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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS, INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

2020 spring commencement postponed indefinitely

By ADRIANNA ADAME
NEWS EDITOR

The 2020 CSUSM commencement ceremony will be postponed, announced the Office of the President via email on Wednesday, Mar. 18.

Commencement was originally scheduled to have 3,641 students walk on May 15-16, but the ceremony will be postponed to a later date this year.

“We know how important commencement is and we are committed to moving this important milestone to a date later this year when it is appropriate and safe to do so. It’s not a question of whether, but when,” said the email.

CSUSM still plans to hold an in-person commencement ceremony, but it’s possible that commencement 2020 might not occur until later during the summer or fall. Seniors will still graduate and receive their diplomas in July.

“I think those options are all on the table, because you know we’re facing unprecedented disruptions and everything is changing day to day. We don’t know exactly what the date is going to be



Photo by Antonio Pequeño IV

CSUSM seniors are now left with the question of when commencement will take place.

yet, it depends on a number of things...but, I will say we are absolutely committed to holding commencement 2020 in-person,” said Margaret Chantung, the Associate Vice President from the Office of Communications.

Since the commencement ceremony will be held at a later date, the ceremony may be slightly different than years past, depending

on whether or not CSUSM will be able to reschedule the vendors originally booked. The vendors are in charge of the set-up of chairs, screens and stage.

“The hope is that it’s going to be as similar as possible. We know how important this is...We need to and want to honor the hard work of our graduating seniors, so our intent is to have it be similar

to what we had before,” said Chantung. “Now, will things be different slightly? Could very well be, just depending on what’s available at that time, but we’re going to do our best.”

The Office of the President has been consulting with ASI leaders in regards to the future of commencement 2020, according to the email.

“We just have to take it day

by day, but we will be absolutely consulting with ASI and listening to our students and we’ll do our best to make what happens in the future workable for as many people as possible, and I know it’s going to be difficult, because there’s some students that will be maybe not living local at this point, but we are going to do our best,” said Chantung.

Some students wrote comments on their opinion about the recent announcement on an Instagram post on CSUSM’s official Instagram page.

“If it’s in the realm of possibility to have commencement before the next academic year, that’d be great,” wrote Ethan Shicks, a CSUSM senior who is set to graduate this spring. “I know lots of people may be starting out-of-state grad programs in September and it’d be a shame if they missed out on walking across the stage.”

While commencement may be postponed, graduates don’t have to worry about not receiving their diplomas on time. Diplomas are mailed out in July. At the commencement ceremony, graduates are given a diploma cover.

“Know that we’re monitoring this and that we know how important this is and that we don’t want to take away from that,” said Chantung.

For further information, visit: <https://www.csusm.edu/commencement/graduates/index.html>.



ASI reveals election results, Michael Garrett to become ASI President

By ADRIANNA ADAME
NEWS EDITOR

Third-year student Michael Garrett will be the next ASI president.

Garrett, a sociology and criminology double major, won 56.73 percent of the votes, tallying 472 ballots.

The ASI Board of Directors released the voting results via email, their election website and on Instagram on March 26 at 2:30 p.m.

A total of 833 out of 13,735, or 6.4 percent of ballots sent via email were submitted by students, according to the ASI Board of Directors Elections webpage on the CSUSM website.

“When I heard the news that I was elected, my first thought was excitement. I was very excited to be the representative for the student body and I also realized that it’s a huge responsibility, so I feel very excited and I am very humble for this role that I’m going to take on,” said Garrett.



Photo courtesy of needpix.com

Michael Garrett aims to improve programs on campus and tackle the issue of parking.

Zameer Karim, a third-year political science major and small business owner, came second, at 26.20 percent, with 218 students voting for him. Steven Alvarado, a fourth-year political science

major and global studies minor, came in third at 12.98 percent, with 108 students voting for him. Four percent

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Faculty share changes and challenges with transition to online instruction

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA
A&E EDITOR

After the coronavirus pandemic prompted the university to transition to online instruction, faculty were forced to radically retool their course structures and quickly come up with creative solutions to adapt to current circumstances.

