although he was able to escape safely, file a police report, and send an alert out on his Facebook group, he wishes that he could have immediately alerted others of the masked men in the area, thus leading him to create the app in 2015.

The Wildfire app made its way to the Stan State campus at the beginning of 2019’s fall semester after the company sent out numerous emails to students. While it’s not clear exactly how Wildfire was able to obtain the email addresses of every Stan State student, it does not seem that any security or privacy laws were violated.

Even with the emails that were clearly coming from an unknown, outside source that has no affiliation with the school, the Signal estimates (by looking at average number of views a top post on the app receives) that about 10 percent of Stan State’s current student population has a registered Wildfire account.

When registering for a Wildfire account, students are immediately required to enter the name of their school in order to ensure that only those who are members of your campus community can receive the messages and alerts that actually concern them as students.

Although the app was initially made for safety alerts, it has begun to function similarly to other social media platforms, like Twitter and Facebook, where funny photos and emotional vents can be posted. In

order to post on the platform, you must choose a category for your post to fall under. Categories include: Chatter, Tips, Memes, Buy/Sell, Student Problems, Campus Crush, Events and Safety Alerts.

When somebody creates a post under the Safety category, all users that are registered with the app, no matter their notification settings, receive a post notification on their device, making the company’s claims that safety is their number one priority hold some truth.

All posts, no matter the category they are listed as, will show up on the user’s main timeline, but the option to filter posts by category is available as well.

It is also much easier to provide users with negative feedback on Wildfire than it is on other, more well-known, social media platforms. Unlike sites like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, where only the like and comment options are available to react to a post, a post can be downvoted on Wildfire. The upvote and downvote features have led people to draw comparisons to the infamous Yik Yak app, which was a completely anonymous posting platform. Yik Yak was forced to shut down amidst public backlash surrounding their lack of action against the constant cyber bullying taking place on their platform.

Additionally, the fact that many students have started using Wildfire as an alternative to apps like Twitter is concerning to many people, especially since it is a platform that is not yet well known. According to the official Wildfire company website, posts are only looked over and moderated when they are reported by members of the user community. Since not everybody knows about the app, it’s much easier for dangerous posts to go unreported and for users to go unpunished for posting unconfirmed information or even harmful material.

Somebody who has expressed their concerns about the app is Stan State communication studies lecturer, Dr. Marcy Chvasta. Dr. Chvasta, who teaches an Intro to Mass Media course on campus, has personally seen the effects that new social media platforms can have.

Dr. Chvasta explained that she is well aware of Wildfire’s existence, but has chosen to remain off the platform. She recognized the possible parallels between this new app and Yik Yak and reflected on the troubling era of when Yik Yak skyrocketed in popularity on our campus.

“If it’s anything like Yik Yak, I’d say it’s problematic,” Dr. Chvasta stated. “Sexist, racist, and homophobic posts were made on the daily. I’d feel some measure of relief when those kinds of posts were downvoted and disappeared, but they weren’t always, and the disappearance of a post doesn’t ‘disappear’ the perception that led to the post,” she continued.

On Wildfire, the majority of users utilize some sort of alias in order to stay anonymous. Anonymity can be another way that people can avoid responsibility for publishing harmful content on the platform, which is yet another similarity to Yik Yak.

Even though there is potential for dangers to ensue from Wildfire, Stanislaus State’s Wildfire community has been consistently positive. Scrolling through the Stan State community timeline, one can

(Photo courtesy of Wildfire Technologies Inc.)

expect to see things along the lines of funny memes, textbook listings, helpful tips, and even just simple, friendly conversations.

Elizabeth Alejandre (junior, Criminal Justice) is one of the many students who trusted Wildfire's email and registered for an account. Alejandre spoke about exactly why she made that decision. "I found it interesting because you get to really connect with people from your school, where you don't always have that with Instagram," she said.

Alejandre said that, so far, the app has proven to be more of a helpful tool and resource more than anything. She explained how it can really make life as a college student less stressful and intimidating.

"At first not many people posted on there, but once finals week came around, it seemed that people really needed someone to talk to, so posts and interactions became more common," said Alejandre. She also mentioned that the funny memes and motivational posts that were on the timeline helped her and other users get through those chaotic final weeks of the semester. "Everybody's pretty chill on the app," Alejandre continued.

