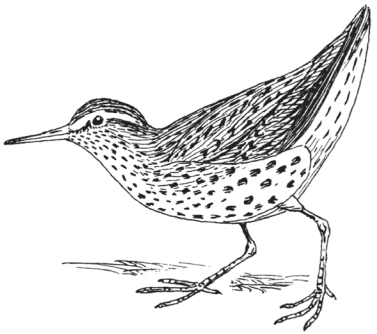


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DISTRICT

What the omicron variant means for CUSD

BY SHAYLA DUTTA

Although seemingly milder, the highly contagious omicron variant of COVID-19 has swept through Carmel Unified School District, infecting students and staff alike while also necessitating changes to the district's current and past measures to keep schools safe and open.

What is the current situation?

On the Carmel Unified website, the district keeps a running list of "school-based cases." As of Jan. 24, the district has reported 175 school-based cases in total, 83 from Carmel High School alone.

"We know we have more kids than that who have contracted COVID," says CHS principal Jon Lyons, who explains the numbers from the district represent the transmissions they believe with reasonable certainty occurred on campus.

The cases that weren't likely transmitted on a CUSD campus are reported directly to Monterey County, who has reported a total of more than 9,100 cases between the ages of 0 and 17. As this encompasses the entire county since its first cases in 2020, this number is drastically larger than the district's reports for this school year. Although the district positivity rate is estimated to be lower than Monterey County, community transmission in the county and state is still categorized

as "high" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While there are still a disproportionate number of student and teacher absences due to the pandemic, CUSD is in a relatively good position in comparison to the county, state and nation.

What is the district's response?

The answer is strictly adhering to the guidelines set forth by the California Department of Public Health.

"CDPH guidance is medical experts telling me what to do," CUSD superintendent Ted Knight says. "My goal is to keep schools open, and the best way to keep schools open is to follow that guidance."

Currently, CDPH guidelines require masking indoors and recommends, but does not require, ventilation systems, masking outdoors and certain procedures for quarantine, isolation, cleaning and food service.

"Testing, masking and vaccinations are the way out," Lyons says. "To the best of our ability, we want to increase people's comfort about being in school every day."

Beginning Jan. 17, CHS adopted a new group-tracing approach to testing put forth by the CDPH, a shift from the previous method of individual, mandatory contact trac-

OMICRON
CONT. 3



photo by EMMA BROWN

By the banks of the Carmel River, transients camp out away from the eyes of the affluent community nearby.

COMMUNITY

Beyond the Glitz and Glam

Carmel's homeless residents

BY EMMA BROWN and SAFIA BOUHAJA

Just out of sight of the patrons of The Crossroads Shopping Center, a collection of homeless people reside in an encampment next to the Carmel River, living in close quarters before dispersing each morning to panhandle nearby. A walk through this settlement illuminates the alternate reality of Carmel: Though the town prides itself on its

image of luxury, sleeping in sandy ditches surrounded by trash long discarded is a reality for some community members.

Cars and patrons passing through the Carmel Rancho, Barnyard and Crossroads shopping centers will likely notice homeless people holding signs on street corners, yet once they drive the half-mile into Carmel-by-the-Sea, none of these people are to be seen. While the homeless population in Carmel is fairly limited, those living outdoors elect to conduct their business on the outskirts of downtown in an attempt to avoid

HOMELESSNESS
CONT. 6

STUDENTS

10-time champion CHS mock trial team kicks off remote 2022 season

BY SOPHIA BONE

After yet another highly anticipated in-person mock trial season has been canceled due to COVID cases rising throughout the county, Carmel High School's award-winning mock trial team is adapting and thriving under the leadership of senior club president Logan Falkel and expects to remind the Monterey Peninsula of their successful history at their county tournament starting Feb. 2.

The team only found out a few weeks into January that they would be competing remotely, despite practicing both in-person and online formats during the preseason that lasted from the beginning of the school year to February. The team was able to keep polishing off their trial the weekend of Jan. 15-16 at the Carmel Invitational and has planned accordingly to peak at the right time.



Now going into their third season competing online, the CHS mock trial team, led by club president Logan Falkel (right) and future president Sophia Cho, has created a set-up that, while virtual, maintains some feel of normalcy.

"Especially for the upperclassmen, it is hard going from such a high streak of winning county seven years in a row because it builds this mounting pressure on the team to perform," sophomore team member Shayla Dutta says.

The team has won the county tournament a total of 10 times, the California State Championship in 2017, and the world championship in New York City in 2016, while medaling at the State Championship six years in a row. Last year at the Empire Chicago tournament, current club president Falkel was awarded best attorney.

"You can attribute our success to a culture where people are so excited about what we do," junior

MOCK TRIAL
CONT. 2

POLITICS

Despite redistricting, Congressman Panetta remains devoted to Central Coast agriculture

BY EMMA BROWN

Following state-wide congressional redistricting pursuant to the 2020 Census, Rep.-D Jimmy Panetta, representative of California’s 20th District, has lost the Salinas Valley, leaving the Central Coast’s agricultural industry unsure of what lies ahead.

The boundaries of congressional districts have been shifted in accordance with population demographics. In previous terms, Panetta’s district encompassed the Monterey Peninsula, Salinas, Greenfield, King City, Hollister and Big Sur, though the territory has now been divided into the 19th and 20th Districts. In the

“I will still be sure that I’m representing the values, the interest and the industries of the Central Coast, from agriculture to hospitality, to our military bases and so forth,” Panetta says. “I’ve been very fortunate when it came to redistricting. It could have been better, but it could have been a lot worse.”

Panetta, the founder of the Agriculture Research Caucus and a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, has been committed to providing federal solutions to local agricultural issues, and despite the loss of much of his agricultural territory, maintains that he will continue to serve the agricultural industry of the Central Coast.



In the 2020 congressional election, Jimmy Panetta represented the 20th congressional district, as seen above.

upcoming 2022 congressional election, Panetta hopes to serve the people of the Central Coast again, this time representing the 19th District, encompassing the Monterey Peninsula, Santa Cruz, south San Jose and north San Luis Obispo county.

“My platform is based on my district, and I represent the Central Coast,” Panetta explains. “I’ll still be able to focus on agriculture.”

Despite his ongoing commitment to Central Coast agriculture, those working in the industry in the Salinas Valley express disappointment in losing him as a representative.

“We’re very disappointed that the new district does not include Jimmy Panetta anymore,” says Norm Groot, the executive director of the Farm Bureau of Monterey. “It’s one of the harder things to reconcile with this whole redistricting thing. They basically took him away from the Salinas Valley, and he’s been a great friend to agriculture.”

During Panetta’s time representing the 20th District, the congressman has proposed legislation regarding agriculture in hopes of aiding Central Coast farmers, as well as creating the Agricultural Fairs Rescue Act, legislation that would help the agricultural sector recover following the pandemic, which the House Agriculture Committee passed in September 2021. The representative also supported the 2018 Farm Bill, which funds agricultural research and broadband infrastructure.

After serving the 20th Congressional District since 2016, members of the agricultural community whom Panetta has developed relationships with also voice disappointment at the loss of a fierce advocate for the Salinas Valley.

“Any disappointment I have is based on the fact that I felt the redistricting commission did not listen to the

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people of this area who called in and wanted to express, and tried to express, their sentiments about not splitting up communities of interest, like here on the Central Coast,” Panetta says.

With Panetta in office, citizens of the Salinas Val-

REDISTRICTING CONT. 6

Mock trial cont. 1

Emma Brown explains. “It instills a love in the law. We spend every single Saturday in trial, and it’s a huge time commitment, but when you are in that room with those people, it feels like the most natural thing in the world.”

Founding coach Bill Schrier attributes the team success to the hands-off approach that he uses with them, placing most of the responsibilities onto the president of the club. Aside from booking competitions and giving legal advice, Falkel is leading the group of 25 solo. Throughout Schrier’s 17 years coaching the team, he has learned that this strategy is the best way to fully prepare his students for the trial.

“During a trial, the coach can’t do anything,” Schrier explains. “There’s no timeouts or subbing, the students

just have to figure it out at the moment. It’s the most student-centered activity I know.”

When it comes to choosing the president, it is not always the strongest on the team, but the leader who will be best for the team. This individual has to be able to take on all the responsibilities of being president including handling finances, organizing and running meetings and being lead council.

“It’s a lot of pressure,” says Falkel. “But it’s also very gratifying because I’ve been part of this program for quite some time so I’ve really got to see it change, evolve and succeed.”

While there are 25 students in the club, during the trials only eight are allowed per team. Out of the starting eight, three club members were invited to participate in the highly exclusive national mock trial Gladiator tournament during the summer, where only the best of the best compete. Having three returning ‘gladiators’—Brown, Falkel and next year’s president, junior Sophia Cho—is typically unheard of.


Another standout of the team is Dutta, who last season was the first freshman to start in the county tournament in 10 years. Many freshmen joined the team this year, which has led to a strong junior varsity program, with students taking on

bigger roles such as attorney and witness. Typically, a large number of upperclassmen means that the younger teammates do not get much trial time, but this year, younger students are getting lots of experience and learning the importance of the team dynamic.


“Mock trial is certainly not about the individual,” adds Falkel. “If one person falls, you all fall.”

The COVID-19 version of the mock trial experience is only a taste of what in-person trials are like as mock Trial is one of the few clubs at CHS that commonly takes trips, competing in tournaments from Southern California to New England. Schrier typically tries to plan three overnight trips during the season, explaining that they were for teambuilding. He is hopeful that they will be able to be in New York for the Empire tournament next fall.

From the time the team starts the county tournament Feb. 2 until Feb. 12, they will be busy competing not in the courtroom, but on Zoom from classrooms on the CHS campus.



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STUDENTS

Local teenagers sidelined with COVID voice personal, family concerns

BY AVA CAMARGO

With the recent surge of COVID-19 and the new omicron variant, CHS has taken extra precautions to further prevent the spread, but students who contracted the virus have experienced a mix of both concern and relief while balancing school, extracurriculars and family difficulties.