To ease faculty members’ transition to online learning, the university offered resources for technological support. “Our initial reaction was, we need to offer some training, for instructors who may have little to no exposure in teaching in an online environment. So we put together a series of workshops,” said Nicholas Duarte, the director of Technology Support Services.

“We saw a lot of interest from faculty. They were coming to us and finding out, ‘what can we do to get help?’” said Duarte.



Courtesy of pickpik.com

Online instruction is the new normal for all CSUSM faculty.

Unlike some faculty, sociology lecturer Chris Hardnack has had a lot of experience teaching online classes. Hardnack said that students have to be more “self-disciplined and motivated” to succeed in online classes. “When something is posted on Cougar Courses, they need to have the discipline to actually click it. It’s kind of a wide acknowledgment that that doesn’t always happen,” said Hardnack.

Denise Baker, an adjunct professor in the Biology De-

partment, said that the lack of face-to-face interaction is challenging. “I can’t read the body language of my students, I can’t figure out if they’re understanding things or not,” she said.

Baker’s lab classes are proving to be particularly difficult to teach online. “All of a sudden, I’m teaching a class that you have to have special equipment, you have to have a microscope, things

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of the votes for ASI President were write-ins.

Tim Pelayo, a second-year business finance major and current College of Business Representative on the ASI Board of Directors, got the majority vote at 89.83 percent to become the next ASI Executive Vice President.

Andrew Gamboa, a first-year political science major and history minor was elected ASI Vice President of Student & University Affairs, receiving 87.83 percent of the vote.

Dylan Crivello, a first-year political science major and history minor who got 75.18 percent of the vote, will become the next ASI Chair and Chief of Staff.

Caleb Standley, a third-year marketing major, was elected the ASI College of Business (CoBA) Representative, receiving 84.21 percent of the vote.

Sarah Elizabeth Ortiz, a first-year political science major and ethnic studies minor, will become the next ASI Student at Large for Diversity and Inclusion Representative, receiving 89.64 percent of the vote.

Julia Glorioso, a first-year political science major and

Christian Uriostegui, a second-year medical anthropology major, will both be the next College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (CHABSS) Representatives, receiving 59.93 percent and 34.59 percent of the vote respectively.

Jennifer Bologna had 11.55 percent of students write her in for Student at Large Representative for Sustainability.

The College of Science and Mathematics (CSM) Representative, College of Business Administration (CoBA) Representative, College of Education, Health & Human Services (CEHHS) Representative and Student at Large for Diversity & Inclusion Representative positions are still open. The ASI website and social media will have open applications for these positions, according to their ASI general elections results email.

The majority of students, 81.65 percent, voted to approve changes to ASI Bylaws, decreasing the CHABSS representatives from four to two and "increasing the college representative commitment from 5 hours to 10 hours per week to increase University committee representation," according to the website.

Garrett's main goal once he takes over as ASI Pres-

ident will be to improve parking.

"I wholeheartedly believe that parking is an issue for many students and that is one thing that I do hope to help, now that I am elected," said Garrett.

"If elected, I plan to work with North City to improve the hours in which students can park in the new parking structure," wrote Garrett on his bio on the ASI Board of Directors Elections website.

For the 2020-2021 academic school year, Garrett said that he is also aiming to improve programs, such as the Cougar Pantry, the 24/5 zone on the second floor of Kellogg Library and working more with Student Health and Counseling Services to promote mental health awareness to students.

"For the student body as a whole, I just want to tell everyone I'm super excited to be the voice of the student body and I am excited to see where this journey takes us," said Garrett.

For further information about the ASI Election results, check out: <https://www.csusm.edu/vote/index.html>.

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like that, and I'm trying to translate that into an online experience for the student," she said. "And it's less than ideal. I feel like it's sad."

Baker's class BIOL 367 is very popular because students are able to be independent in their lab work. "There are students that waited three or four years to take this class...almost my entire roster is seniors, because only seniors can enter it because it's that popular," she said.

"To have it shut down just when we get to the part where you get to do the fun stuff, that was very disappointing. I've had probably 10 or 15 students who have expressed that to me," said Baker.