As a result of her positive experiences on the app, Alejandre said that she has incorporated Wildfire into her daily social media rotation. She even claims that, sometimes, she uses Wildfire more than apps like Instagram.

When scrolling through the campus timeline it is noticeable that, at many times, several of the same users flood the timeline with their posts. The reason for this is because Wildfire, in attempts to boost usership and popularity, is paying students to post a set number of times within a given week.

Destiny Cuevas (junior, Criminal Justice) is an avid Wildfire user who was contacted by Wildfire to get paid to further promote their app and increase user traffic. Cuevas said that she has no problem getting paid to post on the platform, since she enjoys using the app and tends to post a lot anyway.

People getting paid to post on social media is nothing new, but the difference is that the paid posts on Wildfire are not clearly stating that they are sponsored by Wildfire. They are not being tagged as "#ad" or "#sponsored." It's not law to require a clear statement as to whether a post is promoted or sponsored, but these hashtags help create clarity and honesty between the publisher of the paid post and the members of the general public who do not get paid to post.

Alejandre was not aware of people getting paid to post and promote the app, but she didn't find it too troubling. She believes that those who are constantly flooding the timeline are posting their real thoughts anyway. Alejandre also believes that, because of this paid promotion, the app will accomplish their goals of becoming more popular and gaining more users, which she would enjoy.

It remains unseen as to whether the positives of Wildfire will outweigh its potential negatives and questionable marketing. For now, the app continues to grow as Stan State's campus community searches for alternative ways to stay informed and connected.

For those interested in Wildfire, the app is currently available to download on iOS and Android devices. ■

Valentine's Day: Grieving a Loved One

by Kerry Young



Valentine's Day is a beautiful celebration of the love that we have for people in our lives, however it can also be a painful reminder for those who have experienced the death of a loved one.

After losing someone special, it can be extremely difficult to face the holidays that were once so full of joy. How to honor the deceased, how to handle the intense emotions, and how to create new holiday traditions are just some of the questions that might arise during this time.

One organization that provides answers to many of these questions is Jessica's House.

Jessica's House is an organization that supports grieving children, teens, young adults and their families. Located on Main Street in downtown Turlock, Jessica's House provides a safe and welcoming environment for those who have experienced the death of someone near and dear.

Founding Executive Director Erin Nelson explained the inspiration for Jessica's House.

"The need for Jessica's House was evident. We had a lack of open ended free support for grieving children and families," said Nelson. She explained that one in seven children will experience the death of a sibling or parent by the age of 25.

"We knew the need was great for children and families to be supported after a death and that there are risk factors for unsupported grief, so we wanted to meet that need."

Jessica's House is able to help families cope with their grief by helping them understand what new challenges they may face after the death and by providing them with therapeutic activities to help them handle these challenges.

Holidays (like Valentine's Day) can often bring new challenges after a loss.

Nelson explained that Valentine's Day, "can be painful for a lot of people, especially if someone has died. If a wife had their husband die, or maybe a husband their wife, they could be not wanting to think about Valentine's Day."

However it can be difficult to do this when every store lines it's shelves with Valentine's Day merchandise.

"You have a lot of marketing around a holiday like Valentine's Day. I think there is some expectation around it, so it can feel especially painful when that person whom you consider is your valentine is no longer here," said Nelson.

The question remains, when faced with these painful reminders of your loss, what can you do to honor the memory of your loved one, while respecting your own healing process?

Nelson's years of experience as a trainer, consultant and trauma practitioners has prepared her to help answer this question.

First, think about yourself and what you need to do in order to get through the holiday. Find a way to help yourself feel better through self-care and social support.

Since many families have traditions that may be too painful to participate in without the person who died, Nelson suggests making an alternative plan for the day. However, it's important to remember that you have choices. "Know that even if you make a plan, you can make a different plan. Have some flexibility in your schedule," said Nelson.

It can be difficult to anticipate how we are going to feel in the future, so being able to bring awareness to your needs in the moment is crucial. Creating a flexible schedule gives you the ability to adjust your plans to suit your emotional needs.

This year, for Valentine's Day, Jessica's House is helping families honor their loved ones through one of their weekly therapeutic art objectives.

"We're actually making a valentine for the person who died," said Nelson, adding that, "You can even think about what would be a love letter from the person who died to you? Knowing that person, what would they say to you?"

Nelson also suggested visiting a place that reminds you of the person who died.

