PROMONTORY’S FLASH FLOOD

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EDITORIAL EPITHETS
Kelly Galten

Ah, hello. You have found the editorial column. Since this is a new year, and a new editor, introductions are in order. My name is Kelly Galten, and I am thrilled to be the Editor-in-Chief of the Otter Realm. I am a junior here, and I am majoring in Human Communication with an emphasis, of course, in journalism.

But really, this information that really does not interest you. And besides, this paper is bigger than just little old me. So, I asked the managerial staff some questions about themselves, that have almost nothing to do with anything of importance. This way, you can find out a little more about the people behind the scenes of the Otter Realm without your eyes glazing over.

Sean Roney
Position: Online Editor
The best picture Sean Roney thinks he has ever taken is a landscape of a carnival. “I had to ride the Ferris Wheel to the top in order to photograph the landscape of the carnival with people in it,” he remembers. If Roney could have any gadget from his favorite series or movie, he would choose the Great Eagles from Doctor Who. If a superhero in need of a sidekick, he would be Stargirl in the appropriately monikered Stargirl by Jerry Siegel. The character is a kindhearted rebel of a high schooler’s dream, and Haley admires the character’s loyalty to her own personality and choices. Haley owns a cat, and if given the chance, she would ask her fluffy companion if she felt like she was being held against her will. “Not that I would let her go if she did,” Haley says remorselessly. Her favorite poem is “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost; “No one love nature like Frost loves nature.” Haley is still looking forward to her proudest moment, as she feels she has not experienced it as of yet. Her cat had no comment, but was seen gazing longingly out the window at the freedom beyond.

Toutoua Vang
Position: Webmaster
Toutoua Vang, besides having the coolest job title in the whole staff, does have a life other than websites about newspapers. The one picture he would take, if any moment could be captured, would be of his annual family camping trip. On Vang’s personal bucket list are sailing the ocean, and beholding a breathtaking view somewhere in the world (In case he or anyone else is looking for recommendations and a desert landscape, Bryce Canyon fits the bill). If he were recruited by a superhero in need of a sidekick, he would be the smartest character in history and decline. “I don’t really have an interest in fighting crime,” Vang explains. He hopes that next semester will bring his proudest moment.

Adrianna Miller
Position: Advertising Manager
In Adrianna Miller’s opinion, the most underrated character in Family Guy is Meg. “No one ever notices Meg, probably because she is the middle child,” Miller says. The best compliment Miller has ever received was after her recent haircut, about which she received much admiration. Should there be a vote for the most influential person in the world, Kanye West would have Miller’s vote. “I find his music, fashion anything he does, legendary,” she explains. Miller’s proudest moment to date was completing his first semester at CSUMB. No word on whether he uses the Great Eagles as commuter transport.

Kim Haley
Position: Production Manager
If Kim Haley were a main character in a book, she would be Stargirl in the appropriately monikered Stargirl by Jerry Siegel. The character is a kindhearted rebel of a high schooler’s dream, and Haley admires the character’s loyalty to her own personality and choices. Haley owns a cat, and if given the chance, she would ask her fluffy companion if she felt like she was being held against her will. “Not that I would let her go if she did,” Haley says remorselessly. Her favorite poem is “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost; “No one love nature like Frost loves nature.” Haley is still looking forward to her proudest moment, as she feels she has not experienced it as of yet. Her cat had no comment, but was seen gazing longingly out the window at the freedom beyond.

Dylan Avnet
To be clear, David Avnet is in an 8-year Bachelor’s program. However, perhaps once he completes this seemingly insane venture, he will have some time. He could, for instance, see one of the 7 Natural Wonders of the World; if he did, he would see the Northern Lights. Avnet is quite proud about his passion for the show Big Brother and the band Weezer. The most amusing thing about college, in his opinion, is how involved he became. Avnet has both participated the Otter Realm and been an RA, and says of his time, “[the work] showed me how fun and beneficial being involved can be. It’s only amusing because I was never like that in high school (or my first five years of college).” Avnet is excited to see where his proudest moment will crop up. Surely graduating from that Bachelor’s program will make the cut.

So. Now you know a little more about who runs this paper. Want to know what every one of us has in common? We want the same things for this paper. We want to see our staffers be a family, be confident in themselves, and love what they do. We want the paper to be successful, but not at the cost of the people who create it. All in all, we are doing our very best, to give you the very best.
Meet the Staff Writers

Sean is studying to become a teacher, and has years of journalism and editing experience to prepare for correcting mountains of homework. In his free time, he enjoys writing fantasy and science fiction.

Though it is usually impossible to sum up a person in one word, Kim could be described as comfortable. She is a founding member of the CSUMB Saber Society and plays mallet percussion in the school’s concert band.

Kelly is an HCOM major with a journalism concentration. When not working on the Otter Realm, her other interests include working with OtterMedia and enjoying Harry Potter with fellow Hufflepuffs.

Kaitlyn aspires to become either a realtor or a media broadcaster. Until then, she is looking for an adventure. You may think she is wandering around in search of something; the thing she is looking for is a place to set up her hammock.

When Myka, a human communications major, isn’t “acting and reacting to social injustice,” she is either diving head first into her endless anime collection or fine tuning her creative writing skills.

Hailing from Tehachapi, CA, Noah has always been a huge sports fan. Now he is taking on the world of sports journalism here at CSUMB and one day aspires to work for a sports magazine.

Dylan is a Cinematic Arts major who isn’t quite sure what he’s going to do after graduation. However, he would love to work toward his passion of storytelling, especially in the form of movies.

Carolyn doesn’t skip a beet with her convictions about animal welfare and agricultural justice, “We have become so disconnected from what we eat, that we cannot really appreciate where it comes from and what had to happen for us to get it.”

Michelle, working towards a human communications major with minors in Spanish and Journalism, says her favorite part of college was travelling to Mexico to study and research abroad. She fondly remembers staying in a Mayan community.

Having a father in the military, Kelly has had her fair share of moving around. However, she finally feels settled and is enjoying the small town vibe of Monterey. That’s not to say she hasn’t planned her next move. Kelly aims to head to the Northeast Coast of America where she can follow her passion for journalism.

Alex, a third year Peace Studies major, has a passion for playing the violin and and is a member of a string ensemble. He also enjoys photography, creative writing, and delivering hand-crafted sermons at his church.

Rebecca’s unique set of personal and professional tools have her poised to flex her mighty vocal chords and make a loud statement with that big, beautiful voice of hers.

An international student from London, England, Lydia aspires to work in journalism to further her experience as a creative writer. She is an avid reader with an interest in people and culture.
Kayla Norman is a 2nd year Kinesiology major from L.A. who lives on the first floor of Building A in The Promontory apartments. Or at least she did, before the accident over Labor Day Weekend forced her and 61 other first floor residents to vacate their rooms, most of which show no visible signs of damage. Now she lives in her friend’s apartment one story above, sleeping on the floor and sharing a single between herself and two other girls in the same building where her room is vacant and off limits. “Our apartment isn’t even damaged,” says Bailey Banks, a 2nd year Biology major and Norman’s roommate. “It’s a lot on our friends. They didn’t pay for extra roommates. It’s not fair to them.” Norman says, adding, “it’s stressful, it’s three people living in a single, sharing a bathroom.” All 62 affected students have been provided temporary spaces on main campus in both Tortuga and Avocet hall, but Norman, Banks, and a number of other students declined. “We got the temporary card just in case, but we’re not living there. The comparison is just not what I paid for at all,” says Norman.

The notice to move out came from Community Director Katie Hill in an email sent to students on the evening of Saturday Sep. 3rd, following the accident earlier that day in which a driver backed their vehicle into a fire hydrant outside of the front entrance of Building A at The Promontory student housing complex, breaking a valve attached to the hydrant. The result was an explosion of water that shot straight into the air in excess of 20 feet high, showering nearby cars in a forceful spray of muddy water and rocks before flooding the front entrance of the building. The lobby, front hallway, and a number of rooms suffered damage. At least two cars were extensively damaged as well.