Another class that may not be as inherently suited to online instruction is GEO 102, Oral Communication. "GEO is meant to be face-to-face, no doubt about it...public speaking is the one class you really don't want to have to do this," said Mike Sperla, a communications lecturer who has taught for 19 years.

However, Sperla said that online teaching is going better than he had expected. He is using Zoom, and students will still be able to

give their speeches. His students will even be able to use screen-sharing to show their visual aids while presenting.

Another professor using Zoom is Karen Schaffman, who is the Program Director of Dance Studies. "I'm worried about some students. I think some students are very, very isolated, and so it's important for us to show up on Zoom together," she said.

Still, Schaffman said that online instruction has been "very, very challenging" given the lack of in-person interaction. "The beauty and the urgency of dance in the world is really highlighted by knowing...that we have to be in the room together," said Schaffman.

Schaffman said that a great loss was the cancellation of the annual Spring Dance Concert, where students would have gotten to perform in front of the campus community. Now they have to make videos. "Again, I'll use the word 'survive'. How do we survive under these conditions right now? How do we stay creative?" she said.

Hardnack brought up the personal challenges that instructors are now facing, such as lack of childcare and pandemic-related stress. "Look, there's no way I

would have thought teaching the units that I have and also homeschooling my child with no childcare while my wife, who's a health worker, is at work, would be a good idea," he said, adding that his recorded lectures have featured cameos from his five-year-old son.

"That kind of situation makes it hard for us to design a quality course, and then with everything going on, we're kind of checking the news on our phones just as much and are just as distracted as anyone else is," said Hardnack.

Despite such personal challenges, Hardnack said that faculty members are still focusing on what's in their students' best interest. "Students should know that all the professors are on their side. We want them to do well, and we're not trying to be an obstacle or disciplinarian in some way...we don't want to change people's lives more than it already will," he said.

Schaffman encouraged students to remain adaptable. "Dance and art are about improvisation. Improvisation is a skill. So understand that we're all improvising right now...that we're all trying to find ways to structure our lives," she said.

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The Cougar Corner

Sinking Feeling

By Peter Lachance

Sinking in the brown packages.
Tired of the warehouse.
Tired of fork-lifts.
Tired of pickup trucks.

Can't eat another brown bag lunch,
No more apples.
No more peanut butter.
No more jelly.

Curse at the Wonder bread
Fight the plastic bag.
Fight against the smothering.
Fight the red balloons choking me.

Drowning in caffeine to stay awake.
Not another coffee.
Not another Pepsi.
Not another Coke.

Can't get out of my waking nightmares.
Escape from the warehouse.
Escape from life.
Escape to anywhere.

My darkness crumbles my freedom.
Dreams in the garbage can.
Dreams taken away in a garbage truck.
Dreams are lost in the garbage heap of sadness.

Darkness wins
Another day in the warehouse
Another day on the forklift
Another sandwich

Sink slowly into the caffeine
Deeper in the coffee
Deeper into the coke
All the way to the bottom of the red can.
Darkness.

Writer bio: "I am a returning student in my third year. I am a literature and writing major with a minor in film studies. I have a passion for writing, comics and screenplays. I have been experimenting with poetry and short stories."

Are you a creative writer, visual artist or photographer? Show off your work on The Cougar Corner! Message us at cougarchron.arts@gmail.com with your name, a short bio and either a short piece of writing or a photo of your work.

Stargirl suffers from meandering pace and plot

REVIEW

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA
A&E EDITOR

With movie screens around the country going dark to help stop the spread of coronavirus, streaming services are the only way to catch a new movie. One such film is Disney+'s recently released coming-of-age drama called *Stargirl*, which is based on Jerry Spinelli's 2007 novel of the same name.

Released March 13, the film chronicles the unlikely romance of two high schoolers who can't be more different: Leo, a shy teen who just wants to stay unnoticed, and Stargirl, a ukulele-playing girl who loves standing out. With her unapologetic approach to life, the confident Stargirl brings out the best in Leo and the entire school.

While the film has an intriguing premise and it's commendable that the film demonstrates the importance of being yourself, *Stargirl*, unfortunately, fails to live up to its full potential. One of its main problems was its unfocused plot – the surplus of subplots made the film confusing at times and detracted from the film's overall arc.