“At first I was scared about what the symptoms would be because I was worried that my grandma, who doesn’t have the vaccine, would get sick,” CHS junior Sage Lewand says. “I knew I’d be okay if I got sick, but it was mainly a big concern for my family.”

Students who contract the virus also experience a negative impact on their mental well-being from isolation. Like Lewand, freshman Layla Viel found her family dynamic altered.

“My dad and I both had COVID,” Viel says. “And we had to be extra cautious because my grandpa, who was staying with us, is super high risk.”

Apart from the mental effects of being quarantined, physical symptoms ranged from a high fever to a headache to nothing at all, which set back the amount of schooling that could be done while at home.

“I had around a 102-degree fever, and that was how I first knew that it was COVID,” Lewand explains. “I’m grateful my symptoms weren’t too difficult though, and

most of the time it was a headache and sore throat for me.”

On top of juggling the virus, junior Abel Villaseñor also had to adjust to public school after being home-schooled since fourth grade.

“It definitely wasn’t ideal to start my first year at Carmel High with COVID and missing the first week

Since the COVID-19 outbreak occurred during and after winter break, only a minimal amount of school-work was missed for most, but others faced more conflicts off campus, including senior elite gymnast Colleen Cordell.

“I have a really busy schedule with school and then practice right after for three-and-a-half hours, so it was hard for me to stay isolated from gymnastics and my friends,” Cordell says. “But at the same time, I appreciated my teachers giving me extra time for assignments.”

Managing school itself did not seem difficult for many, especially with the new five-day quarantine regulations, which recently dropped from 10 days. Emailing teachers and friends was often all that was needed to keep up with in-person learning while at home.

“In order to adjust to doing school online,” junior Brody Mendez explains, “I reached out to my teachers via email, but wasn’t provided any other resources besides Google Classroom and couldn’t do much homework when I was sick.”

After finding out about the 90-day immunity after contracting the virus, a sense of relief settled among CHS students. Contact tracing and weekly rapid tests are now encouraged for all students to prevent outbreaks and continue learning in a healthy environment.



Students who catch the virus keep up with homework through emailing teachers, Google Classroom and help from friends.

of football,” Villaseñor says. “Afterwards I was very cautious of the virus and my opinions in regards to vaccines and masks were the same.”

Omicron
cont. 1

ing. That method often recommended quarantine and testing depending on the vaccination status of a close contact, defined as someone who spent more than 15 minutes within three feet of another positive individual.

“Now, if there’s an exposure in class, it’s completely voluntary to get tested,” explains Danielle Caoili, a contact tracer for the district. “With our old protocol, it was helpful to just pick kids out who were actually positive out of class. But I think our new protocol now is better so that kids having to disclose whether they’re vaccinated or unvaccinated is not an issue.”

One noted difference from students’ return to school last spring is the relaxation of social distancing on cam-

pus. The initial return in the 2020-21 school year saw spaced desks and instructions to sit six feet apart when eating or otherwise maskless outdoors. But in response to schools’ difficulty in accommodating all of their students, CDPH guidelines changed.

“It’s just not possible to fit 800 kids in a high school six feet apart,” Knight says. “We still tell people to social distance if you can, but it’s no longer required.”

What the district is certain of, short of an extreme statewide shift, is that the schools will not close. At the conclusion of last school year, California essentially removed that possibility. Instead, school districts—independently, or in partnership with others—are required by the state to offer an “independent study” option for students who don’t feel comfortable being in school.

“What we know from the pandemic is that students need to be in school and with their classmates.”

the superintendent says. “When school first closed in March, it wasn’t as bad because most parents were home, too. The problem was that next August when parents had to go back to work, kids weren’t going back to school.”

Regardless of the number of students and staff absent, CUSD has no plans to close school. While teachers are urged to take these absences into consideration and be gentle with the workload imposed on sick students, there are no standardized rules or a threshold of absences to halt instruction.

The issue arises with teacher absences, compounded by a substitute teacher shortage impacting not only CUSD but schools all across the nation. In

response, the district created a “depth chart” for all teachers and certified personnel. After all the substitute teachers have been called, administrators will turn to an ordered list of other district employees certified to teach or work in other positions, such as serving food.

“Our goal is to keep school open by making sure that no matter how many people are gone, we just keep backfilling,” Knight says. “I’m certified to teach. If we run out of teachers, I might get called.”

The superintendent also added that, unless CDPH guidelines do so, CUSD is not considering mandating vaccines.

“The minute we don’t stick to CDPH guidelines, we’re fair game,” Knight says. “I think vaccines help all of us, but if we go outside of that guidance, we don’t have the weight of the law behind us.”

This stands for all issues, including masks and other responsive measures to COVID-19: In almost all cases, the district intends to strictly follow state guidelines. In certain cases, schools have made decisions to pause certain programs, like sports or other teams, when it becomes a hotspot for COVID-19 cases.

What is the consensus?

“What I’m seeing among students is a mixture of fear, confusion and ‘but I still want to go to school,’” Lyons says. “But I’m encouraged by the fact that kids are taking this seriously.”

According to Lyons, mask compliance at CHS is high for the most part. Districtwide, the community response has also been mostly positive.

“At this point, as long as kids are in school, a supermajority of parents appreciate what we’re doing,” Knight says. “What we’re doing might not be ideal, but it’s still better than closing school.”

While there exists no course of action to please everyone, the district is seeing high vaccination rates, high masking compliance and support from students and parents. The superintendent perceives the general consensus is an emphasis on schools remaining open and safe, the district’s ultimate goals in an unpredictable new year.



In accordance with new CDPH guidelines, CHS has adopted a “group-testing” approach, making testing voluntary, proactive and an option for all students.

DISTRICT

Pre-existing CUSD substitute shortage worsens with COVID-19 variant

BY CLAIRE PETERSON

An increase in the number of absences for both Carmel Unified School District students and teachers due to the omicron variant has exacerbated a substitute teacher shortage across the district.

This fall, CUSD hired three permanent subs who are always on the Carmel High School campus and available. If these substitutes are engaged in work in other classrooms and a teacher needs someone to fill in for their class, the school refers to the district-wide substitute list.

“Right now, I only substitute at the high school, but in the past everywhere,” substitute teacher Felicia Fisher says. “Because of COVID-19, this is my first year as a full-time sub.”

Fisher substitutes in different classrooms three times a week on average, explaining that it’s beneficial when teachers know they’re going to be out. Substitutes can go in early and the teacher can explain the lesson plans, but when it’s a sudden absence, there isn’t time to do that, which puts the students behind.

Occasionally, teachers are asked to cover in a classroom if other subs are not free.

“If the permanent subs are assigned, and I need another sub, I can call other subs who are on the sub list,” CHS principal’s secretary Lisa Brazil explains. “They sub for all different schools, so sometimes they are and sometimes they aren’t available at the last minute. If I can’t find anybody then I ask other teachers to cover.”

On the list, there are about 10 substitutes designated to teach at the high school level, and certain campus staff with teaching credentials are sometimes asked to sub, but potential strains are placed on teachers’ schedules when they are needed in another classroom.

“When I’m asked to go sub in another classroom, I’m giving up my prep period,” explains CHS math teacher Jody Roberts, “and I’m not able to complete my work or plan for future lessons.”

Photography teacher Holly Lederle faces the same problem. Lederle explains that giving up a period in which teachers’ time is used for personal work and to better prepare lessons for students affects the quality of their following lessons.

All schools within the district use the same substitutes, so if a majority are needed at the elementary schools or Carmel Middle School, fewer subs remain available to teachers at CHS.



Substitute Shannon Bertilacci introduces herself to students while covering for a math class.

photo by CLAIRE PETERSON

posed a bigger challenge last semester than it currently does.

“There are more subs available this semester than there were last semester,” Brazil explains. “People are becoming more comfortable with how the schools are doing and how we’re managing COVID-19. More and more substitutes are calling saying they’re available.”

Many substitutes employed by CUSD have gotten a chance to see the precautions CHS is taking with the new COVID-19 variant and have become more comfortable with the concept of returning to school, but COVID-19 cases have compounded the longstanding problem.

Some teachers, including CHS’ Video Production teacher Brian Granbery, say that it has been more difficult to find a substitute for their classrooms this year in comparison to years prior because of the increased demand. CHS Spanish teacher Tricia Bean is facing similar challenges.

“This year especially, I’ve noticed that it takes longer to find a substitute for my class if I’m out,” Bean explains. “It’s easier if I’m just out for a period or two, but if it’s an entire day it’s harder to find someone who’s available.”

Teachers at CHS can place a request for a substitute through Aesop Online, a program that serves as a substitute absence management primarily for teachers. When teachers are out, they state their reason for absence, and the system

randomly generates calls to the substitutes that are available in the district.

Teachers can also request a specific substitute before one is randomly assigned.

A bachelor’s degree and a substitute teaching credential are required in order to serve as a substitute in the district. Brazil explains that parents with these credentials have also been stepping in as substitutes, which is greatly appreciated.

DISTRICT

Following Dec. 15 incident, CUSD reevaluates where board meetings will be held

BY FLINT NACHBAR

After a group of Carmel Unified School District unmasked parents claiming a medical exemption attended the Dec. 15 board meeting, violating the district’s mask mandates and causing a disruption that led to a postponement of the meeting until a later date, CUSD

officials have been forced to examine how to execute future board meetings.

To avoid problems with masks in the future, the school board and superintendent’s office plans to hold future meetings outdoors.

“This is the best thing to do,” Knight says. “If that parent does decide to show up they have a legal right to be there, and they’re not breaking any laws.”

This will have an effect on the time and the places that board meetings are set, with meetings occurring at Carmel Middle School’s outdoor venue MeEarth earlier in the afternoon.

Exemptions seem to be a gray area when it comes to laws reinforcing masks, but Superintendent Ted Knight says the solution is quite simple.