The mandatory relocation was issued to allow for “assessing the situation and doing the necessary repairs,” according to an email from Hill on Sep 3rd, an explanation some residents question. Kiki Tope-Anifowose, a Kinesiology student in her second year, is one of the students who refused to relocate to Tortuga, and is currently residing on the second floor with her friends. “The name of this place is Promontory Apartments. If I was in a normal apartment, they wouldn’t kick me out of my house because someone else’s apartment is damaged. Construction would go on. I feel like the majority of people on the first floor did not have to leave, because there’s nothing wrong with their rooms.”

Safety concerns and staying out of the way of construction workers are cited as the main reason given by the RAs for why first floor students were required to move. “I like to ask questions, I don’t just let people tell me stuff for no reason without an adequate answer,” says Daye Turner, a former Army infantryman and senior Social Behavioral Science major, so when an RA explained that it would be a fire hazard if residents remained on the first floor, he was unconvinced. “But I said, ‘there’s only two exits in the whole building because no one can go out through the main.’ That means everybody in the building is still using the same two exits, which are in the back. So it didn’t make a difference if you had us on the floor or not, because we all still use the same exit. And we’re closer to that exit.”

The Director of Student Housing and Residential Life, Jennifer Crompton, made the decision to relocate students based on the recommendation of the “Facilities, disaster crew, and other crew on site at the time of the incident”; that recommendation being that it was unsafe for students to remain on the first floor when the extent of the damage was unknown. In a statement made to the paper, she stressed, “these decisions are never made lightly and at the core of this decision was the safety of...
the students living on the floor.” She also explained that power and water on the first floor may be shut off intermittently as repairs are being made, making the floor uninhabitable.

Since the beginning of the crisis, however, students have been confused about why they were required to leave. Between vague emails and piecemeal, at times contradictory explanations from their RAs, there were more questions than answers about what had happened, or how long it would take to return to normal. “Residents weren’t given much information past ‘you need to get your things and leave’, which was very stressful,” says Melissa Scheeckner, a sophomore studying Collaborative Health and Human Services. “We were also told that we would be updated as soon as more information was known, but for the most part, we have only gotten ‘update’ emails saying that there aren’t any updates.”

Tension between Student Housing representatives trying to enforce policy and frustrated students fighting to remain in their units turned dramatic on the Tuesday night following the accident. Tifani Tucker, a 2nd year Marine Science major, was assigned to a single in Promontory. At $5,398 per semester it is the most expensive housing option offered by CSUMB. When she was told to pack her things and move to Tortuga by the community director on duty—Allison Griffith—two accompanying RAs, she and her suitemates, Norman, Banks, and Tope-Anifowose refused to go.

“I said ‘what exactly is the point of us moving?’ She said ‘because water could have potentially gotten under the wood floors and they’re going to have to rip up your floors to see.’ There is no water damage, because I was there the entire time.” argues Tucker, who was present the day of the accident and witnessed the flooding in the lobby, and claims that none of the water made it to her suite at the opposite end of the building. Both Norman and Tope-Anifowose protested that they didn’t understand why they had to leave.

“Did I sign anything that said that?” Tope-Anifowose demands in an interview on Sep 10th, echoed by her roommate.

“Where is this stated? I understand if these are the rules, but it’s like I’ve never even seen the rules to living in Promontory. Where does it state that I need to leave? Because you’re telling me I need to leave, but where does it say that?” Norman asks, a question she has yet to have answered. On her refusal to leave, Tope-Anifowose says, “I’m not about to stay on main campus and pay for Promontory.”

On the night of the disagreement, Griffith allegedly threatened to call the police. “She was like ‘well if you’re not going to leave I’m going to call the police and have you escorted.’ You’re going to call the police to have us escorted out of our own apartment? That I paid for? $5000 I paid to be here, and they’re telling me they’re going to escort me to a dormitory.” Tucker says. Kayla Norman recalls being taken aback.

“When she went there, I really was like ‘Okay. I know your mindset now.’ Now you think we’re just belligerent black girls.”

Asked to comment on the incident, all RAs as well as Community Director Allison Griffith declined to do so, deferring to Director Jennifer Crompton, who reported no knowledge of the dispute.

Since the incident, an email has been sent to affected residents warning that due to ‘noncompliance’ they may be required to surrender their keys. Additionally, first floor residents can no longer access Promontory buildings with their ID cards, which has left Tifani Tucker and her suitemates without access to Building A, where they have chosen to remain with friends on the second floor. “We have to find ways to get into our rooms. We have jobs to go to. Now we have to call people, they want us to call RAs to get escorted to our rooms.” Tucker says. “What is an RA going to do that I can’t do? ’Due to noncompliance’ they’re going to take our keys. In a sense, am I on punishment?” Currently all affected students must call the RA on duty if they need to access their rooms on the first floor.

Now more than a week after the accident, residents of the first floor are still not back in their dorms, and according to Director Jennifer Crompton, there is no set timeline for when they can expect to be. “Unfortunately we don’t have an updated timeline at this time as we are waiting on vendors and flooring work to be finished in common areas.” She adds, “We are doing our best to be as transparent as possible with students, and as soon as we know anything we will let them know.”

On the university’s reaction to the accident, students are divided. Daye Turner expresses dissatisfaction with the lack of faculty involvement. “When something happens like this, you shouldn’t have students overseeing this problem. These kids are younger than me. They’re like sophomores. I feel like you shouldn’t have kids, or young adults, running something so serious like that, because I feel like it’s fragile.”

Marysa Lugo sees it differently. “I feel like they’ve responded well. The biggest problem I’ve heard of it is that people still are trying to live on the first floor. And it’s like, just please get out. I want to go back.” A psychology student in her 2nd year, Lugo is crashing at friends’ places until she can return to Promontory. “I just hope it gets done soon.”

The one concern students all seem to agree on is money. Although affected students were given temporary parking permits for main campus and a small meal plan by the university, everyone seems to be wondering the same thing.

“Can I get my money back?”

Director Crompton settles the matter in an email correspondence on Sep 12th. “No, we are not reimbursing students at this time.”
**SET MICROWAVE TO RED ALERT**

Food mishap causes shutdown of BIT building

Carolyn Hinman & Kelly Galten

The Business and Information Technology (BIT) Building was evacuated and remained closed for Sept. 8. At around 10:45 a.m., students and staff were asked to leave the building when the fire alarms rang. Everyone in the lecture halls, classrooms, and hallways emptied out onto the sidewalk surrounding the building.

The cause of the fire alarm was food-related, as initial investigations noted. "Somebody basically left a burrito in the microwave for too long," said Scott Roark of University Affairs.

The morning fire alarm meant students were at first evacuated, but after the the room with the microwave was cleared at 12:19 p.m., investigators determined it was uninhabitable, and kept the building closed until 2 p.m. the same day.

Confusion ensued during the daytime, as classes were cancelled and people were left wondering when the BIT building would reopen.

Karina Camacho, of the University Writing Program, was doubtful there was a fire. "Sometimes you can smell something burning, but nothing happens," she said.

Several students in the crowd surrounding the building after the evacuation agreed with Camacho. "I thought right away it was a drill," said Brittany Tuazon. Her friends nodded, saying that they had seen the library evacuated last year under similar circumstances.

Officer Heather Murphy of the University Police Department was present among emergency responders. When asked what she thought caused the alarm, she said someone probably burned food. "We’re just waiting for the fire department," she said on the scene of the evacuation.

Fire trucks arrived within minutes, with sirens used minimally. After the all clear later that afternoon, classes went through no further disruption and needed no cancellation or relocation.