Stargirl's sluggish pacing was also problematic. There's something to be said



Photo by Anneliese Esparza

Stargirl follows the love story of the exuberant Stargirl (Grace VanderWaal) and the quiet Leo (Graham Verchere).

for films that take a step back and focus on characterization and scene more than action-packed storylines. Still, there is a difference between savoring a more laid-back film and counting down the minutes until the film is over, and *Stargirl* leans toward the latter category.

Despite its significant narrative flaws, *Stargirl* did feature strong acting performances from its leads. Graham Verchere was exceptional as the introspective and tender Leo. Despite the fact that the film is named after Stargirl, Leo is actually the main character and the subtle depth of Verchere's performance was one of the bright spots of the film.

Stargirl is played by Grace VanderWaal in her acting debut. VanderWaal, who vaulted to fame when she won the 2016 season of *America's*

Got Talent, may be better known as a singer-songwriter, but *Stargirl* proves that the 16-year-old is gifted with acting talent as well. VanderWaal's performance ensured that her character would be multidimensional rather than just a quirky stereotype.

VanderWaal got a chance to sing and play her ukulele for the role as well. While she is undoubtedly an accomplished musician and brought passion and talent to the musical aspect of her performance, the songs themselves were subpar.

Aside from the instrumental soundtrack by Rob Simonsen, the music was primarily covers of other artists' work, which detracted from the film's musical originality. Moreover, many of the songs that were covered tended towards the kitschy, particularly the Beach Boys' "Be True

to Your School" that was sung twice in the film.

The best song in the film, "Today and Tomorrow," was written by VanderWaal and plays during the credits. Featuring her signature slightly husky vocals and accompanied by just the gentle strums of the ukulele, the song is a melancholy ballad that beautifully summarizes the unique relationship between Stargirl and Leo.

Visually, *Stargirl* excelled. Set in Arizona, the film took time to delve into the magnificence of the state, with extended shots of the sweeping, gorgeous desert and several scenes of Stargirl and Leo exploring the wilderness.

While *Stargirl* could have been so much better, the film still has some good points. Narratively it may have floundered, but the acting performances of Verchere and VanderWaal at least ensure that you will become invested in the young lovers' bond, and fans of VanderWaal will no doubt enjoy witnessing her success as an actor.

Even if *Stargirl* might not be winning an Academy Award anytime soon, you might want to give it a watch, if only because streaming platforms are the new movie theaters for the time being.

Eight YouTube channels to watch while you're social distancing

By JAEALYN DECENA
STAFF WRITER

This social distancing has tested us in many ways. Trying to find things to do to pass the time is quite draining. In all honesty, you've probably spent a little more time than you would have liked to watching YouTube videos.

In our defense, YouTube can provide ways for us to learn about history, literature, ourselves and others, all while still remaining entertaining and engaging. Here are eight of the best YouTube channels to watch to help you pass the time.

"Buzzfeed Unsolved": "Buzzfeed Unsolved" investigates cold cases and paranormal experiences. Hosts, Ryan Bergara and Shane Madej, present theories on



Photo by Anneliese Esparza

Watching YouTube is fun way to pass the time while you're social distancing.

true crime and the supernatural. The dynamic between a believer and skeptic adds a light comedic tone to the serious subjects they're taking on.

"The School of Life": With the amount of free time we now have, we have a perfect opportunity to self-reflect and find ways to better ourselves. "The School of Life" provides many differ-

ent videos on self-development. Much of this knowledge is information we don't often think about, such as the problem of being too nice. "The School of Life" can often be therapeutic, challenging us to look inwards and work towards bettering ourselves.

"Rowena Tsai": Rowena Tsai is an influencer who shares tips and tricks she's

learned while being on her own journey to becoming the best version of herself. She provides advice in areas such as money, anxiety, self-doubt, self-esteem and more. Tsai also prompts us to get to know ourselves better. With there being bumps along the way, Tsai's content reminds

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THE CHRONICLE ENTERTAINMENT RUNDOWN

By ANNELIESE ESPARZA, KAT PARRA | A&E EDITOR, PHOTOGRAPHER

Single: "Didn't I"



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Ryan Tedder is the lead singer of pop band OneRepublic.