“If you had a medical exemption that says you didn’t have to wear a mask, you’d have to wear a [face] shield with a drape,” Knight says. “[We] as an entity should make accommodations with any disability.”

This posed a problem for the people attending the

board meeting with many attendants not comfortable with some being unmasked, according to Knight.

“There were students in that room, [and] elderly people who were more at risk to COVID,” Knight says. “We just want people to be safe and healthy.”

With COVID-19 cases on the rise, being unmasked can be a health risk to civilians who attend board meetings, but the situation does become tricky because the meetings are open to the public.

“We even asked the individual to make their comment from outside so they can still participate,” Knight says. “That accommodation was made, and it was denied.”

The board meeting took a recess as the administration figured out what to do with the unmasked individuals.

“It got to that point where [we needed] them to wear a mask or we needed them to leave,” the superintendent notes.

ASB president Hannah Filly, who attended the Dec. 15 meeting, says that she was asked to leave only 20 minutes after the start of the board meeting due to the risks involved with being unmasked indoors. As residents and taxpayers within the district, Knight explains, everyone has the right to attend public meetings, but guidelines are in place to stop the spread of the virus, and CUSD requires attendants to follow those guidelines.

“Just like a business would say, no shirt, no shoes, no service,” Knight says, “we want you to come and we want to hear what the public has to say but you have to follow the rules.”



The most recent board meeting occurred outside at the CMS habitat to alleviate controversies around masks.

photo by FLINT NACHBAR

POLITICS

As COVID-19 persists, Mayor Potter hopes for civil debate among Carmel residents

BY RILEY PALSHAW

Co-editor-in-chief Riley Palshaw met with Mayor Dave Potter on Jan. 13 to discuss the shape of Carmel and current issues taking precedence in the city.

From handling COVID-19 and parklets to dealing with the new state mandate for housing in the city, Carmel-by-the-Sea Mayor Dave Potter has been kept busy throughout the pandemic, but his priority remains handling disagreements in the community professionally and courteously, as well as fostering continual conversation within the community as a whole.

After years in construction and service on the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, Potter ran for mayor of Carmel on the sole goal of improving the experience for its residents and visitors. What he didn't anticipate was that two years after he was elected into office in 2018, he would have a pandemic to wrestle with.

"I ran on a platform that we will get along as a community and we'll do the public's business," Potter says, "but we'll do so respectfully, professionally, and courteously. I think we're there."

Since the pandemic first hit, Potter has had to think creatively in order to adjust and keep Carmel's businesses afloat, which has been no easy task. But, ultimately, it's been the help of the community that has kept Carmel in the great shape it finds itself in today.

"COVID has been hard for government," Potter says, "but as a community, I'm very proud that we've gotten through it together. We really have."

Yet such an upbeat outlook wasn't always easy.

"Normally when you have a recession you can see it coming," the mayor notes. "Unemployment starts going up and housing and real estate starts to slow, but this was just lights-on-lights-off all of a sudden. It was really shocking."

To combat the disadvantageous economic position in which Carmel found itself, the city moved forward with a plan to install parklets on the streets outside of



photo by RANDY TUNNELL

Mayor Dave Potter (with wife Janine) envisions disagreements within the city to be handled professionally and courteously among Carmel's residents.

restaurants at the start of the pandemic. These wooden platforms serving as space for additional seating areas for diners have sparked debate among Carmel's residents, with some members of the community loving the idea, while others claiming the pop-up seating takes away from the charm of Carmel-by-the-Sea.

While an opinion poll conducted by the city did come back with overwhelmingly positive support for the installation of parklets, Potter does recognize that this temporary seating can look tacky on the streets of Carmel. Hoping to fix their somewhat disheveled appearance, the mayor is looking into the possible extension of the city's sidewalks, which would allow more outside seating for restaurants right alongside their buildings. This way more people can dine outside in a setting that's more visually appealing and maintains Carmel's indescribable charm.

The parklets certainly haven't been the only thing COVID-19 has affected in Carmel. The mayor acknowledges that the pandemic has put a strain on the public process too now that in-person meetings are not happening.

"I like to be able to read the room," Potter adds. "I like to be able to see everyone's faces and watch the crowd, which you can't really do on Zoom."

The one advantage the mayor does point out is that he can now schedule meetings with his congressman or

state senator with more ease instead of having to worry about scheduling issues like he did in the past.

Although Zoom meetings might not be ideal, Dave Potter has bigger fish to fry. As of September, when Gov. Gavin Newsom signed new legislation to expand housing across the state, California has mandated that each city construct a certain number of new housing units dependent on the city's size. For Carmel, this means the construction of around 340 housing units, and although a fourplex can be put up on a single family lot in Carmel, Potter is wary about what the city logistically has the capacity for.

"I didn't buy a home in a single family neighborhood to end up with an apartment put in next door to me," says the mayor. "It's a state mandate, but one size does not fit all."

Figuring out the logistics of a project like this is something the mayor and the city council will have to begin working on soon, but for now, Mayor Dave Potter hopes to accomplish a more foundational goal: handling disagreements within the city professionally and courteously, as well as seeing continual conversation between the community as a whole.

"I'm not naive enough to think we're all going to get along all the time," Potter muses, "but I just want respectful participation and to at least do public business professionally."

OPINION

Utilitarianism can heal a selfish society during the pandemic

BY EMMA BROWN



The pandemic has isolated people, shrinking the size of the world to the diameter of an individual's personal bubble, and in the months since the global re-emergence from the COVID-19 lockdown, that ego-maniacal state of mind has remained a fixture of life for many teenagers.

In the absence of social awareness, the ethical philosophy of utilitarianism can provide direction.

First proposed by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, utilitarianism offers that people should act in a way that produces the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people, even if that means sacrificing individual fulfillment. The modernized version of the philosophy, rule utilitarianism, states that people should live by rules that generally lead to the greatest happiness for the majority of people.

Utilitarianism encourages people to think outside of the attractive draw of instant gratification or perceived retribution. In coming out of lockdown, the notion that time had been lost to isolation has been used to justify irresponsible and reckless behavior. During the omicron era, teenagers have repeated the phrase "I lost my high school experience" to rationalize attending large parties, despite record-high infection rates. Through adopting a utilitarian state of mind, students might ponder the situation from an unbiased perspective, noting the significant risk in frequenting an ultimately insignificant event.

When immersed in a literal pandemic, people must face the truth: According to the New York Times, more than 5.48 million people have died from COVID-19 globally, and each person's actions have medical consequences. The fact of the matter is vaccinations and masks are the most effective ways to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Principle of Utility suggests that people should always act to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. Thus, one must carefully consider the repercussions of choices that may be individually gratifying, but send ripples of infection out into the world. Scientists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine believe that each infected individual will on average, transmit the virus to 10 other people, and so on and so forth. The fallout of a

single COVID-19 infection significantly outweighs the benefits of making a choice to not wear a mask or get vaccinated against the virus.

Bentham and Mill's philosophy proposes that while each individual is unique, one person is no more special than the other. The pandemic has stolen a segment of each of our lives that we will never get back, but that in no way means that every person can act as recklessly as they please. While people may be enticed by unfounded conspiracies surrounding scientific issues, it is vital that medical issues such as vaccinations be approached without bias. Yes, individual liberty is important, but when the health of the world is at stake, acting in the interest of the greater good is essential. This may mean wearing a mask that is uncomfortable or receiving a vaccine that is not in alignment with one's personal views.

When making decisions that affect people beyond the individual during the pandemic, consider a utilitarian perspective and ponder whether this action is producing as much net good as its potentially harmful repercussions.

Homelessness

cont. 1

trouble with the Carmel Police Department.

One woman who lives outdoors with her husband in Carmel explains that asking for donations in the downtown district is far more difficult because the rules are stricter in the tourist-packed area. Around the Carmel Rancho Shopping Center, the police rarely, if ever, interrupt the day-to-day routines of panhandlers.

“Carmel’s a pretty laid-back town,” says Ted, a homeless person living in Carmel. “There’s not a lot of problems with the police here, and people will usually give money or food.”

Municipal codes of the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea dictate that sitting or lying on sidewalks in a manner that might disrupt traffic, camping or doing any act connected with human habitation on public areas, as well as erecting a tent on public property, are all strictly prohibited. Because of these ordinances, the city’s police department has grounds to remove transients from downtown.

Outside the bounds of the city lies the greater Carmel area, where municipal codes have no judicial weight.

“Like in any city, Carmel will pass ordinances in order to not have a very visible homeless population because it does drive people away from their businesses, unfortunately,” says Brian Bajari, a local pastor who has worked closely with the homeless community over the years. “There are forces at play in these kinds of vacation and honeymoon towns where people just don’t want to see homelessness.”

The limited homeless population in Carmel can also be attributed to a lack of resources for the area’s homeless community.

“There are fewer places in Carmel for the homeless to congregate where it’s not so obvious,” says Robin McCrae, CEO of Community Human Services, a nonprofit organization committed to helping homeless youth and families. “There may not be as many services available in Carmel as there are in some of the larger communities in the county.”

Because of larger homeless populations elsewhere in Monterey County, many corporations have opened permanent shelters in larger cities such as Monterey, Seaside and Salinas. Through the IHELP Organization, an interfaith short-term lodging and meal service program, numerous churches in the Carmel area open their doors to homeless people.

In Monterey County’s 2019 homeless census, only 6 transients were reported to be living in Carmel, a sharp contrast to Monterey’s reported 204. Yet despite

the lack of resources in Carmel, many homeless people elect to remain in the city because of its profitability.

“I’ve been coming out for two years every day in the morning, and I couldn’t believe it,” says Michael Bruno, a 61-year-old former Carmel High school student who now lives outdoors. “So I sign over in the middle of the road over there (on the lane divider). Over there, you can make \$100 a day, people are handing me twenties on twenties. You’ve gotta hit up the rich people in Carmel.”

Because of the wealthy demographic of the greater

viduals and families with locating affordable housing and providing financial support. To qualify for an EHV, one must be at risk for homelessness, recently or currently homeless, or fleeing from situations of domestic violence. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, in Monterey County 269 EHVs have been awarded, but only 6 EHV units are currently being leased.