"The moral of the story is, watch the microwave," said Roark.

**THE BIG READ**

Pictured above is Research and Instruction Librarian Sarah Dahlen with newly displayed copies of Sun, Stone, and Shadows, a short story collection by Hispanic authors. The books are part of the NEA Big Read, coordinated locally by the National Steinbeck Center. The book was chosen to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15. Those taking part in the Big Read can stop by the campus library to learn more. Dahlen said people participating in the Big Read can choose to read a single story, multiple stories, or the whole book.

**SOBRANES FIRE UPDATE**

Kimberly Haley

County fire continues to burn for seven weeks

The Soberanes Fire in Southern Monterey county has been burning since July 22. The fire has burned approximately 107,000 acres and is currently 60 percent contained, according to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group’s (NWCG) incident website. Full containment is expected on September 30.

The fire has led to closures of Los Padres National Forest, Garrapata State Park, areas south of the Carmel Valley and areas surrounding Big Sur. Currently no recreational parks and trails east of Highway 1 are open due to smoke levels and evacuation zones.

California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) had been home to many CAL FIRE vehicles and service workers during the summer months the NWCG was given Unified Command of the fire on August 26. Evacuation warnings have been in place in Big Sur and as far north as Carmel Valley during this time, and the county has given this fire priority when aiding those displaced and the firefighters at work.

To learn more regarding how to help those who are affected by the Soberanes Fire, the Community Foundation for Monterey County (http://www.cfmco.org), Monterey County Recovers (https://montereypo.recovers.org/), and Red Cross (http://www.redcross.org) all have information posted online.
Crowds numbered in the hundreds at Seaside City Hall on Sept. 7, as the Seaside Planning Commission held a public hearing to discuss the proposed Monterey Downs building project.

The development would bring a horse park, veterans cemetery, shopping venues, restaurants, hotels, a tennis and swim club, and extensive residential housing to the City of Seaside, which could in turn have effects on neighboring Marina and CSUMB.

Seaside residents from both sides of the issue gathered to speak out on what has been called a controversial project because of its proposed location on parts of the former Fort Ord Military Base.

One element that has caused past concern, a horse racing track, might be removed from the overall project.

Roelof Wijbrandus, of Sustainable Seaside, said, “I think this project does not belong in Seaside. It belongs somewhere else, but not in Seaside.” Wijbrandus had “No Downs” t-shirts printed for the occasion, and passed them out to other attendees free of charge.

Dawn Poston, Vice President of the Board for the Monterey Horse Park, said the Downs project would be a boon for the community. Of the protesters, she said, “I think they’re being incredibly selfish. That land was set aside for development for the community. This little piece of the pie is Seaside’s chance to get business, commerce, visitors, and tourism that the rest of the county enjoys.”

After four and a half hours of citizen presentations, pleas, and protests, the Planning Commission had not yet reached a conclusion, so the vote was pushed back until a future meeting. Once the issue receives a decisive vote, it will be passed along to City Council for approval.
INTAMURALS SEASON HITS CSUMB

Students gear up to join in the sports fever as teams seek players

Noah Owens

California State University, Monterey Bay’s very own intramural sports leagues are starting soon! Grab some of your friends and go play or spectate the many different sports offered. Intramural sports are a great opportunity to meet new people, form better friendships with your friends, and enjoy the sport that you love. There are many different intramural sports at CSUMB. The major leagues include basketball, outdoor soccer, and indoor volleyball and the minor leagues which are flag football and softball. These leagues are the perfect mix of friendliness and competition meaning anyone can play.

There are many different reasons to join one of the intramural sports offered here at CSUMB. The competitive atmosphere offers entertaining play as well as a great chance to meet people that may be spectating the games. Some people use intramurals as an excuse to forget about their school work and go hang out with their friends. The perfect blend of competition and friendliness allows people from all over campus to come together and play their hearts content.

“I joined intramurals because it is a great way to play a sport if you are not part of one of the school teams and it is also a great way to meet new people” said Devante Robinson, Junior Kinesiology major. “Playing intramural sports was great because we got to play at Midnight Madness which was like the playoffs for intramural basketball. Playing intramurals also got me on the club team which was great because I got to travel around and play basketball.”

Intramural sports are offered in a wide variety here at CSUMB. The major league sports are considered the most popular. These include 3v5 basketball, 6v6 indoor volleyball, and 8v8 outdoor soccer. The minor leagues may not be considered as popular but still contain the same excitement and competition. The minor league sports offered are 7v7 flag football and 10v10 softball. There are also a few special tournaments during homecoming weekend. These tournaments include sand volleyball and kickball. All leagues happen at their own time and date in certain areas of campus ranging from the gym to the Student Recreation Center.

The most popular intramural sport at CSUMB is basketball. People gather in the Otter Sports Center from all ends of campus to watch, play, and cheer on their friends. The excitement of intramural basketball starts at 8 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesday and goes all the way up to the closing of the OSC at 12am. If you enjoy basketball, this is the place to be.

If you are a fan of diamonds, then you might want to consider playing intramural softball. Intramural softball is the perfect time for baseball and softball fans to put their differences aside and compete on the field. Softball is held on the softball and baseball fields on Sundays from 1pm to 5pm.

Even though CSUMB does not have a football team, students still find ways to play the sport. CSUMB’s flag football is another intramural among students. Held on the Student Recreation Field, flag football is a time for students to show what could be if there was a school football team. But until then, cheer on your fellow otters on Fridays from 2 to 5pm.

Volleyball players, do not fret, because there is also an intramural league for you. CSUMB’s indoor volleyball intramural league offers a great chance to play the thrilling game of spikes, digs, and kills. The Otter Sports Center allows those who enjoy the game of volleyball to play on Sunday from 6 to 10pm and on Mondays from 8pm to 12 am.

Outdoor soccer is a great time for those that enjoy the game that some would call the real football. Held on the Student Recreation Field, outdoor soccer is a perfect mix of the salty Monterey air and the heat of the game that is being played. Head over to the Student Rec Center on Sundays from 1pm to 5pm to watch the further, heading, and goal scoring that is outdoor soccer.

CSUMB’s intramural sports happen all throughout the year, but there is a deadline to sign up if you want to play. Registration for teams ended on September 13 and team captain meeting for each sport occur on the following day, September 14, in the Student Center West lounge. If you missed the sign-up, fear not, because you can still go out and spectate your favorite sport.

OTTERS SCORE TIGHT WIN OVER ARGONAUTS

Sean Roney

The Otter men’s soccer team came out of their kickoff game on Sept. 1 by not only making the first goal of their season, but also by seizing a 3-2 victory against the Argonauts of Notre Dame de Namur.

“It was a lot of emotion going into that 3-2 victory,” said Otters Head Coach Rob Cummings. He went on to say of the narrow victory, “It’s much easier to fix things after a win.”

The Otters came out ahead in the first half when Adam Voloder secured the first goal, then scored the second, within the first half.

“During the whole week we practiced getting the ball across,” said Voloder of the preparation that led to his goals. “The second goal is what we taught ourselves at the beginning of the game: We’ve got to press them hard and high, and it worked.”

However, the Argonauts scored a goal later in the first half, then tied up the score in with the first goal of the second half.

“It was an ugly win, but I think that’s what you have to do,” said Cummings. “We walked away with three points.”

In reflecting upon the kickoff home game, Voloder said, “It was awesome to get in front of the home fans and win. Hopefully, better things will come this year.”

Espinoza noted the pressure and said, “We had to get the win, especially since we’re limited with the home games this season.”
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GOING FOR THE GOLD

Myka Mendard

This May will bring the Special Olympics. This is a competition in which the Developmentally Disabled in our community, and communities across the world, come together and really get the chance to shine. North Salinas High School has even created an integrated P.E. class where some students get the opportunity to mentor and train disabled students for the Special Olympics. They then partake in the Special Olympic games that are being held at Monterey Peninsula College this coming May. At Seaside High School there will even be a Special Olympics basketball tournament!