Director of Development and Communications at Jessica's House, Davis Woods added that it's important to make the memories of the person who died come alive.

"Maybe as a family, talk about the person, and who they were, and what they liked to do. Do an activity that they liked to do. Do something you know that they would love."

While there are countless options of how to honor our loved ones, Nelson emphasized that the most important thing is to, "remember them in a way that feels meaningful to you."

Although many people are fortunate enough to not have experienced the death of a loved one, given the statistics, most people know someone who has.

It is hard to know what to say or do when we encounter someone else's pain. Many of us have experienced the feeling of helplessness that occurs when we realize that we can not take away someone's sadness and make it better.

For those who want to help their grieving friends, but may not know how, Nelson has some advice.

One way to show a grieving friend support is by simply reaching out. "Tell them that you're thinking about them. Maybe ask them what they would like to do and just be available to be a companion to them during that time. Just offer to be with them," said Nelson.

The practice of "just being" with someone who is hurting, is greatly emphasized at Jessica's House. Volunteers are taught the skill of learning to sit with someone in their pain. This skill takes practice, patience and bravery, but it is extremely valuable.

For those who are interested in learning this skill and using it to help the grieving members of our community, Jessica's House is always open to training new volunteers.

"One of our greatest things is our volunteers. We have a lot of amazing volunteers, and we could always use more," said Woods.

In addition to volunteering, support can be shown through donations.

Woods explained that Jessica's House is always in need of a variety of art supplies for the therapeutic art activities that are offered each week.

"We have a wishlist on our website that is up to date on what our current needs are."

Woods also explained that Jessica's House is currently seeking donations for the construction of a new center.

As more families have begun to seek the support of Jessica's House, the cozy little center on Main Street is struggling to accommodate the needs of the community.

"We have planned a new permanent home, where we will be able to incorporate the best practices of therapeutic spaces and provide lots of options for kids," Woods said.

The additional space would allow Jessica's House to offer an even wider assortment of activities for children and teens to participate in.

Woods explained that, "not all kids grieve the same way. They don't do it through the same activities or the same play, so we want to be able to offer as many choices as we can to those families that come through our doors."

Whether you decide to try volunteering, make a donation, or simply "just be there" with a friend in need, remember that now is the time to open our hearts. Valentine's Day is not just about romance, chocolates and lacy cards, it's about love. Love for your family, love for your friends, and love for your community. Kindness has the power to help heal broken hearts, and that is what Jessica's House is all about.

If you are interested in volunteering, or making a donation, visit jessicahouse.org. If you and your family are seeking the services of Jessica's House, you can call them at (209) 250-5395. ■



The Jessica's House team! (from left to right) Melissa Ahlem, Megan Vaughan, Erin Nelson, Erica Reis, Yvonne Pacheco.
(Photo courtesy of Jessica's House)

E
A **WORD** *SCRAMBLE* P
> by Kerry Young

To solve this puzzle, unscramble each of these words; then use the letters above the black boxes to unscramble the caption.

CLCEOAOHT

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The Signal is excited to announce the addition of a new feature to our paper. Coming next month, the Signal website will be adding columns dedicated to humor and advice!

Our readers will now be able to enjoy humorous stories and submit comedic pieces of their own for a chance to be featured in the column. Additionally, members of the Stan State community will be encouraged to write in questions and concerns to be answered by the wise and all knowing Athena, goddess of wisdom, inspiration and culture. If submitted, questions will be answered and published anonymously.

The humor and Ask Athena columns will be located under the opinion section on our website at www.csusignal.com. Students can submit their stories and questions to Editor@csusignal.com.

For a story submission, write "Humor." For advice, write "Ask Athena" in the subject line. We look forward to hearing from you!

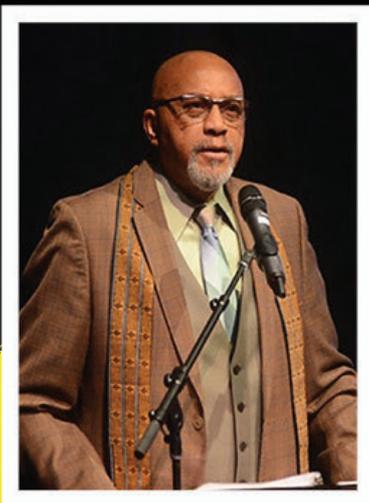
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