“Some of our numbers have dropped in the last few months because of federal and state services that have become available, but there’s no real knowing if those services will continue or dry up,” says Tony Finnegan, the board chair for IHELP.

Though EHVs are available, transients living in Monterey County report struggling to get a voucher.

“I’m trying to get off my feet, but I go to the Welfare Office and they keep telling me that I’m not eligible for vouchers,” says Jennifer Hill, who lives outdoors in Monterey. “I’ve gone almost everywhere, I’ve left messages. I need help, I need an advocate, social services is a big deal, and I can’t do it by myself.”

After seven months on a waiting list, Oscar, who lived outdoors in Monterey with his wife for five years, recently moved into an apartment after receiving an EHV.

“We were staying on the beach in a tent for months and just praying,” Oscar says. “We had a Section 8 voucher, and they don’t apply to two-bedroom apartments, only one-bedroom apartments, and we kept getting calls for two-bedrooms. Finally, we got a blessing and got an apartment in Marina.”

For many transients, the lack of affordable housing in Carmel leads them to stay in other areas of Monterey County. However, some will reside outside of Carmel and return to the area during the day to panhandle. In Bruno’s case, most days begin with catching a bus to the Carmel Rancho Shopping Center and spending the day on a street corner flying a sign, before returning to a shelter elsewhere in the county.

While the demographic of Carmel is primarily affluent and middle-class residents, those living outdoors encourage the citizens of Carmel to view them as neighbors rather than intruders.

“I try to shift the language from ‘homeless’ to our ‘outdoor living neighbor,’” Bajari says. “It’s a different frame of mind. When we see the people on the street as our neighbors, that’s a different kind of mindset. They’re our neighbors. They live here. We live with them. They’re part of our fabric.”

For those looking to donate to homeless shelters for families and youth, Community Human Services accepts donations on chservices.org.



For many homeless residents, living among their scattered belongings is their reality.

Monterey area, affordable housing is a rarity, making it far more difficult for transients to move off of the streets and into a permanent residence.

“There’s very little affordable housing and that includes low-income rental units,” McCrae explains. “There’s been an increase in the number of Emergency Housing Vouchers and Housing Support Vouchers, but there’s also the challenge of working with landlords to get them to accept those vouchers as the only form of payment for their rent.”

Emergency Housing Vouchers assist at-risk indi-

Redistricting

cont. 2

ley report improvements in immigration policies, an important issue for the agricultural industry, given the demographic of the workforce. Those in the farming community express appreciation for Panetta’s support of the Farmworker Modernization Act, maintaining that it addressed major issues for the Central Coast.

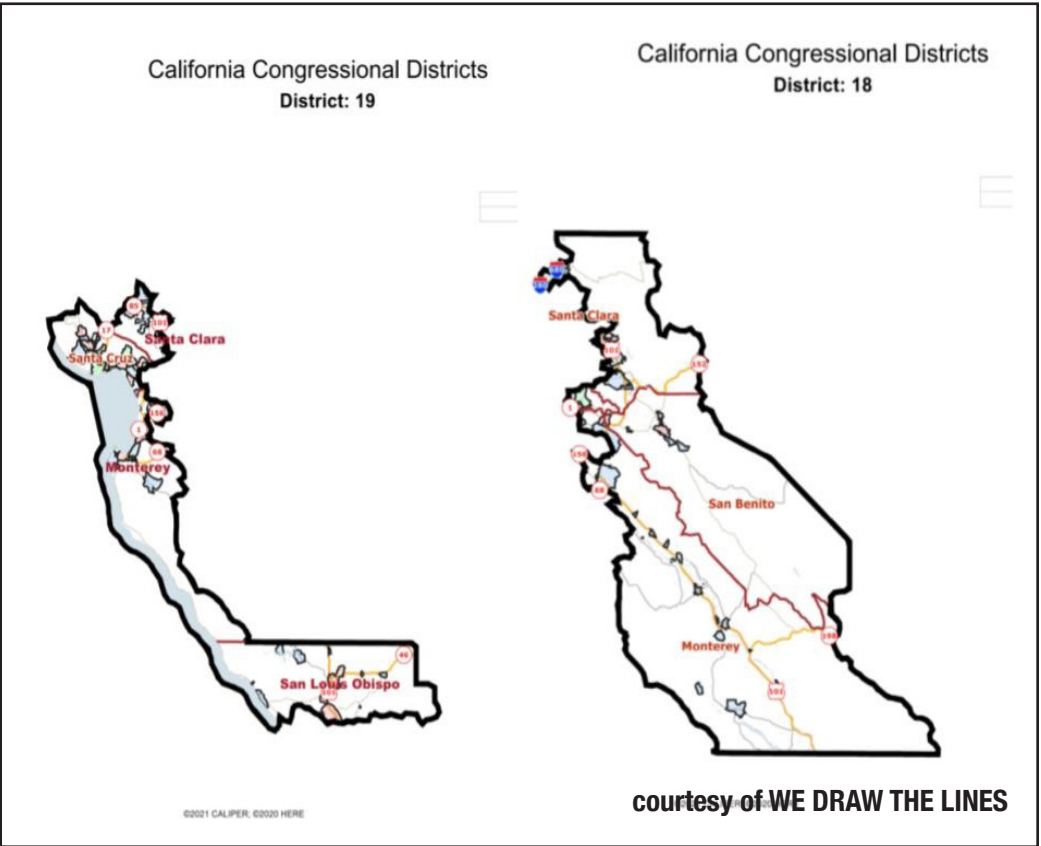
Because of agriculture’s connections to other political issues, such as immigration and economics, many farming companies in the Salinas Valley look for a representative who can speak to the interests of both the company and its employees.

“The people who work for us need healthcare and affordable housing,” says Rodney Braga, CEO of Braga Fresh. “These are the things we’re asking our representatives for help on. Jimmy Panetta’s been a great friend to agriculture, not just to the owners of companies, but also to the thousands of people working in the industry.”

For the Salinas Valley, redistricting means sharing a representative with Silicon Valley, raising concerns from some about future agricultural issues being appropriately addressed.

“The big fear about all of this is that we’re connected to Silicon Valley now,” Groot says. “They’re two totally different districts with different characteristics, and we all recognize that the votes are in Silicon Valley, so it’s going to be very difficult for the Salinas Valley to elect someone who represents this area.”

Representative Zoe Lofgren will run for office in 2022, this time representing the interests of the Salinas Valley, as well as the greater 18th District.



Following congressional redistricting, Salinas and Monterey have been separated, leading to the Salinas Valley’s loss of Congressman Panetta as a representative.

EVENTS

Winter Formal ensures safe Snowflake Soiree

BY BROOKE MILLER

The rise of COVID-19 cases has affected social gatherings yet again, and Carmel High School’s annual Winter Formal is transforming into a first-ever outdoor Snowflake Soiree on Feb. 12 at Hacienda Hay and Feed in order to ensure the safety of students.

CHS Leadership teacher Aubrey Powers and leadership students are coming together to create a formal that will be unforgettable with the new approach to safety.

“We are hoping that the ambiance of Hacienda and the features that the venue offers as well as our own touches will help to make this a memorable and fun event,” Powers says. “Our major precaution for safety is that it is being held outdoors.”

Along with the new experience of an outdoor event, Astudents are guaranteed a snowflake wonderland with brand new features coming into play.

“We have decided to purchase a snow machine and implement a Winter Formal Club Court,” says junior Ava Valdez, head planner of the formal.

With the Winter Formal Club Court, clubs will choose two members of their club who deserve the honor of Winter Formal Club Royalty. These students will be awarded the title in recognition of their service, dedication and academics, accompanied by free entry to the dance.

“We will be highlighting and celebrating some of our most active members within our CHS club program,” Powers says.

Those who are spearheading the formal hope that the outdoor space will allow for more freedom for students to keep their distance from others if students prefer.

“Masking will be optional,” Powers says. “Since we are not currently under guidelines for social distancing,

better air circulation,” Schnader says. “When you think about the gym, there is no air circulation, so being outdoors allows a space for students to distance themselves.”

Although this isn’t the traditional setup for school dances, students seem to be eager for the opportunity to dance with their friends under starlights.

“Being outside for an event like this is much safer during the pandemic, and the night-time atmosphere will be lovely,” freshman Maddie Waroff says. “I am all for having an outdoor winter formal, and I am excited I get to experience this new dance with everyone else.”

Leadership and Powers hope to create an atmosphere of a snowy wonderland, specifically for CHS students, who will not be allowed to bring guests into the event in order to prevent outside contact of COVID-19.

“It is unlikely there will be any outside guests allowed,” Valdez explains. “We have a maximum number of people who can go, and due to the sales of the last dance, which was 500 people, we will not have room for extra guests.”

In order to help combat the spread of COVID-19, any refreshments and snacks will be prepackaged.

With an outdoor event also comes some concerns over the winter weather and the aspect of community, as told by junior McCartney Hong, a student on the leadership team.

“Some students think or assume this event won’t provide the ‘high school dance experience,’” Hong says. “Students should be appreciative of this opportunity to experience the Winter Formal during a global pandemic.”



photo by KEA YENGST

Due to the rising COVID-19 cases, Carmel High’s winter formal will no longer be indoors.

a social distancing mandate will not be enforced at the dance.”

Junior Mya Schnader is helping with planning the soiree and making sure that safety is a number one priority.

“This outdoor setting will allow students to step away from others if they feel too close and allows for

COMMUNITY

Uptick in ‘smash-and-grab’ robberies hits close to home

BY SHAYLA DUTTA

Crimes known as “smash-and-grabs,” in which robbers, armed with sledgehammers, smash display cases or windows of stores and run away with the exposed items, have recently gained popularity in California—most well known by the raids of San Francisco’s Union Square and Los Angeles’s Nordstrom Rack—and downtown Carmel is no exception.