I went to take a look at the integrated class, and also to interview the teacher in charge, Mr. Gomez. He seemed very excited about the class, even though it was only his first year teaching this course. When I arrived at the school most of the students were working in the pool, each with their own goal set up by the mentoring students.

The mentor students were striving to help their partners succeed in any way that they could. The goals all varied based off of the ability of the disabled student. The comradery between the two groups of students was wonderful to see. Mr. Gomez had said that this was not the same environment as the one at the start of the school year. Time had bred comfortability and Mr. Gomez even began seeing students and their partners having lunch together outside of their shared class!

There are several sections in the course over the year to help cover all sports and allow each student to practice what they exceed at. This class allows the student to go beyond their own potential and strive. They are given the chance to go for gold, and become their very own Olympian. What do the mentors who help the special education students achieve new goals receive? New bonds and relationships they would never have imagined before. From what one could see from the class, for every success the disabled student made, the more pride and excitement the mentor students seemed to feel.

After his class had ended, Mr. Gomez was asked if there was anything he would like to improve about the course. His response was that he would like to see more students both from the special needs class and the regular classes come together. He told me how he loved to see how much the special needs students had opened up over the course of the school year.

Seeing this amount of effort to include the special needs students with the rest of the student body is stupendous! It is hard work for students to learn how to open themselves up to new people and experiences. The Special Olympics is going to be something that the special needs students and their partners will never forget. What all students will end up remembering the most, is the fun they had spending time together with their partners.

WOMEN’S SOCCER WINS KICKOFF GAME

Otters pull ahead in high energy match with Notre Dame de Namur

Sean Roney

The first half of the kickoff game of the Otters women’s soccer team closed with tense reactions by team and fans alike, as the Notre Dame Argonauts were ahead, 1-0. It was up to the home team to push ahead in the second half of the Sept. 1 game.

“As soon as we scored that goal, our energy was super high,” said Hannah Kind, who sent the Otters’ first goal past the visiting defense in the second half’s first minutes. “It really lifted our spirits and gave us that extra confidence that we needed to push through.”

The tension was noticeable while the Otters were behind. “At halftime, coach came to us and discussed that it needs to be better,” said Kind.

She described the game’s opening half by saying, “We started off really well. And then toward the end it kind of slowed down a bit and we weren’t connecting as well as we could have been. But second half we did and we scored and we got the outcome that we wanted.” She added, “Being down 1-0 at halftime is always a little rough, but it’s totally doable to come back and overcome it.”

Ashlee Cortez, who scored the second goal, noted teamwork as an essential element in securing the game-winning point. “Getting the ball where it needed to be in that right position, I got a nice little through ball,” she said. “I couldn’t have done it without my teammates. It was all of us building up to it, so it was nice.”

The Otters played a scrimmage against Hartnell in August. “We got to find out how we play as a team,” said Cortez. “It was our first actual game as a team, so coming in with all the new players and the freshmen, it was nice to see we could build a foundation from that, and play against a different team rather than our own during practice.”

The next home game for the Otters women’s soccer team is Sept. 16, at noon against the Academy of Art, followed by a Sept. 18 game at 11:30 a.m. against Chico State.
WEIGHING IN ON FOOD WASTE

Weigh Your Waste tips the scales towards zero

Carolyn Hinman

That pile of picked-around penne, bushel of brushed aside broccoli, and crumbling castaway cookie left on the plate when the stomach is stretched to satiety will end up adding to billions of pounds of food wasted in landfills every year. Unless we take initiative and curb the waste.

California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) is bringing Weigh Your Waste back to the Dining Commons Sept. 13-15 and Oct. 18-20 from noon until 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Associated Student members, the Green Team, and other volunteers will be on site to weigh plate waste and explain how CSUMB’s new composting system works.

Rachel Sutton, CSUMB student and Recycling Coordinator Intern with Green Waste Recovery, said this year Weigh Your Waste is a competition between CSUMB and other California universities including Menlo College, St. Mary’s College, and San Francisco State. Each school will weigh students’ food waste and compare its results with CSUMB’s. Winner gets bragging rights and the satisfaction of keeping the most food out of landfills.

Chris Kang, Environmental Programming Commissioner for Associated Students (AS), said she hopes Weigh Your Waste will make an impact on the way the campus community thinks about food waste. “It’s not hard to throw food and plant waste in a different bin, and it’s very good and important to the environment,” Kang said.

All that waste takes a significant toll on the environment. In 2015 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that 31 percent of the American food supply is wasted. That equates to about 133 billion pounds of uneaten food every year. The USDA also reported that when food ends up in the landfill instead of on the dinner table, it contributes to economic loss, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and keeps food out of the mouths of the millions of Americans who experience food insecurity; so the United States has set a goal of reducing the nation’s food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

Weigh Your Waste is just one of the ways CSUMB is working toward reduction. Other efforts are in effect across campus. Tim Ramirez, Executive Chef of Campus Dining, said composting stations are already in use in the Dining Commons, Otter Express, and Monte’s Restaurant. At these locations, students can put their plate waste into compost bins, so it’s a learning process right now,” she said.

Sutton was optimistic about CSUMB’s ability to learn and adapt. “We are doing great things, but there are always things to improve on. We believe in it, it just takes time to get the system going,” she said.

For more information on composting and food waste at CSUMB, visit the Sustainability Department in Mountain Hall, Suite A, or contact their office at (831) 582-5508 or sustainabili-ty@csumb.edu.
A crash course in this year’s unique student organizations

Kelly Finlay

With the start of a new semester, students have come from far and wide to attend CSUMB. They have left behind friends and family to immerse themselves in a new environment, some from states or entire countries away, and many for the first time. Although the frenetic pace of college life leaves little time for feeling lonely or homesick, for the uninitiated, it can be difficult making new friends.

That’s where the thriving student clubs community comes in. There are over 100 registered clubs on campus, representing a wide swath of interests and activities, from the Star Wars films to tea drinking to appreciation of Korean Culture. Students had a chance to see these clubs last month, when club organizers packed the main quad with tables and banners for the Otter Showcase to share their passion and hopefully entice new membership.

Present at the event was Amber Ward, the Inter-Club Council (ICC) representative for the club #IncludeHer, which is a club “founded and led by female students in the computer science field,” dedicated to supporting and encouraging women in the STEM field, where they are still underrepresented. A Social Work major herself, Ward clarified that the group is open to people of all majors, and is gender inclusive. Club activities include leadership training, discussing STEM news, and field trips - including one to Google headquarters in the past, where students were given access to professionals in their field.

There are clubs to promote change in the community or bring awareness to important issues, clubs to advocate for CSUMB students - such as the Student Veterans Organization, which provides support and resources to veterans and dependents of veterans attending CSUMB, and those “helpful fun social events” according to president Robert Jurado, a Social Work major and clubs for simple relaxation. The Tea Club, as described by ICC representative and Health & Human Services major Aylin Barcenas, is a group where students can “drink tea and chill,” watch Youtube videos, and share their company over a steaming cup of their favorite brew.

For students looking to unwind with a round of the popular Nintendo game, Super Smash Bros., there’s the League of Smashers. A standard turnout of 15-20 people join up on Fridays from 6-8 pm to duke it out with their favorite characters, either in tournaments or free-for-alls. With plans to expand their tournaments by next semester, now is the perfect time to show up for a few rounds and get your practice in.

Also in gaming, the brand new Adventurer’s Guild brings back the ‘80s with the table-top role-playing game, Dungeons and Dragons. Fans new and old are welcome to join the group as they network to connect DMs (Dungeon Masters, the game moderators) with players, and organize future campaigns.