OneRepublic released their new single "Didn't I" on Mar. 13. The song is from the band's upcoming album *Humans* and is about love lost. The lyrics reminisce about a pair of lovers' former connection and lament the eventual demise of their relationship. "Know that I, know that I still care for you / Tell me why good things have to die," sings lead singer Ryan Tedder in a powerful, emotional vocal performance. Noteworthy for its use of repetition and rhetorical questions, "Didn't I" is a bittersweet, melancholy song that perfectly captures the painful regret of breaking up with someone you still love.

Book: *An American Marriage*



Photo by Rayon Richards on Wikimedia Commons
Tayari Jones is the author of *An American Marriage*.

Tayari Jones' 2018 novel *An American Marriage* is a fascinating tale that explores the relationship of a couple as they experience trauma and division. Roy and Celestial come from different backgrounds but are happily married and ready to spend the rest of their lives together. Everything changes when Roy is wrongfully convicted of rape as their bond is tested with the increasing strain of years of separation. Jones' skilled pen infuses her characters with authenticity and truly captures their world. A truly engaging novel, *An American Marriage* takes the reader on a captivating journey of change, love and loss.

Movie: *Horse Girl*



Photo by Gage Skidmore on Wikimedia Commons
Alison Brie stars in *Horse Girl*, which was released on Netflix on Feb. 7.

Set in modern times, *Horse Girl* unleashes the truth of psychological mental illness. While the film attracts the eye, the storyline turns into a rabbit hole. Sarah (Alison Brie) is a socially awkward individual with an ordinary job and passion for a horse who shares her birthday. Yet each night she is greeted with nightmares, devastating sleepwalks and strange occurrences. Her constant prescient dreams lead her to believe she was abducted by aliens, is stuck in a time loop or is her reincarnated grandmother so she embarks on a journey to find the truth about her illness. The thrilling, unique film is streaming on Netflix.

TV Show: *Little Fires Everywhere*



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Reese Witherspoon plays the wealthy suburban mother Elena Richardson in Hulu's *Little Fires Everywhere*.

Adapted from Celeste Ng's novel of the same name, *Little Fires Everywhere* is a drama series that explores motherhood, adolescence, family secrets and racial and class divisions. When transient artist Mia Warren (Kerry Washington) and her daughter Pearl (Lexi Underwood) move to the town of Shaker Heights, Ohio, they clash with the upper-class, predominantly white community. Particularly, they come to odds with their landlord Elena Richardson (Reese Witherspoon), who is obsessed with perfection and keeping up appearances. The series features a compelling storyline, in-depth characterization and lots of unexpected twists and turns. The first five episodes of the eight-episode series are currently streaming on Hulu.

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us that we're just human, and trying our best is all that matters.

"Sam O'Nella Academy": If you enjoy learning, but find TedEd to be too bland for your taste, Sam O'Nella Academy teaches history through the lens of comedy. With his crude, stick-figure drawings, Sam O'Nella dumbs down major historical events and concepts in order to make them easier to understand. However, if you're someone who doesn't enjoy crude words, this may not be for you.

"TedEd": Being in quarantine also allows us to use our free time to explore more about the world around us. "TedEd" offers answers to questions we didn't even know we had. By covering different subjects such as history and literature, "TedEd" allows its viewers to engage with meaningful content, emphasizing the importance of lost stories and lost arts.

"Anna Akana": Anna Akana is a multiethnic comedian-actress who focuses her channel on a wide variety of self-help topics. Given that she lost her younger sister to suicide, her channel emphasizes the importance of focusing on our mental well-being. She tackles many self-development topics, even by pointing out her

own faults. Each video focuses on a specific idea she learned in therapy and provides that knowledge she was given to her viewers. Like many of the comments read, "Anna goes to therapy so we don't have to."

"OffhandDisney": With the Disney theme parks being closed until further notice, it's nice to be able to get a slight fix by watching Disney videos. "OffhandDisney" offers content for the Disney fanatic. Whether it be theories about the rides' stories or the best smells of Disney, "OffhandDisney" provides quality videos about all things Disney parks.