At 4 a.m. on Sept. 4., five masked robbers smashed the windows of high-end consignment clothing store Foxy Couture, incurring damages and loss up to \$300,000. On Dec. 7, Fourtané Jewelers was targeted for a crime of a similar nature, involving sledgehammers and costly losses, but this time while the store was open and employees were present.

“This is a typical crime that happens to jewelry stores,” Fourtané owner Josh Bonifas explains. “I’m not saying we knew it was coming, but we were definitely aware of what was going on due to the flash-mob robberies going on in San Francisco.”

No one was harmed during either break in, but Susan Galvin, the owner of Foxy Couture, had been attacked during a previous robbery of her store in December 2020. On that occasion, six people robbed the store which was staffed with four employees at the time.

“It was extremely upsetting and shocking,” Galvin says, “but after doing the research we realized it’s not uncommon, at least as far as my industry goes.”

Despite Fourtané’s extensive security measures, the intruders managed to break one of their showcases and steal the jewelry inside. Since then, the store has hired another armed guard, bringing the total to two, and seen the conviction of one of the robbers, just 16 years old.

Foxy Couture has also seen an increase in security measures. In the interest of helping maintain that security, they note they are unable to disclose specific information, but after multiple robberies and even more dangerous situations, they have invested a great amount

of time and money in that area.

“Because of the things we carry in our store, we are more likely to get robbed,” says junior Piper Mahoney, an employee at Foxy Couture. “But we’ve taken a lot of extra precautions, and I feel safe because the owner is prioritizing our safety.”

For other local businesses, or businesses at risk of similar break-ins, Bonifas emphasizes guards and guard dogs as helpful preventative measures.

“I understand why most businesses can’t invest in the protections we have,” Bonifas says, “but have some type of guard as a deterrent and have insurance because nothing is worth putting anybody at risk for.”

Bonifas commends the Carmel Police Department for their support and exemplary handling of the investigation.

“It was incredible to watch the police and the FBI work,” Bonifas says. “I can’t thank them enough. I think we at least sent a message that in Carmel, you won’t get away with it.”

While Fourtané Jeweler’s has seen the conviction of at least one robber so far, Foxy Couture has struggled with the more lenient laws that inhibit prosecution and, according to them, are a serious lack of

deterrent.

“It’s not just a luxury issue,” Galvin says. “It’s an issue of people trying to steal anything they can resell.”

Lately, smash-and-grabs aren’t the only popular crime. Car break-ins, and flash-mob robberies, in which a group of people agree on a certain time to storm and overwhelm a certain store location, have become exceedingly common, especially in the Bay Area.

While such incidents is much less likely to occur in Carmel or surrounding areas, many local businesses are taking it as a warning to increase or reinforce their security.



photo by LOVINA WORICK

Smash-and-grab robberies, while not a new threat for jewelry stores like Fourtané Jewelers in Carmel, have recently become more frequent and brazen.

Secrets to a Forever Valentine

BY SOPHIA BONE

With love starting to fill the air as the 14th approaches, local retired couples who have spent many Valentine's Days with their soulmates explain how they met each other and how they have stayed together throughout their lives.

Kent and Marsha



TRUE
LOVE

It's 1974. Kent and Marsha Wall are currently stranded in a little town in Yugoslavia after totaling their car during a three-month trip they were doing through Europe. The only way home was to go behind the Iron Curtain.

"It all started on the first Saturday night when classes started, they had a little record hop," recalls Kent, smiling. "Marsha came to that to mix, and I was there playing pool. I came out and I saw her and said, 'Do you want to dance?' and she said, 'Yes.'"

That was during the beginning of the winter quarter of Marsha's freshman year and Kent's junior year at the University of Minnesota. They dated for a year and a half, were engaged for a year and got married in Marsha's hometown of 300 people.

"You didn't send invitations to people because the whole town just always showed up to weddings, funerals, baptisms and things like that," Marsha explains.

While Marsha is from a small Minnesota town, Kent is from a bigger city in New Jersey, right outside of New York City. While they have different backgrounds, something they share is their love of travel and after living in England for a few years as part of Kent's job they decided to camp and drive through Europe.

The couple eventually made it home with more memories than they thought possible. The trip truly emphasized and tested their keys to an overall successful marriage: patience and understanding.

Kent and Marsha Wall decided to settle down in Carmel and had both their children go through the CUSD school system.

"It's also realizing that what you've got is worth more than anything else in the world," Kent says. "And that has always just been the most meaningful thing."

Dionys and Jonathan

This June, Dionys and Jonathan Briggs will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Spending a majority of their lives together and making memories through their two kids, it all started at a banker's party Dionys was attending...and Jonathan crashed.

"He came in with long hair and a leather jacket and just seemed like the most interesting guy in the room," Dionys remembers.

Jonathan whisked her off to another party he knew about, and the rest was history. Their first dates included going out to see foreign films, which foreshadowed a love of traveling they would share together. Prior to COVID-19, they traveled once a year to places like Argentina, New Zealand and European countries.

Jonathan's job had them moving coast to coast, living in places like Maine, where their two kids were born, and Southern California. Going to the snow in Bear Valley brings fond memories as the kids competitively ski raced there, and although they settled in Carmel, they still try to vacation there every winter.

As for the necessities needed to have a harmonious relationship, it's all about chemistry, compromise and knowing each other's strengths. While Dionys is more artistically minded, Jonathan is more mechanical so it works out that he does things like managing their finances.

"One last thing that is very important is that you have to agree on the type of dog you get," Dionys says while petting their two-year-old terrier, Rosso.



SOUL
MATE

John and Ann



ME &
YOU

Both coming from previous marriages and children, John and Ann Mahoney, who were able to find each other in their early 50s, are coming up on 33 years of marriage with much wisdom on how they found love for the second time and made it even more meaningful.

"Not only is Ann my wife and my companion, but she is my best friend," John explains.

The two lovebirds were both in the real estate business and met while Ann was moving office spaces in Carmel. As soon as they were introduced to each other they hit it off and realized everything they had in common: Both had two kids each attending local schools and both loved to travel. As they have gotten older, they have stayed in Carmel Valley and now have grandchildren attending Carmel High School.

When it comes to what has made it work all these years, John has many ideas.

"We have a similar moral compass, we give unlimited support to one another, we give space to our spouse, and we tend to laugh a lot because laughter is such an important ingredient," John says.

The two have also found common interests like taking walks, playing bridge and traveling, usually to their favorite spot off the west coast of Mexico. They emphasize that family time is a key factor to happiness as well and love spending holidays with their blended family of 19.

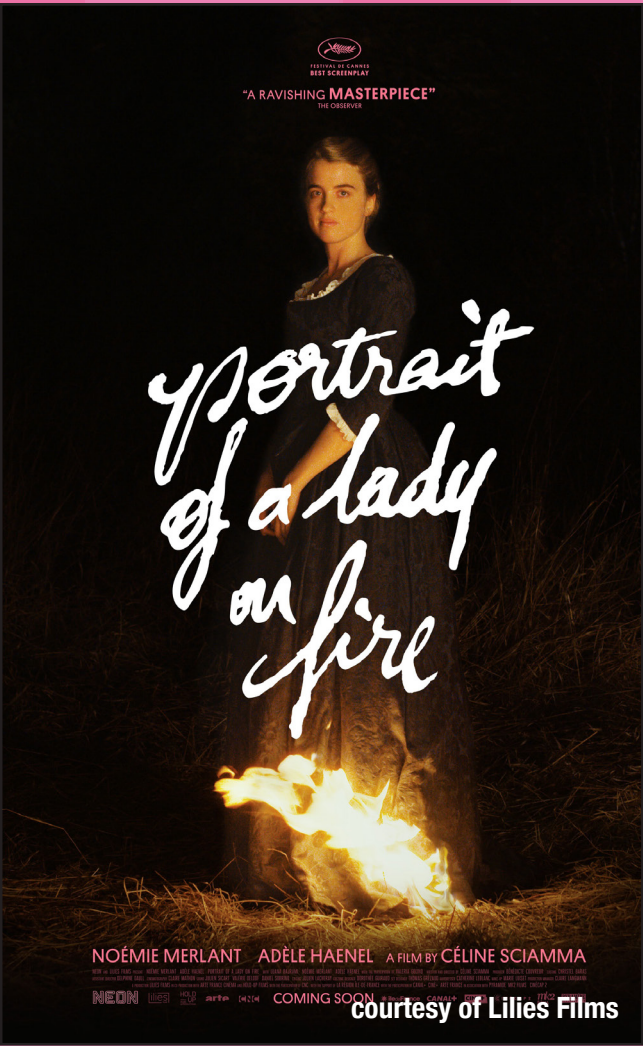
Although it was a bit harder for the two to find each other, John and Ann Mahoney do not regret it and are looking forward to the rest of their lives together.