Those with an affinity for the theater can find their home with the Performing Otters and Otter Improv clubs. Repped by a very enthusiastic bunch of students, the Performing Otters do a range of fun exercises, from workshops, team building and bonding activities, to improv games. The theatrically inclined can drop in on Mondays and Fridays from 8 pm to 10 pm in the East Lounge of the student center, while the less daring are welcome to attend strictly to enjoy the show.

If you’re enthusiastic about culture and trying new things, there is the Korean Culture Club, a brand new group that seeks to share the food, music, fashion, and traditions of Korea. Have you tried Korean BBQ? It is but one of the many tantalizing events the group would like to host this year.

Whether students want to explore something new, build their skills and make connections in their majors, or just make friends and hang out, the clubs on campus provide many ways to do it. If you would like to find out more about one of the clubs mentioned in this article, or see what else CSUMB’s ICC has to offer, check out their webpage at csumb.edu/clubs.

Rebecca Caladiao

Students are in for some rousing events to come, courtesy of the Otter Student Union (OSU) and their mission to cultivating a community on campus. Aaisha Ahad, Programming officer, is anticipating a great turnout at the Black Box Cabaret for the Finding Dory movie night on Thursday, September 15. “We expect so many students to come that we decided to have two showings; one at 7:00 and another at 9:00,” says Ahad.

Already this semester, officers have held 4 events including their annual Late Night @ the Student Center, a Root Beer Float Giveaway, and Dance, Dance, Dance with DJ Carisma. Senior and BBC Representative D’Quan Stewart says of the OSU, “I have gotten opportunities to make connections with other organizations as well as meet some cool people in the process.”

Our student representatives, including Aaisha and D’Quan, encourage the embrace of school spirit in our young academic lives while achieving our career goals. All of the affiliates of the OSU work to unite students across all majors through respect, diversity, and promoting campus life.

This is D’Quan and Aaisha’s first semester with the OSU, and as excited as Ahad is to give out prizes for the Finding Nemo trivia preceding Finding Dory, she is most excited about booking Kel Mitchell (All That, Good Burger, and Kenan & Kel) for his interactive stand-up show on Thursday, September 22. This free event will be held in the UC Ballroom, the same location as the October’s Homecoming concert featuring We the Kings. Tickets for homecoming are on sale starting Friday, September 16.

For more information about upcoming events, text OSU to 71441 to sign up for weekly reminders of on campus events.
The air was still and cool as students met before the flagpole on the main quad to hold a healing space for the numerous tragic events that occurred over the summer. The candlelight vigil, facilitated by CSUMB’s Otter Cross Cultural Center (OC3), was held at 8 pm Thursday night.

In conjunction with many of the campus’ clubs and organizations, the OC3, Black Students United, the Personal Growth & Counseling Center, CSUMB Pride, LGBT and Allied Advocates, and allied students, faculty, and staff gathered to show support and solidarity, with heavy hearts seeking answers.

People were invited to decorate white paper bag lanterns with messages on their hearts and minds, which they would then illumine with small electric tea candles and place in an expansive glowing spiral, emanating from the center of the grassy quad. Although students were also invited to walk within the spiral, there was an unspoken sacredness of the largely undisturbed area that left many people standing deferent on its outskirts.

Angélica González, the OC3 Educational Workshops Student Coordinator, spoke to the issues heavy on the hearts and minds of many at the vigil. “This event is to hold a healing space for students,” González said. “It is supposed to be a reflection for what happened over the summer, specifically for issues of police brutality and violence that affects LGBTQ+ people and People of Color.” Some of the events named at the vigil included the Pulse nightclub shooting by Omar Mateen in Orlando and the deaths of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Sky Mockabee, Korryn Gaines, and countless others. “Let this be a space where we can feel all that needs to be felt,” González said, speaking to a crowd of people assembled in the light of hundreds of tea candles.

“The song was really powerful,” CSUMB student Vanessa Moreno said, when commenting on the live guitar and vocal performance of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah,” performed towards the end of the vigil. “Everyone spoke about really deep topics,” Moreno elaborated, “but to me, everyone just really connected to the music. It reminded me of the Trans Awareness Week candlelight vigil last year, where we also sang together.” For many, the vigil offered a space big enough to hold all of the sadness, frustration, anger, pain, and heartache many were not able to communalize while away from the campus community over the summer.

The OC3 is hosting a number of different events coming up, namely its “Let’s Talk” Dialogue on the Campus Climate Survey, happening on Sept. 15 from 6 to 8 pm in the OC3 on the West side of the Student Center. For more information, contact the OC3 at oc3@csumb.edu.
Candielight vigil held for victims of summer violence

For More Information:

- **The Otter Cross Cultural Center:** oc3@csumb.edu
- **The Personal Growth & Counseling Center:** counseling_center@csumb.edu; (831) 582-3969
- **Black Students United:** Meetings Tuesdays, 6 to 8 pm in the Student Center West Lounge
- **CSUMB Pride:** Meetings Tuesdays, 5 to 6 pm in the OC3
- **LGBT and Allied Advocates:** Meetings Fridays, 3 to 4:30 pm in the OC3
A recent FBI amendment to the definition of rape to reflect the sexual violence against men as well as women may have also contributed to the increase in reports, including a 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act which required universities to provide reasonable accommodations to survivors of sexual violence.

One opportunity for survivors and other students to learn proactive defense strategies is the Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Systems offered by the University Police Department (UPD). RAD training is free, with courses tailored to both men and women. The next RAD sessions will be held Sept. 19, 21, 26, and 28, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., for women, and Sept. 21, 28, and Oct. 5 and 12, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., for men. Registration is open now, and can be accessed through the UPD page on the CSUMB dashboard.

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The legal proceedings and lenient sentence in the rape conviction handed down to Stanford’s Brock Turner have been prominent in the media. The Associated Press reported an average of one forcible rape per campus, while CSUMB had two reported the same year. Shanieka Jones, Crime Prevention and Clery Compliance Specialist with the University Police said, “For 2013, CSUMB had four on-campus forcible sex offenses and zero non-forcible. All the forcible offenses occurred in on-campus student residential facilities. In 2014, we had 11 reports of sexual assault, nine of which occurred in on-campus student residential facilities.”

The elevated numbers appear alarming, but may not necessarily mean those crimes are happening more often. Jones said she attributes the increase in reports to several factors, including a 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act which required universities to provide reasonable accommodations to survivors of sexual violence.

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SEEING THEM FOR WHO THEY ARE

Introducing the developmentally disabled in our community

Myka Menard

Within our lives we encounter many disabled persons, but it is our initial judgments of how different we are that begins to create a barrier. This barrier refuses any possibility of getting to know someone who might actually surprise you. There are a few individuals, friends that I have made, that I would like you to meet. I interviewed several of my friends asking them questions about themselves to hopefully get a conversation started about their lives. So here they are, maybe you will be surprised by them as well.

My very first friend that I would like to introduce to you is named Paul. He is a very attentive listener and loves talking to people, and if you ask him about his wife he will just light up. You can always tell when someone is passionate about something, and his wife is definitely his passion. They have been married for fourteen years and he even carries around her picture in his wallet.

I also asked him that if he could do anything in the world, what would you do? His response; “I would want to learn how to ice skate.” From there he went on about how people can go fast and even skate backwards. His smile was so bright when he talked about it, one hopes that someday he gets the chance to learn to ice skate. He definitely has the patience and heart for it!

Next I would like to introduce you to a lovely lady named Micheline. She is always doing her best to be as helpful as she can, no matter where she is. When I asked her if she could do anything in the world, what would she do? Her answer was that she would want to become a “businesswoman”. One who sits at the front counter and helps people when they come in. I asked her why and she stated “because I want to help people.”