"Kurtis Conner": Kurtis Conner is a stand-up comedian who makes videos on current culture. Whether it's TikTok, fangirls or E-Boys, Conner will find a way to poke fun at anyone. While remaining focused on the comedic factor of his channel, many of his videos focus on a lesson in human rights. He finds ways to make fun of those who stigmatize different groups of people. Conner allows quality content to help bring a voice to those who may not have one.

Live stream entertainment from the comfort of your couch

By ANNELISA ZAMORA
MANAGING EDITOR

As we're all practicing social distancing and self-isolation, binging countless episodes of *The Office* or dwindling down your watchlist on Netflix can feel a little repetitive. So here's a list of live streams to mix up your schedule and get you laughing, crying or dancing; maybe even all three.

The National Theatre at Home: Starting Apr. 2, The National Theatre will be releasing plays for stream on their YouTube channel every Thursday at 11 a.m. Starting with *One Man, Two Guvnors*, the line up includes *Jane Eyre*, *Treasure Island* and *Twelfth Night*. Each play will be available for one week after its initial stream date along with bonus material like Q&As with the cast and post-stream talks.

Link: <http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>.

The Laugh Factory: Every day at 2 p.m. *The Laugh Factory* goes live via Instagram and YouTube to present stand up comedy acts. The comedy club is famous for being the spot where now-famous comedians got their big breaks. Chris Delia, Tiffany Haddish and Dave Chappelle have all been known to perform there, so while many

of the performers you see are names you may not have heard yet, they're sure to be ones you remember.

Link: <https://www.instagram.com/laughfactoryhw/>.

Broadway HD: With a membership, BroadwayHD.com offers your favorite Broadway musicals and plays to stream from your home. *Phantom of the Opera*, *Kinky Boots* and *Falsettos* are just some of the many critically acclaimed options available to watch. If you're not up to paying \$8.99 a month, they do offer a free seven-day trial; that gives you one week to binge your favorite Broadway hits and cancel the subscription before you get charged.

Link: <https://www.broadwayhd.com/>.

Billboard Live-At Home: Billboard is live streaming music performances from a new artist every day on their Facebook page. Guests so far include Josh Groban, X Ambassadors and Hunter Hayes. The live streams last anywhere from 15 minutes to half an hour and each performer chooses a non-profit organization that is working to help struggling people during the pandemic to benefit from their live stream.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/Billboard/1711083055850565/>.

Andrew Lloyd Webber:

The renowned composer is using his talents on the piano and the help of Twitter to take song requests and perform live, weekly. People have also recorded their sing-alongs to his performances and they've been compiled together for what Webber is calling "Sunday singalongs". So far he's performed "All I Ask of You" from *Phantom of the Opera* and has had Lin-Manuel Miranda join in with a performance of "Everything's Alright" from *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Link: <https://twitter.com/OfficialALW>.

Digital Drag Fest: The world's most famous drag queens are putting on PEG's *Digital Drag Fest*. With names like BenDeLaCreme and Valentina, many contestants from *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Drag Race UK* will be hosting their own shows as part of the lineup. The performances range from makeup tutorials to comedy and musical numbers. From Mar. 27 to Apr. 12 four to

five 30 minute shows will be held each day for the price of \$10 per show. 50 percent of the proceeds will be donated to Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

Link: <https://www.stageit.com/digitaldragfest?page=1>.

#TogetherAtHome: Global Citizen started the hashtag #TogetherAtHome that has encouraged countless singers and musicians to go live via Instagram. With hundreds of concerts and music festivals delayed or canceled altogether, artists are making an effort to deliver performances from a CDC approved distance. John Legend, Vance Joy and plenty more to come are putting on at-home concerts that are proving to be fun in their own way. Keep an eye on the hashtag to see if any artists you're interested in are hosting concerts in their PJs. Global Citizen usually posts clips of the live streams on their Instagram page if you happen to miss a good one.

Link: <https://www.instagram.com/glblctzn/>.

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International public health student shares insight on coronavirus pandemic

SPOTLIGHT

By KATHLEEN CARPIO
ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

Magne Wallacher, a graduate student of the CSUSM's Master's in Public Health, shared his opinions on how COVID-19 is currently affecting our communities. He believes that the practice of social distancing is necessary, "...it is important to try and stop the spread because the vulnerable population is at risk for this, it's something new. It seems like it's at a point now where it's going to be very tough now to try and stop it. It's just going to blow its course."