Films for the Lonely hearts

By Emma Brown

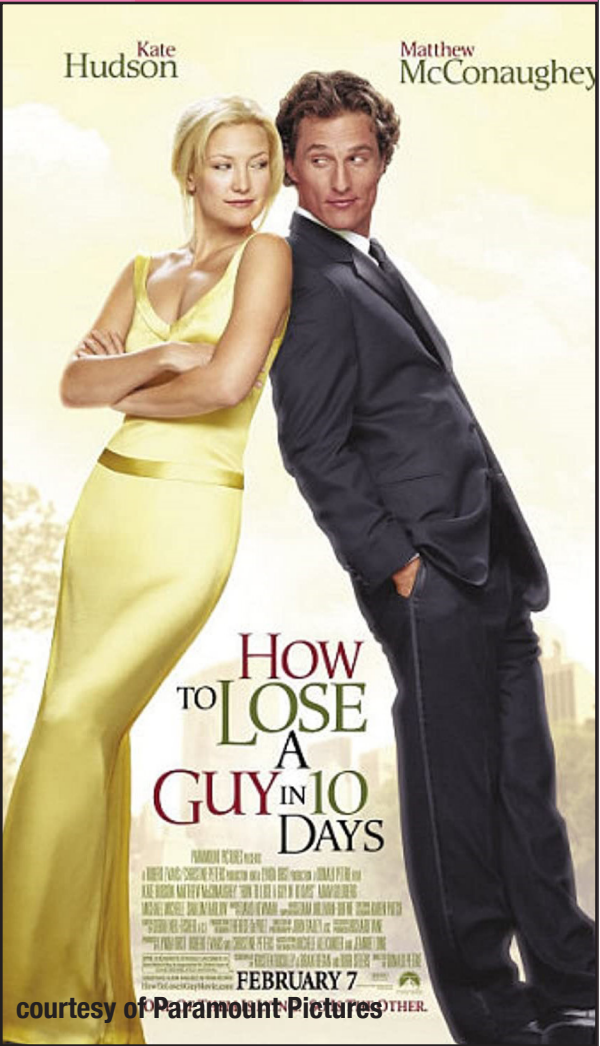
With Valentine’s Day rapidly approaching, many of us are reminded of the loneliness to which we have become accustomed, only now noticing the gaping hole that romance has left in our hearts. Fear not! Films are a completely healthy, non-chocolate thing to gorge yourself on during the most depressing holiday of the year. Look no further for a comprehensive guide of every movie you could desire.

If you’re looking for something artsy:
 “A Portrait of a Lady on Fire”



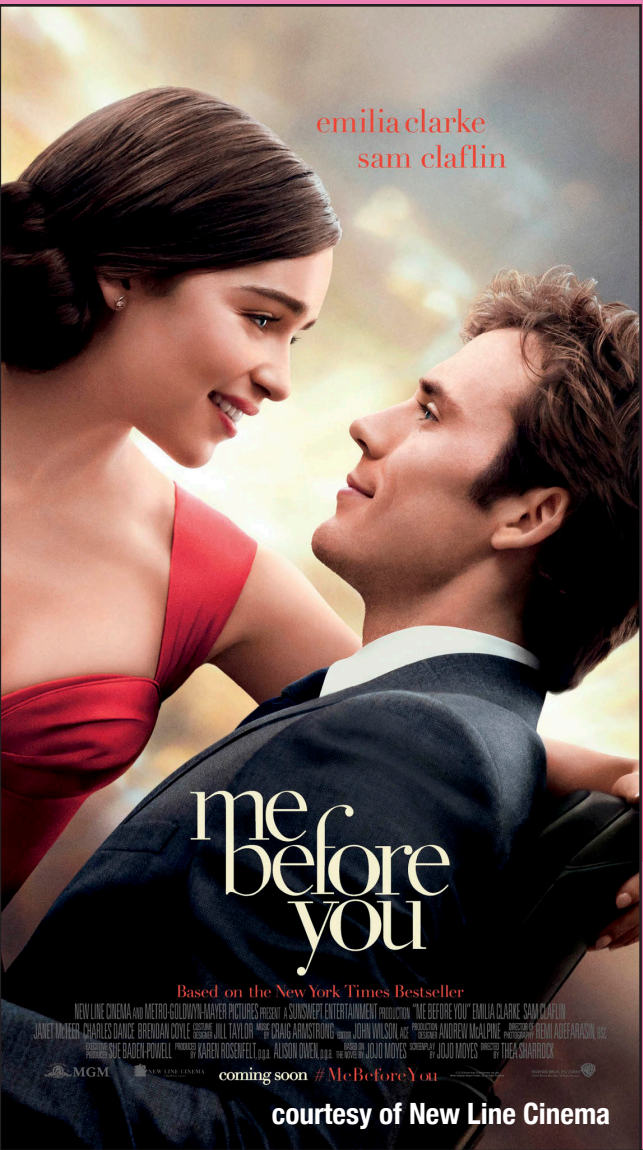
“A Portrait of a Lady on Fire” follows Marianne (Noémie Merlant), a painter, as she attempts to complete her task of capturing the elusive essence of the reluctant bride-to-be Héloïse (Adèle Haenel), a venture made more difficult when she is told that her subject must be unaware of the purpose of her stay and is forced to work on her masterpiece only under the cover of moonlight, using only recollections and rough sketches of her muse to inform her portrait. The primarily blue color palette of the movie and the absence of a soundtrack make the film a portrait of solitude and somberness, as the cinematic universe revolves around a slow-burning love doomed from the first day.

If you’re looking for a classic rom-com:
 “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days”



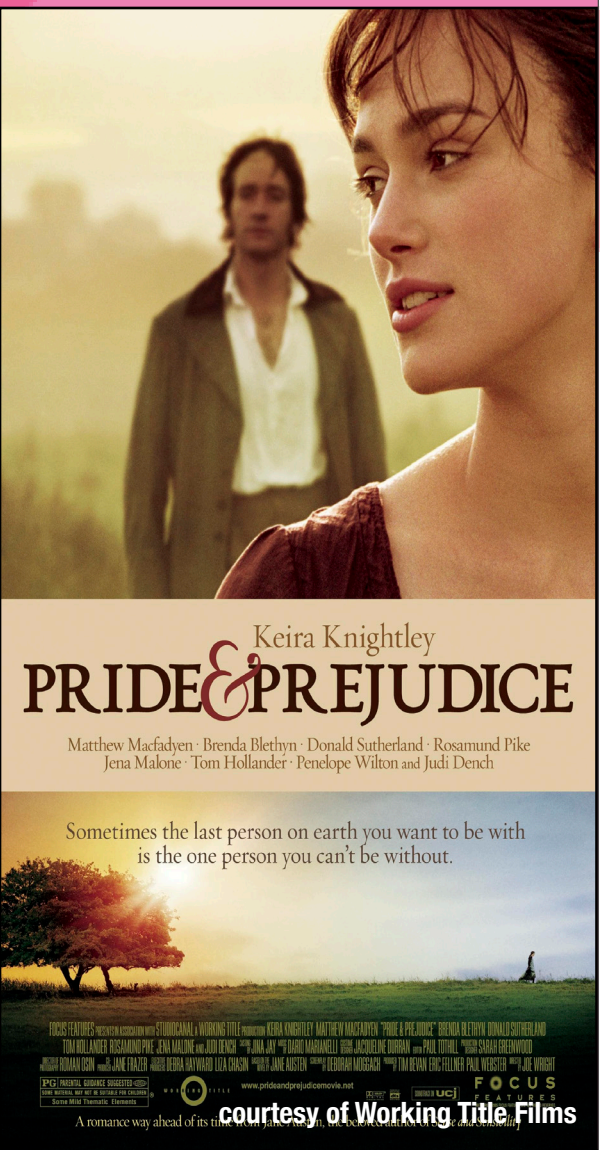
Matthew McConaughey and Kate Hudson play their parts perfectly in this classic rom-com, effortlessly capturing the whirlwind beginning of a romance. Andie Anderson (Hudson), a magazine writer, is tasked with writing an article about the mistakes that women make while dating, causing them to drive partners away. On the other side of town, advertising executive Benjamin Barry (McConaughey) makes a bet with his co-workers that he can make a woman love him in 10 days. A recipe for disaster, the push-and-pull relationship in “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” is sure to elicit laughs from viewers as the story follows the antics of the journalist and her friends in their pursuit to push her new boyfriend away.

If you’re looking for a good cry:
 “Me Before You”



Based on Jojo Moyes’ novel, this movie follows Lou (Emilia Clarke), a bubbly character, who becomes the caretaker for the distant and cruel Will (Sam Claflin). In need of money to help support her family, Lou remains persistent in the face of disdain from her patient. As the two spend time together, their relationship turns from professional to amorous in a series of indistinct interactions that culminate in a love affair. Charismatic characters and a heartwarming relationship lulls the viewers into an optimistic point of view, nearly causing them to forget the underlying truth of Will’s condition. With a truly heartbreaking ending, “Me Before You” is guaranteed to get you sobbing.

If you’re looking for a timeless classic:
 “Pride and Prejudice (2005)”



This remake of Jane Austen’s novel features a star-studded cast, including Kiera Knightley, Matthew Macfadyen and Carey Mulligan, with an actor to appeal to every viewer. In this film, rebellious daughter Elizabeth Bennet (Knightley) is unchanged by her introduction to Mr. Darcy (Macfadyen), despite the cosmic shift it causes for her prospective suitor. Mr. Darcy, an arrogant and classist man, is far from likeable for the majority of the movie, eventually confessing his love for Elizabeth in the most counterproductive and insulting way possible. After rejecting his proposal, Elizabeth finds herself reconsidering all that she knew about the man so fiercely in love with her. “Pride and Prejudice” is the epitome of the enemies-to-lovers trope, acting as an inspiration for future media.

CAMPUS

Puzzling features on CHS campus

BY MARCUS MICHIE

Have you ever spotted curious structures or installations on Carmel High School's campus? If you have thoroughly examined CHS, you may have seen a few architectural mysteries and strange objects present on campus.

In the barren walkway adjacent to the cafeteria, for instance, six years of deterioration left the barbecue rusted and inoperable.

"We tried to use the barbecue six years ago without much success," CHS activities director Aubrey Powers recalls.

Built in the 1990s, the seemingly neglected grill's past was occupied with preparing patties, sausages and other grilled food primarily for athletic events, including the football team's pregame dinners.

"It's a beloved feature of our campus," CHS administrative assistant Lisa Brazil says. "It's just waiting out there for life to return to normal."

In a newer addition, several newly installed benches and stumps have emerged beside the amphitheater, but some students and staff are questioning their awkward and peculiar presence.

"Having places to sit is great," says Computer Science teacher Tom Clifford, who's classroom has a front-row seat to the stumps outside. But Clifford admits he is puzzled by the design of the stumps. "Why not get actual rounds of logs?"

The unnatural, synthetic logs dissuade some students from settling down with friends, and with an abundance of recently added seating around the campus, some students question whether the arrangement was worth installing.

"No one sits there," freshman Jeremiah Robinson says. "The school could have invested the money elsewhere."