She is a woman of action too, always offering help. She was smiling throughout our whole interview and worked very hard to answer all my questions, to the best of her ability. She helps out at community gardens and tries to involve herself in the community, all the while trying to make friends with the people she encounters. If you ever get lucky enough to meet her, you will be pleasantly surprised by her warm heart.

This next man will make you laugh no matter how serious a person you are. His name is Dante. He is partially blind and tends to bump right into things when he does not use his cane, and even times that he does. However, he never gets mad. He stops and laughs then will say, “Sorry, I am drunk today.”

He is not in the least bit intoxicated and everytime I hear him say it I cannot help but laugh. He loves to have conversations with people and will surprise you with how much he knows. He is a very attentive listener, seemingly pulling in all the information around him.

In my interview with him I asked him who his favorite actor or singer was. His response, “Ice Cube.” I was surprised by his answer, so I asked him why? His response was “he’s a funny guy.” Which was very true!

Lastly we have Eiva, she is always at the ready when it comes to helping out her friends. She is always doing her best to try and include everyone around her, because she does not like anyone ever feeling left out. I have never seen her without a smile on her face, even when times seem hard she still smiles for everyone around her.

I asked her if there was anything in the world that she could do, what would she do? She responded: “I want to learn how to drive.” This took me back for a second because I forgot what it was like to not be able to get up and just go, to not have a vehicle. Something that I take for granted, is something she would love to learn how to do.

Eiva often works out in the community gardens, watering vegetables and flowers. Helping them grow, just like she helps those around her bloom.
CHICAN@/LATINO@ HERITAGE MONTH 2016

September 15 - October 15 is Chican@ Latin@ Heritage Month. The Otter Cross Cultural Center invites students to participate.

September 16
Fiestas Patrias | 4PM |
Student Center, East Lounge

September 21
ChicanX & Revolving Language | 3PM | Otter Cross Cultural Center (OC3)

September 27
My Life with the Wave/ Tell them Not to Kill Me | 2PM |
Student Center, East Lounge

2016 MAJORS FAIR

You are here... now what? Want to know which major is best for you? Come to the 2016 Majors Fair

Monday, October 3rd
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
University Center Ballroom

Talk to faculty, staff and students representing all CSUMB majors, and find out more about the many campus resources.

For disability or other related accommodations, please contact FYS Coordinator Dr. Swarup Wood swood@csumb.edu
Why be a mere bystander when you can be a creator? Student newspapers currently have an unusual place in our culture. Media is in a massive state of change. Colleges are responsible for helping us harness that change to become the leaders of tomorrow. That means the best option for student newspapers is to not only witness those changes, but to help shape them.

Welcome to the Otter Realm of 2016. My name is Sean Roney, and I am the first Online Editor for the Otter Realm’s digital content. My seat is a new one at this newspaper, since our focus has been on the print side. Now, we focus on both print and digital news.

Just one decade ago, newspapers, radio, and TV newscasts were the powerhouse of journalism. One decade from now, there will be no question that websites, podcasts, and online videos are the new leaders. But right now, all of us are watching the transition from real world to digital.

The Otter Realm is right in the middle of those changes, offering students a substantive experience in journalism. That means producing content for both print and online news, because both are relevant to the writers of today and the future. With that in mind, I would like to extend two invitations.

First, I invite you to follow our online content. The website is otterrealm.com and the Twitter and Instagram accounts are @otterrealm, because we like to make things simple. We also have an Otter Realm page on Facebook (OtterRealmNews), which is not impossible to find, either. We had reporters present for the recent Promontory flood and the BIT evacuation. We also carried tidbits from around campus. You can see some of that content on the next two pages. What online breaking news or interesting items will we cover next?

Second, I invite you to submit content. In addition to our staff reporters, we appreciate article and photo submissions from our readers. Maybe you will enjoy writing enough to join the Otter Realm staff next semester. Or maybe you will help us shape the future of online content with different styles of articles. For example, I am happy to explore the idea of academic journal-style pieces. What interesting stories are you going to share?

Now that you have received the invitations, will you do more than be a bystander and become a creator? Let me know at sroney@csumb.edu.
Q: How about we start and you tell me a bit about yourself and what role you have here at CSUMB?

A: I am from Mexico and I have always wanted to do Cinema 23 years ago I started my education in the American Film Institute, I started working on feature films, and plenty of short films since then. I am a Cinematic arts professor at CSUMB.

Q: Tell me a bit about how you got here from Mexico, or why here (Monterey Bay)?

A: The university, honestly because of the university, for a person from Mexico it is wonderful to work in a place with a lot of Spanish speakers, and the university motto captured my attention, I fully agree with it. Plus the area is very beautiful.

Q: It is known that in Spain and in Mexico, and in general, the cinematic world is having a bit of problems, people still prefer to watch Hollywood movies. Yet it is super important for Spanish speakers to continue to have these films in mind because they represent our language, and often our modern culture. How is it that we can achieve the task of having the new generations of Spanish speakers become more interested in our movies, well and non-Spanish speakers as well?

A: This problem is not only in the Hispanic films, it’s a world wide problem rather watch Hollywood movies, but what I think would be a solution so that the youth becomes interested, would be simply to tell stories which they can identify with. Currently there is a movement in Mexico where they are taking Hollywood movies and making remakes, and it’s having a lot of success. I think the solution is to make the stories interesting, and just relevant. Like Me Estás Matando, Susana, based on Jose Agustín’s novella Cuidades Desiertas (Deserted Cities). Currently, the film starring renowned Mexican actor, Gael Garcia Bernal, and Spanish Actress Veronica Echegui. After the success in Mexican theaters, the film is set to release in the US next month. We sat down with Cámara and he gave us some insight on the film, and what are his upcoming projects in Monterey and on campus.

Q: What was it like to work with Gael Garcia?

A: I never actually got to work with Garcia personally. I was in Canada and I showed my work, they loved it and I left, then I heard Gael Garcia traveled to Canada three days after I left. But I can say it is very gratifying to see how your dialog that you wrote, is represented or brought to life with actors like Gael Garcia, and just so interesting to see the changes that he made to what I wrote on paper, which made it even better.

Q: Are you working on any other projects?

A: I am currently working on the screenplay of a horror film, and working on something locally.

Q: When and where can we watch the movie, Me Estás Matando Susana?

A: I have understood that the film will be distributed here in the US in October, but I am also trying to convince the director, Roberto Snider to come to CSUMB, and even bring the movie to campus.
Imagine going to a university and barely knowing the language they spoke there; this is the case for some of our students here at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). There are approximately 400 international students studying at CSUMB this academic year. They’re coming from a total of 44 countries, and they bring with them a variety of cultures and experiences different from America’s own. Some of those students are part of the American Language and Culture Program (ALCP), this means that for either one semester or for the whole year, they will be learning to speak, listen and read English. Does the language barrier they face affect their adjustment and integration into the American society that they have travelled so far to experience?

Although, learning English is the priority of their time at CSUMB, it is not the only reason they came here. Kyoko Kurasaki, originally from Japan, commented, “I’m reaching out to make sure [the students] feel confident and that they are welcome.”

Dr. Tran also stresses that there are so many resources available, such as the Cooperative Learning Center with ESL/reading courses group study sessions, for those students that are struggling in classes. She advises students to take advantage of their professors: “Go to their office hours, talk to them after class, and engage with them.”

Despite interactions not being as frequent, when asked for opinions on the American students, the internationals had only positive things to say about the students here at CSUMB. They said they were friendly and always willing to help. Suyoung Kwon, from Korea, describes an encounter with some American students helping her with her laundry. She comments, “I think they are so friendly that sometimes I’m moved”.

So, we need to put ourselves in their shoes. They have travelled for as long as thirty hours to come study at CSUMB. They bravely face a culture that is vastly different from their own, and a language that they have only encountered in classrooms. Understanding an everyday conversation or simply being understood is a daily struggle for them. As their fellow students and as their staff, it is our duty to continue to reach out to those internationals in our classes and around our campus. Asking if they understood the class discussions or making them aware of the available resources or even helping them with daily tasks such as doing laundry together.