The fears that the general public holds towards this virus is something that Wallacher finds understandable but noted that perhaps this fear is becoming uncontrollable, "It blows up a little bit, so people are panicking. Especially if you're looking at the toilet paper getting bought up and hand sanitizer... That's just crazy. There's no reason for that at all."

Wallacher shared that although COVID-19 is new and threatening, it is not the only sickness that needs awareness from the public.



Photo by Kat Parra

Magne Wallacher explains what the public students here are doing to further research COVID-19 and ways to fix it.

"With this thing going on... if they had a flu vaccine for corona or COVID-19, everybody would be rushing to get it right now. But they're not doing that with the flu, and the flu is almost the same... This is novel and we never had this strain before so everyone is freaking out, but the flu kills a bunch of people every year. And we have a vaccine but people just go 'Eh, it's just the flu.'"

Currently, Wallacher and fellow graduate students are hoping to research as to why certain demographics are not choosing to get general

flu vaccines. This capstone is still pending as they wait for approval by the Institutional Review Board. "If you do any type of research that requires primary data, which basically means that you're collecting the data... you need approval from the school," he said.

Wallacher and his colleagues are hoping to specifically survey CSUSM Students, "...We're doing a capstone on flu vaccine utilization, looking at some of the factors why college students don't get them. What's the reasoning why a percentage

of students are getting their flu shots?... Why aren't more of the [CSUSM] students getting it?... That's what we're looking at and it's pretty relevant right now."

Wallacher also shared his thoughts about how the country is currently handling the COVID-19 outbreak, "With the closing of the border, no flights from Europe and the suspended NBA. I'm sure that is what they need to do because they wouldn't do this if they didn't feel like it was absolutely necessary... but people just need to calm down a little bit." His insight

comes from both as a public health student as well as being a native from Bergen, Norway.

Wallacher shared "Bergen is a special town for sure. It's the most beautiful town I've ever been in. I'm lucky to have grown up there. We're famous for the rain. We get a lot of rain, that makes everything very lush." Wallacher further shared that he was drawn to pursue higher education overseas when he realized his job as a warehouse distributor for one of Norway's grocery chains wasn't something he could see himself doing long term. "I had a pretty decent job and actually owned my own apartment in Norway but... it wasn't something I thought I could do the rest of my life... So I knew I wanted to go out and do something. I've always been intrigued by San Diego."

Wallacher credits this interest due to his familiarity with American punk rock during his skater days as a youth, "Growing up I was a huge fan of Blink-182. I would watch all their DVDs, music videos, and all that stuff. And because they were from Poway they would always talk about San Diego and how much they loved

San Diego."

He then applied to study abroad in San Diego and was accepted at CSUSM where he completed his Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology, but was further inspired to pursue public health, "I took a class, and the professor really got me into epidemiology and public health and... he's still my mentor now... Thomas Pillsworth."

It's been five years since Wallacher came to the states to pursue his academics, but he's also made a home for himself in San Diego where he met his wife. "I met her here basically at the UVA and she was a fellow student." Wallacher recalled with laughter, "We're actually starting to look at buying a house, and we have two dogs."

Despite the uncertainty that the country is facing currently with a pandemic Wallacher shared that he still has goals for himself and his family, "I want to work in disease surveillance and management, looking at trends in America and around the world... Right now we have this big one going on, and that's something that I want to try and figure out why it is spreading and... how can we make sure this doesn't happen again."

Activities to do while in self-quarantine

By SASHA ANAND
FEATURES EDITOR

With the threat of the Coronavirus outbreak getting worse, the world is experiencing a pandemic at the moment, and it is something unlike anything anyone has experienced in a long time.

With these uncertain times that society is in, many people are having fears and doubts about the effects that this will have the future. In order to combat the spread of the virus the government mandated an order to 'stay in place'.

This puts many of us in our homes and we may be left with anxiety wondering about the state of the world.