Before the benches and stumps were built beside the stairway to the amphitheater, the land was unused and often disregarded as an unattractive segment of the campus.

"If it's something that the students will use, I think it's a good idea," says CUSD Board member and former CHS principal Karl Pallastrini.

Time will tell.

Another structural subtlety on campus is the library balcony. Strangely, the balcony is inaccessible from inside the building.

"I've never noticed the balcony before," CHS campus supervisor CJ Veloz says. "I would guess they wanted to have inward doors, but had a change of heart."

The library was built while Pallastrini was principal, and he envisioned the balcony to be an area for students to gather, read and study in the open air.

"It was an idea that didn't have enough traction to happen," Pallastrini says.

Whether purposefully decorative or an architectural flaw, the balcony is a curious feature of CHS' library, similar to the dilapidated shack beside the CHS track. Nicknamed "Ables' Barn," the shack held track and field equipment for decades, but time has left the shed moldy and unenterable.

"John Ables was a track coach here for many years," Brazil explains. "I don't know how long it has been here, but it's scheduled to be demolished."

For years, CHS has been cautioned against tearing down the structure as the roof tiles contain asbestos, the mineral linked to mesothelioma.

"Because of the asbestos, students can't go in, but adults can," Clifford says.

The barn could be demolished by the summer of 2022 and replaced by a new storage facility shortly thereafter.

Carmel High School's colorful past has produced many mysterious structural oddities. Just what does the future entail for these curiosities and others on campus?



photo by MARCUS MICHIE

The CHS library, ornamental balcony included, was built in the early 2000s beside the administration building.



photo by MARCUS MICHIE

Left undisturbed, the insulated asbestos within "Ables' Barn" has been harmless.

SPORTS

Winter sports adjust with COVID impacts

BY HEATHER ALBIOL

As the winter season naturally brings along more illness, COVID cases have risen and Carmel High School sports are dealing with the impacts: games canceled and rescheduled, students unable to attend practice because of a runny nose, returning fatigued athletes, and a mass of frustrated coaches and athletes facing impacts of the unpredictability the virus has brought to their sports.

Of all the winter sports—basketball, soccer, wrestling—not one team has had the luxury of attending all their competitions at the original place and time as several games have been canceled and rescheduled due to players getting COVID or showing symptoms.

"It's a different combination, sometimes we could be affected and we get some games canceled," CHS athletic director Golden Anderson explains, "and sometimes it looks like we're getting more games canceled because someone else has been affected by COVID."

At the start of the winter season in November, when a player had a positive COVID test, the entire team would get tested, any coming up games would be rescheduled, and other team members might be placed into a modified quarantine.

As of Jan. 12, however, the state guidelines had changed to allow a more manageable handling of contact tracing: Regardless of vaccination status, if anyone has been exposed, the CDC recommends that they get

tested within 3-5 days, but if there are no symptoms present, they may participate in school and extracurriculars as normal. Athletes and coaches alike are hop-



photo by JULIA HADLAND

Juniors Adam Carley (left) and Jim Moreau (right) on the boys' basketball team compete against Salinas High School while wearing masks indoors.

ing that continuation with these loosened restrictions will allow for more stability in their season.

"You wake up in the morning and you receive a cou-

ple of texts messages sharing that we're either out or we're a close contact," CHS varsity girls' soccer coach Krista Winkler explains, "and then all of a sudden, you went from having a practice plan or a game lineup to really having to change what you had practiced."

Girls' varsity soccer (6-3-4 through Jan. 30) went almost an entire month without any games from Dec. 17 to Jan. 18 and are not the only team to have experienced these measures. Boys' varsity soccer (8-2-2) has currently had only one game rescheduled against Greenfield, but has struggled with missing players, similar to boys' basketball (3-13-0) who lost four lead players and had to postpone a game against the school's rival, Pacific Grove High School.

Girls' basketball (8-3-0) may have had the hardest blow though as excessive COVID cases have postponed numerous games, one against league-leading Stevenson.

"Sports seasons are about rhythm, there's a rhythm to the school year, and I think there are sub-rhythms," varsity boys' basketball assistant coach Hans Schmidt says. "There's a rhythm to the seasons, and with all the disruptions from COVID, it impacts performance, it impacts focus, it impacts execution."

While the games are currently being made up, there is worry over whether these teams will be able to finish their seasons as resched-

OMICRON ATHLETICS
CONT. 11

COMMUNITY

Roaring into the Year of the Tiger with Chinese New Year celebrations

BY ALEXIS PINE

From Feb. 1 through Feb. 15, Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year and Spring Festival, takes place in the 2022 Year of the Tiger, holding significant value and history to the Chinese community both as a whole and among local students.

Based on the Lunar calendar, *zhong guo xin nian* is one of the biggest and most anticipated holidays celebrated in China. It follows a 15-day celebration period where families and friends visit one another to welcome the new year.

“Just like Christmas, it’s a big family time where everyone makes and eats dumplings in a traditional way together,” CUSD Chinese teacher Joyce Liu says. “It’s all for the meaning of family gathering and unity.”

Like many Chinese holidays, the Lunar Festival has a deep legend that originated thousands of years ago in the Shang Dynasty where a dragon named Nian, which translates to *year* in English, attacked the villages. Because it was scared of loud noises, lights and red, celebrations including fireworks and wearing and decorating quantities of red became customary, as well as celebrating with family.

“There’s a lot of red and firecrackers,” sophomore Grant Xu says. “We don’t do them in the U.S., but I remember when I visited China once during Chinese New Year there were so many firecrackers.”

At the end of the 15-day period, people in China wrap-up festivities with a wide-scale lantern celebration that allows for everyone to go out on the streets, symbolizing reunion and freedom to socialize and featuring iconic dragon and lion dances. Other traditions like the giving of red envelopes covered in the auspicious color red, known as *hong bao*, and cleaning the house to sweep away the old and bring in the new are practices that are widely observed.

“Usually my parents and grandparents will give us red packets with money,” junior Grace Wang says, “and we’ll eat certain foods like noodles and rice cakes. We’ll also try to clean our house to bring in the new year.”

Eating and making a reunion feast called *nian ye fan* with family members is also customary and usually includes eating homemade dumplings, fish and sweet rice cake called *nian gao*.

“Chinese New Year is a big part of staying connected to Chinese heritage,” Xu observes. “Even though we often video call with extended family in China, since I don’t see them very often, this is a great way for me to be connected with them.”

While growing up as Chinese-American offers some disadvantages to closely connecting with forgotten culture, events like Chinese New Year fill the hole of missing heritage and take the opportunity to remember relatives in China or Taiwan.

“I have half of my family in Taiwan, on my mom’s side,” freshman Jesse Shu says, “so I think of them when we do these celebrations because it’s my culture and that’s where they are.”

Both at home and in an academic setting, commemorating and learning about the holiday allows for reflection on the holiday’s importance, even as they grow up away from the main scene in China.

“It’s a piece of my culture,” Wang reflects, “and keeping as much of it as possible is something that is important to retain that individual, unique identity.”

In addition to students commemorating the holiday at home, activities to learn about and celebrate Chinese New Year can be found on campus within tight-knit Chinese classrooms through a cultural week hosted by Liu.

“For students to create something, they can make cards or share lucky candy,” Liu says. “They can make red envelopes and share them with their friends or teachers—that way it’s more meaningful and relevant.”

The history and engaging activities revolving around the festival was planned to be featured at CHS through a campus-wide celebration held Feb. 2 and 3, which will feature calligraphy, hand painting, origami and a zodiac race.

“To me, it’s not only a holiday,” Liu says, “but a tradi-



Chinese New Year festivals happen globally, including the London gathering depicted, and feature customary dragon dances, lanterns and lots of auspicious red.

tion that I can embrace and can pass onto the next generations. As a language teacher, I think it sets a cultural context for my students to learn this beautiful language and to reflect on their own culture.”

Thousands of years of Chinese New Year history and traditions put emphasis on educating the younger generations to keep traditions alive and to allow for deeper connections with their culture across the world.

Xin nian kuai le, gong xi fa cai! Hu nian xing da yun.
Happy New Year, we wish you prosperity and great fortune in the Year of the Tiger!

Athletics mid-micron cont. 10

uled games could cut into spring sports. Anderson has explained that there have been no changes to whether the cutoff date, the third week of February, will be extended, though there may be room for creative solutions—one already is that make-up games are now allowed to be scheduled on Sundays, an allowance that previously did not exist.



CHS boys’ soccer plays on despite challenges with losing team players and postponed games.

“I’m not gonna stress about the guidelines,” wrestling coach Russ Shugars says. “When they change, we’ll adapt with them.”

As each sport is being affected differently, and guidelines are constantly changing, navigating sports this season has been rough on student-athletes. Yet coaches share their inspiration with the players, encouraging them to play on.

“We get to be out there having fun together, and playing something we love to do,” Winkler says, “and I think keeping that perspective is so important.”

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STUDENTS

CHS surfing duo competes with Los Aptos High

BY HEATHER ALBIOL

At 8 a.m. on the brisk morning of Jan. 15, the beautifully curling surf at Pleasure Point Santa Cruz was closed off so a heat of six surfers, including CHS students Sage Lewand and Lili Menkal, could compete in the fourth Santa Cruz Scholastic Surf League competition of the year.

After trying to start their own surf team at CHS and finding little possibility for it, Lewand and Menkal joined the Aptos High Surf Team to participate in competitions and better their surfing skills by going against challenging opposition and taking their sport to new levels.

While attempting to build a CHS Surf Team, Lewand and her dad, Kevin, built connections with many of the people helping orchestrate the SCSSL competitions, one being Aptos High School science teacher Joseph Manildi, who coaches the AHS surf team. Lewand and Menkal found little opportunity to compete elsewhere, as there is not a team in the local area, but Manildi offered two open spots on the Aptos girls’ team, giving them a chance to participate.

“They have got a great attitude and a really good approach to surfing and life,” Manildi explains.