There is also always an opportunity to join the Buddy Program, and become a point of contact for an international student. This is a great scheme to integrate all the different cultures here at CSUMB and to help someone adjust to American society.
THE NERDY GIRL DIARIES
Kimberly Haley

I really do not feel too different from my peers until about 8:30PM on Thursdays. When the Saber Society gathers on the main quad, I remember that in the seven officials our Star Wars club has, I am the only woman standing next to six men. There are other members that are girls, and they are all as enthusiastic as me, possibly even more so, but I am the only founding female officer, and oftentimes one of only a few in a weekly meeting of at least 15 attendants.

I consider myself a nerdy girl in respect to my likes and dislikes. I own a purple lightsaber with a silver hilt, I grew up with Harry Potter and am a proud Hufflepuff (and Thunderbird, for those of you keeping up with Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them). I enjoy most video games, but my favorites are Fallout 3 and Grand Theft Auto V. When I go into a store like Hot Topic, I will flock towards the fandom sections and never touch the other gothic inventory. I am anxiously awaiting my first official Dungeons and Dragons session with my roommate and my friends, since I missed that train when I was younger.

The problem with being a nerdy girl is the fact that sometimes, people expect you to just be a nerd. I am a pretty big stereotypical, boasting pair of shoes (at least half of which are heels) in my closet and decorating my living space in feminine styles. I had always grown up with both influences at home, and I had my share of activities that included me, dressed up like a princess, playing Sonic Adventure on the family’s Sega Dreamcast. For a while in elementary school, I did not think that a girl could be both all the time, and that she had to choose, and since attending the California State University, Monterey Bay I have blended both into my everyday life.

There are far bigger issues than personally identifying as a nerdy girl, though. Many people in the gaming community know about the constant harassment women can get when playing online, and the public scrutinizes tomboys for not being the traditional model of femininity. Men dominate the science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, fields to this day, and boys are encouraged at a young age to be interested in child’s play that resembles these topics. My brother had a lot more robotic action figures and original video games marketed towards me when we were both young children, whereas I had Barbies and their branded games marketed towards me. My brother and I shared most of our toys and games anyway, so I grew up with both worlds. I am not so sure that all other girls (and boys, for that matter; my brother played Barbies with me countless times) have had that luxury.

Despite these societal challenges, nerdy girls like me have begun to change these standards, and I see my nerdiness to be far less taboo than it used to be. I am proud to be a nerdy girl, and I meet so many more girls who are proud to be nerdy too, especially on our campus, who are becoming active in our community. The only thing left for nerdy girls to do is stretch our legs and get comfortable with a good book and our fictional weapon of choice by our sides.

BLVCK//CURSED SKIN

Discrimination is an everyday reality for people of color.

Chris Siders

During Summer 2015, my father and myself spent sometime together in one of the most wealthiest cities in Southern California; the city of Torrance. He wanted to take me to a spa to give me a glimpse of some of the finer things in life. He told me, “whatever you want in life, you can get it.” Looking back a year later, I can say now that I fully understand the significance of that day. Those words came from a man that was constantly harassed and beaten by the Torrance police department for Driving While Black, and being on the “Wrong side of the tracks” in the 1970’s.

Driving While Black is phrase that is used where black motorists are being criminalized for driving, or in a lot of cases driving an expensive vehicle. For example, August 2015, a friend Jay Carter, and I were on our way home after getting food ininglewood around 11pm at night. In the middle of driving we noticed that there’s cop car following us and they eventually pulled us over. We were asked to keep our hands where they can see them, at the same time asking for Jay’s license and registration. While Jay was searching for his information slowly to make sure the officers weren’t scared by any sudden moves, I was asked if we had any dope or crack in our Jack in the Box bags, that you can clearly smell it was burgers and fries. We both said no, it’s just food. Jay then proceeded to give his information to one of the officers. The officer that was questioning our truths that evening continued to ask us more questions about what we were doing, and where we were going. We told the officer several times that we are just trying to get home. Every time we told the officer that we trying to get home, he kept telling us that the neighborhood is a gang infested. We acknowledged that it’s a gang infested neighborhood, however, he continued to question where we was going some more. 10-15 minutes later, they let us go.

In regards to this situation, if the clock was set back 30-40 years, that action we did would be considered being on the “Wrong Side of the Tracks;” A concept where blacks would be considered being on the “Wrong side of the tracks” in the 1970’s.

As a high schooler, my father always told me that nothing changed regarding racism and discrimination in this country. I didn’t believe him at first because I was looking on the surface seeing diverse crowds of people was going to school together. However, I began to realize that the rate of racism and discrimination hasn’t slowed down, it just gotten a little more subtle where people are not blunt as about it as they were back in the 1960’s. For example, through media outlets we see that blacks are portrayed in a negative light more than positive. To individuals that have no idea what our culture is about, they would think we just all about killing each other.
In the 11th grade I was going to a predominant African-American school called View Park. There was one white student in attendance and I noticed she always sat by herself. One day I approached her and asked why she was sitting by herself. She proceeded to express to me that she hated black people because on the news she only saw those negative images with headlines that say “Black on Black crime”. In the recent cases of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, on social media I see white people saying why should I care about blacks, if black on black crime is still in existence? Black on black crime is a concept designed to keep blacks in a negative light. Why we never hear the phrase “White on White crime”? Yes, we have communities in our society where members would cause harm to one another. The black community is not exclusive to this type of violence, it happens everywhere. What deeply disturbs me about these cases is that people would try to justify their deaths. Yes, Alton Sterling had a criminal past, and he has done his time for the crimes committed. That does not mean he deserves to die.

Cooperating or not cooperating with an officer should not serve as a death sentence either. Police officers are suppose to be present in situations to defuse potential problems from happening, or calming everything down, not to kill. Sterling was standing still, when two officers came out of nowhere tackling him, put their knees on him, yelled at him to stay down while he was already on the ground, as the officers proceeded to fire six shots in his chest. Sterling had a permit to carry his weapon, however, he did not take the gun out of his pocket. In the second video, from a different angle, you can see one of the officers take Sterling’s gun out of his pocket after he was shot six times dead on the ground.

Blaze journalist reporter, Tomi Lahren stated that this isn’t for a sketchy cellphone video to decide. It’s up to law and justice system to see if his death is justifiable. She then proceed to list out all the crimes he committed.

This made me think of a huge fight I had the beginning of my high school career. A student called me a “nigga” then I got up, pushed him to the floor and choked him. I could of paralyzed him or killed him. The school system threaten to expel me, put me on a step program and suspended me for a week instead of trying to figure out the root of my problems. I was labeled as a thug and delinquent due to the current zero-tolerance policy that contributes to the school to prison pipeline in the education system, but that’s going into a different discussion. Point of the matter is, do I deserve to die over an event that happened 8 years ago? What I did is technically a crime. We resolved the issue shortly after, and I did my time to rebuild trust within the school community. As I got older, I made sure I never put my hands on anyone ever again.

It’s difficult, even as a 22 year old college graduate, to not think about past situations such as these when the public view you as an menace based off of pure prejudice. Even if one were to commit crimes, we as a society neglect to see the potential that wrong doers can indeed change for the better. As a feminist instructor at Soledad correctional facility I can say without a doubt in my mind, people can change.