The long break from school may have been a time of relaxation for a brief moment, but in this time of self-isolation and social distancing, you may get tired of sitting at home, or lose focus in wanting to do schoolwork.

So in order to avoid going stir crazy, here are some things that you can do to fill your time.

Clean. This may seem like such a basic, mundane and tedious task that you usually put off for as long as possible. However, since you are going to be stuck at home for a while, cleaning up and organizing your space may give you a sense of calm and organization.

Having the space around you be tidy can help get you in the mindframe to be motivated and have a more productive day.

Read a book. Whether it's for a class or for pleasure, now is a good time to crack open a book and either unwind or catch up on the reading for that one class that you may have been falling behind in.

Learn a new skill. Since you are stuck at home until who knows when, now is a perfect time to be learning something that you have always wanted to learn like a new language or an instrument. You could try and perfect your artistic skills or your cooking abilities. Perhaps you'll find a new hobby you enjoy doing.

Keep in touch with family and friends. Now is a good time to spend quality time with your family, assuming that everyone is healthy. Have meals together, watch a movie together, have meaningful conversations and maybe sort out any issues that may be occurring. It is also a good idea to have time

apart so you can keep the peace in the home. Stay in touch with your friends through social media, text messaging and FaceTime. You can even watch a movie with friends through a new Google Chrome extension called Netflix Party.

Get outside, while maintaining social distance. Getting out of the house to get a breath of fresh air and a bit of exercise can help you stay level-headed during these stressful times. As long as you stay at least

six feet apart from others and wash your hands once you return, you can stay safe and healthy.

Lastly, **rest.** Catching up on sleep is very beneficial to reducing your stress levels as well as helping you stay healthy overall.

Due to the strange time society is experiencing, it is important to stay calm and stay home. Do things to take your mind off of everything that is going on at the moment.

"...it is important to stay calm and stay home. Do things to take your mind off of everything..."

Crafts to keep you busy during self-isolation

By SASHA ANAND
FEATURES EDITOR

With the COVID-19 pandemic spreading and no real end to the self-isolation period in sight, you may find yourself with a bit more free time now that you are not having to attend classes on campus. Keeping yourself busy is a good way to get your mind off of the crazy things that are going on in the world right now. So, between the homework and online classes and of course catching up on sleep, here are some easy, time-consuming crafts to keep you entertained.

Craft #1: Make a blanket or scarf with Loop-It Yarn. This is a bundle of yarn that comes with loops already tied on each strand. This is done to mimic the stitching needed to crochet or knit. This craft allows you to knit without needles. It makes it easier to make a woven blanket or scarf. For this, all you need is a spool of the Loop-It Yarn and to follow the instructions that come with it. It can be a bit confusing at first, but once you get the hang of it, it becomes easier. You can find it on the Michaels Craft Store website or Amazon.com.

Craft #2: Make individual piggy banks for each type of coin, separating nickels from dimes, etc. For this, you'll



Photo by Joslyn Pickens on Pexels

During this time, you may want to try something new or to take your mind off of the current situation in the world.

need an empty plastic water bottle, a hot glue gun or double-sided tape and scissors. Rinse the water bottle and clean it with soap and water. Then, dry it off. Afterward, decorate the outside of the bottle however you want.

Lastly, cut a slit at the top of the bottle cap to insert the change. If you want to create a specific thing with this craft, you can turn this into a pig. You will need all the same things as the first part along with four empty bottle caps or thread spools for the legs and a small piece of pipe cleaner. In order to do this, take a water bottle and clean it. Then, using the construction paper, cut out shapes for ears and small circles for the nostrils and eyes. Rest the bottle on its side and cut a slit out of the top of the pig for

the coins to go inside. Then glue on the ears to the side of the bottle (this would be the top of the pig if the bottle is on its side.) Glue on the eyes to the bottle itself and glue the nostrils onto the bottle cap.

Lastly, glue whatever you choose to use for the feet to the "bottom" of the pig and the piece of pipe cleaner to the back of the pig.

If you don't want to look for supplies around your house, you could always work on your drawing skills or simply buy an adult coloring book, which provides more time-consuming designs.

Whatever you choose to do, try and allow yourself to clear your mind from the scary situation that society is in.