Having the two CHS students on the team has proven beneficial as Lewand has made it to the final round in all three of the competitions she has competed in. Though it is based on individual abilities with surfers

getting points on their style, technique and confidence, the points collectively score the team.

Through SCSSL there are six competitions for high school and middle school surfers with a few teams from around the Santa Cruz area. Three surfers from two

unique community, introduced them to new people and showed them a new aspect to the sport that they love so much.

“I’m surfing with girls who love the sport just as much as me,” Lewand says, “and it’s motivating to see other girl surfers out there ripping.”

For both girls, surfing has been something of a therapy to them and getting to experience it in a different way and see other people share their excitement is something that encourages them with these competitions.

“We’ll be at the perfect surf spots,” Lewand explains, “famous surf spots like Santa Cruz, Pleasure Point, Steamer Lane, and it’s just you out there with five other people surfing these insanely good waves when there usually would be 100 people in the lineup, so even if you don’t do good in the contest, you’re still surfing Santa Cruz.”

Although there is not currently a CHS surf team, surfers interested in participating in these competitions and furthering their abilities should be given the opportunity soon enough as SCSSL is expected to be introducing two new teams next year, one a team

open to any high school students in Carmel.



With perfect surf and a competitive drive, CHS junior Lili Menkal carves up the waves during a competition at Pleasure Point.

competing schools battle to advance in three 15-minute rounds with a first heat, semi-finals and finals.

Menkal and Lewand had never surfed competitively before, and the opportunity brought them closer into a

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REVIEW

‘Spider-Man: No Way Home’ finds home in hearts of old and new Marvel fans

BY AVA CAMARGO

Marvel enthusiasts get caught in a web of astonishment as the new “Spider-Man: No Way Home” captivates a multiverse of action, humor and drama that leaves audiences wanting more.

Following “Spider-Man: Far From Home,” where the evil Mysterio reveals Spider-Man’s identity, Peter Parker (Tom Holland) finds his world falling apart in spite of the controversy over Mysterio’s death. Fellow Avenger Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) attempts to help Parker, and before you know it New York is flooded with chaos.

The third movie of the new Spider-Man series starring Holland ties all three versions of Peter Parker’s story together. The twist on Peter Parker’s character in the 2017 and 2019 movies has certainly brought attention to a younger audience, and now fans of the original trilogy and “The Amazing Spider-Man” movies will be thrilled to see blasts from the past incorporated in the storyline.

The dynamic trio of Peter, MJ and Ned attracts the perfect balance of high school and young adults trying to navigate their lives alongside Spider-Man. Emmy Award-winning actress Zendaya, who plays MJ, strikes once again with her witty, dry and observant take as Spider-Man’s love interest. Viewers are now welcomed into her vulnerable and compassionate side through her and Peter’s relationship. Both MJ and Ned (Jacob Batalon) are suited with even bigger roles in “Spider-Man: No Way Home” as they help Parker behind the scenes of his Spidey excursions.

Though Spider-Man has usually been under the influence of superhero leaders before him, such as Iron

Man, a new kind of leadership and responsibility is presented here, which captures more audience appreciation for Peter Parker himself. Holland’s dorky, humble and newly powerful appeal is just the right amount of relatable and comedic, causing the viewer to fall in love with his character.

The acting success of each lead is one thing, but the directing, writing and producing is on another level. To create such a diverse script that follows a multitude of storylines and perspectives takes a great amount of creative precision.

With a length of nearly two and a half hours, the movie seems to be never-ending but keeps viewers in total commitment to the plot without a dull moment to spare. Despite that, the constant introduction of new characters may be confusing for those who aren’t prior Spider-Man fans.

Earning \$668 million domestically so far, *Variety* mentions that “Spider-Man: No Way Home” is ranked sixth-highest grossing movie of all time, and for good reason. The only question that remains: What will come next?

9.7/10



Spider-Man (Tom Holland) alongside Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) and MJ (Zendaya) as they defeat a multitude of enemies from different dimensions.

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REVIEW

‘DRIP SEASON 4EVER’ testifies to Gunna’s strengths, rapper’s weaknesses

BY RYAN JALILI

“DRIP SEASON 4EVER” is the fourth and latest installment of Gunna’s “Drip Season” series, which gives fans a strong beginning, but fails to maintain a cohesive flow as a trap album as the beats become more and more melodic.

With features on songs with the likes of Future, Young Thug, Kodak Black, 21 Savage, Lil Baby and more, this album has a stacked roster.

The album starts off slow with the song “private island,” but quickly picks up the pace with the album’s currently most popular song, “pushin p,” featuring Future and Young Thug who perform well on this strange but fitting beat. Lyrically it’s a confusing mess with lines like “she’s not a lesbian, for p, she turn pesbian,” but all three rappers’ flow works well and fits the song’s overall vibe.

Young Thug stands out on the track “mop” with a classic Thug flow on this track reminisnact of his older albums. However, the clear show-stealer of the album is “thought i was playing” featuring 21 Savage. This track feels like it is straight off of Savage Mode with amazing production from Metro Boomin and great performances from both Gunna and 21 Savage; they both deliver a classic savage track.

“P power” is a well produced, but uncomfortable track featuring Drake, consisting of both rappers rapping

over a beat of women moaning, and while both artists perform well, it is just overall awkward to listen to. Kodak Black performs pretty well on the track “how you did that” with a more mellow tone, but the song also features a subpar verse from Gunna.

The second half of the album completely diminishes

any flow or cohesion the album previously has by using more melodic and slower beats, which does not work at all for Gunna’s vocals or lyricism. Songs like “livin wild,” “you and me” and “die alone” are prime examples of this. This really makes the second half of the album forgettable, with each song sounding virtually the same and boring.


Perhaps the most disappointing song on the album is “25k jacket” featuring Lil Baby who gives a lazy performance with a horrible beat that features out-of-place dog barks. The production on this track is awful.

A common theme is that a large majority of the album’s featured artists, specifically Future and Young Thug, outshine Gunna. Both of these artists appear multiple times and seem to have a much better overall flow and lyricism than Gunna himself. Where the album succeeds is usually at the hands of Gunna’s features, and where the album fails is when Gunna is melodically rapping over an dull beat with absolutely no flow.

With a phenomenal start, but slow and painful finish, apart from a few hit tracks this album is most likely not going to be remembered.

6/10






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Valentine's Day Advice

from our resident love expert



Q: There's a person that I share some classes with who I like, and when we talk in class, it seems like they like me back. But, when we leave class, we don't talk. I don't think I'm even on their radar. What should I do?

A: You probably are not on their radar, but that doesn't mean you can't be. Reach out outside of class, whether it be through a text or a call. Ask them about their life outside of school or even ask for a favor—it's proven to make people think about you more.



Q: What should I do if my boyfriend does something that is just a complete turn-off? Like if he vapes or smokes a lot. How do I tell him it's an ick of mine? Should I tell him? What do I do if he doesn't quit or thinks I'm being too high-maintenance?

A: When it comes to an issue that is super important to you, it's really important to convey that

to your boyfriend. Having conversations about healthy habits or practices that make you uncomfortable are ways to strengthen your relationship. You need to date someone who is receptive to your feelings and values.

Q: We have great chemistry and we get along real well, but she's dating someone. I never see them together, so maybe it's not serious? Advice?

A: There is a difference between liking someone and being nice to someone. If she is in a relationship, don't read into it. You don't want to be the person to cause problems in a good relationship.

Q: If I know someone is interested in me, but I know that I don't have feelings for them romantically, what is the best way to stay friends with them, but also let them know that I don't reciprocate the same feelings.

A: It is important to be honest with them. If you know they are interested in you, make it clear that you do not share the same feelings. Being direct is the best way to avoid any confusion. If you feel that clarifying your feelings might jeopardize your friendship, make it clear that you value your relationship as friends, but don't see them in a romantic way. Respect their feelings and their time, if you don't see a future with this person, the truth is best.

Q: What are the universal tells for a girl hitting on you?

A: Eye contact. Eye contact. Eye contact. During conversations with someone a girl likes, they will often try to maintain consistent eye contact. Physical touch is also a good indicator of interest, or if they laugh at everything you say. Going out of her way to ask you questions or for small favors is also a good indicator of her interest.

Q: What are the best pick up lines that actually work?

A: Looks like you're a criminal because it's a crime to look as good as you do.
Do you have a name or can I call you mine?
I think there's something wrong with my phone, could you try calling it?



HOROSCOPES

Aries

This month, expect to find love in the seat next to you. Take a quick glance to the left and to the right. You'll find beauty and opportunity all around you.

Taurus

During the season of all things love and otherwise, the only thing you'll have a relationship with is a bucket of fries.

Gemini

Geminis, with love in the air and ice in your heart, the dichotomy of your existence will fracture and freeze any possibilities for romance.

Cancer

Wandering through the halls of supermarkets, you'll discover rows and rows of candy, though you won't be receiving any on Valentine's Day. Purchase some for yourself the day after. It's half off!

Leo

For a fire sign, this month, there will be no spark. There's not much else to say. Better luck next time?

Virgo

Cupid has drawn back his bow and aimed his amorous arrow at your heart. You are destined for a day full of affection.

Libra

Your Valentine's Day will be spent in the arms of the stuffed bear that your distant relative bought you for your seventh birthday. At least you can pretend like that animal cares about you.

Scorpio

Scorpio, you pot of salsa! Expect a February that tops the Scoville scale.

Sagittarius

You're no stranger to disappointment when it comes to matters of the heart, and this month, it seems that you will once again be acquainted with that familiar feeling of disenchantment.

Capricorn

Capricorn, this holiday, we promise that you will meet someone as compatible for you as chocolate and raspberries are for each other. Keep your eyes peeled!

Aquarius

This February will be retribution for your past sins. We hear karma can be quite a pain. That's a real shame. Take this time to really enjoy the flavor of your own medicine.

Pisces

As you try to piece together your life, remember the havoc you wreaked this past month. Perhaps this is your penance for meddling where you didn't belong.