Filled with anger and rage, the next day I decided to take a day for myself, hang with some friends and go to the movies to calm myself down. Some of the “#Stay-Woke” community on Facebook believe that blacks who do not watch the videos of Sterling and Castille getting killed, are being brainwashed and desensitized to the issue. No one is obligated to watch other people get killed. That is inhumane and extremely traumatic, especially for individuals who have witnessed people get murdered with their own eyes in real life. With that being said, I urge everyone to take care of themselves even if that means stepping away from everything for a bit. However, I want to encourage everyone to get active when they are ready to jump back in the good fight. I personally believe staying on social media and arguing with people doesn’t do anything, but makes the problem worst. Sharing memes does not help changes lives, but being hands on and making a connection with people in real life does. Write a song, write a poem and go to your local open mic to express yourself. Get involved with a non-profit. Develop ideas with the community. Get in contact with local activists and organizers in your community to help guide you on your way to contributing a better future for Black Lives.

You are not obligated to join the police force. If you have a desire to be in that line of the work, then more power to you. I just urge you to educate yourself on why cops such as Nakiia Jones, who spoke out against police brutality are being silenced. There are several different ways you can inflict change other than joining a historically racist institution such as your local police department.

The reason why saying “All Lives Matter” is extremely problematic because our American justice system does not care about black lives. Saying “All Lives Matter” does not aim to highlight issues Black America is facing regarding injustice. “All Lives Matter” does not strive to put an end to the issues in Black America. We have black men serving time in prison for crimes they did not commit, black women being abused and raped by police officers, and black children/adults dealing with an education system that does not do anything to be inclusive and protect. These things are unacceptable, we have no more room for people that do not understand what it means to be “colorblind”. Have a dialogue with your white friends. If they continue to neglect their privilege, show them how staying silent adds to the violence. Just like how me staying silent as male, not acknowledging my male privilege adds to rape culture and violence against women. A way to utilize your privilege is to create platforms for other groups to speak or talk to other people that have the same privilege for them to understand what’s going on.

Black Lives Matter is not the “new KKK”. Black Lives Matter has not taken any lives. The KKK has taken several innocent lives since the 1860’s, up to the present.

Too many times for speaking out against issues we are considered to be “controversial”, “radical” and “loud” when we just want to be heard. Just like what Tupac Shakur said in a 1994 interview how many times are we going to ask? We asked with Rosa Parks, we asked with the Civil Rights Movement, now we asking with Black Lives Matter several decades later. Let us in the fucking door. Just like when I called out California State University, Monterey Bay’s administration during their 2016 Black Graduation. Some folks dubbed me as a controversial artist, when I was speaking out on the different injustices students faced, in addition to the mistreatment to staff of color. I find it interesting that this university prides itself on diversity, but continuously fails to provide to students and staff of color. In relation, America prides itself on being a great melting pot, but does nothing to make changes happen for those who’s affected by this imperialist, racist, misogynistic, capitalist, ableist, islamophobic, hetero-patriarchal system we are in.

There is no such thing as “Blue Lives Matter” unless you talking about the smurfs. Do not misinterpret what I am saying, Police do matter. They are people and they have families too. What I am upset about is that everyone is trying to counter underprivileged groups with other groups that’s already well respected under the eyes of the U.S. Justice system. Police do not have blue skin. They have a uniform, a badge, and a gun. If you consider their uniforms to be pigment, then understand that they have the option to take off their uniforms at anytime. As people of color, we cannot take off our skin, we cannot hide ourselves.

If you have to ask yourself why everything is about race in America then do research on the first time blacks came to America and the history of violence and hate that has trickled down over the past several decades up to this current state we are in.
I heard the soothing sounds of Elton John’s album Goodbye Yellow Brick Road on the night I first had sex. The album title, in case you didn’t know, is a nod to the yellow brick road that Dorothy traveled to reach the Emerald City in the classic film The Wizard of Oz. At the time I didn’t think much of it, but looking back now, I can’t think of a more appropriate soundtrack to lose my virginity to.

I first reached the Wonderful Land of Oz, so to speak, when I was 21 years old. I was a late bloomer. Now to some of you, that may not seem so late. But trust me, when you go all throughout high school (and in my case, throughout another 4 years of college) without having sex and you’re surrounded by people who have, you really start to feel like an outsider; Dorothy in the Land of Oz. But while Dorothy was on a journey to get back home, I was on a journey to feel at home- to feel the warmth and comfort that everyone else was feeling. See for me, it wasn’t just about the act of having sex. I wanted sex to be more than just an act, to mean something greater. Having sex meant I’d find someone I could trust, someone who I could give myself to completely. But like I said, when you see everyone around you developing deep and meaningful connections with each other as they leave you behind, you can’t help but feel discouraged. Self-doubt: The Wicked Witch of the West.

I won’t lie, my first few years of college were a struggle. Social awkwardness and anxiety loomed over me like a house lifted by a storm, ready to crush me at any moment. The idea of talking to another person was terrifying, and even if I managed to do so, it would be nearly impossible to have a conversation without over analyzing everything I was saying. The weight of the world fell upon every sentence I uttered, too afraid of saying something stupid and being embarrassed. I despised the first day of a new semester when I’d have to introduce myself to the class. The Wicked Witch was laughing so loud in my ear I couldn’t hear anything else. It was unbearable. How was I supposed to be happy, feel love, have sex- when I couldn’t even hold a simple conversation? I never felt so lonely...

There’s an age old expression about being unable to love others until you learn to love yourself. It sounds cheesy, but in my case, it couldn’t be more true. See, the scary thing about being lonely is how easy it is to stay lonely. It was easy for me to feel bad for myself. I’d do it all the time. Until one day, I stopped. I got to the point where I was fed up with feeling bad for myself, fed up with being stuck in my head all day, fed up with living in a fantasy world. It felt like the path I had been on for so long had led me nowhere; I finally reached the end of the yellow brick road only to discover that the Wizard of Oz was just a man behind a curtain. What I believed I needed for so long was just a hallucination. I had my own polluted idea of what others expected of me, and as soon as I came to that realization, my journey had changed. I didn’t want to be loved by others anymore, I just wanted to love myself. And while this was my own journey to embark upon, I knew I couldn’t do it alone. After all, Dorothy had a little help along the way, too.

When I finally started being honest with others about how I was feeling, I was shocked by how much better I felt. Every time I opened up, it was a massive weight being lifted off my shoulders. The wall I built around me was quickly crumbling, brick by (yellow) brick. You never realize how empathetic people are, and how much they are willing to help you until they’re given a chance. It wasn’t before long until people started to know the real me and love me for it. And more importantly, I loved myself for it.

I lost my virginity on the night of March 13, 2013. My lava lamp was in full flow and Elton John provided his accompaniment. Leading up to the moment itself, I didn’t know what to expect. I was nervous as hell and convinced I was going to suck at it. But all my worries and insecurities were incidental; I was with someone I cared for and I was finally ready to do it. Afterwards, I didn’t really know if I was any good or not, and to be honest I didn’t care. All I knew was that I just had sex, and that it meant something.
When Brandon Stanton created Humans of New York in 2010, he had no idea that it would become a global phenomenon. What began as a photo diary of street fashion and eclectic people has evolved into a storytelling vehicle in which the deepest and most essential components of humanity are captured, not strictly in pictures, but in the words of each subject. Today, HONY has over 17 million likes on Facebook, has become a bestselling book, and has launched a movement across the world of imitators seeking to create their own “Humans of” series.

This year, the Otter Realm is happy to present our own version in a project called Otters of the Bay. In the same spirit of HONY, Otters of the Bay will celebrate the diversity of the CSUMB community by featuring a new selection of student interviews and photos every issue. We believe that every student has a story to share, big or small, some of sacrifice, some of triumph, and each of those pieces belong uniquely to our community. Together they show us what it means to be a student of CSUMB, where we have come from, what we’ve overcome to be where we are today, and what matters to us. In short, who we are. In your words, this project will uncover what it means to be an Otter of the Bay.
CALLING ALL Artists Writers Critics

Send your submissions to otterrealm@csumb.edu, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Your work may be featured on any Otter Realm platforms once submitted!

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