

Super Single Slam Sesh makes for super social Otters



PHOTOS BY HAYLEY MATTO

By Hayley Matto
Staff Writer

If you could change the three flavors in a neapolitan ice cream to three others, which would you choose? Why did you pick the major you did? What three items would you take with you if you knew you were going to be left on an abandoned island? Icebreaker questions circulated through a hopeful crowd of about 35 students in the OSU Rookery during The Super Single Slam Sesh.

A Valentine's Day mixer put on by Otter Media and LitMatch, the event featured candy gram making and slam poetry before turning into a singles mingle. Students sporting name tags and colored stickers corresponding to interests wandered around the space, taking turns chatting with strangers.

Speed dating took on a little less of a traditional method. Instead of having people sit across from one another and rotate every few minutes, Otter Media had everyone up on their feet and finding a new person to chat with every few minutes with prompted questions. This set up allowed people to find others that had the same interests and

sexualities displayed on their nametags.

Lie Lie, a first-year Japanese language culture major, was excited during the singles mingle, "At first meeting new people was a little awkward, but ultimately I feel like it's been really nice getting out of my comfort zone."

Meanwhile, Lee Berg, a first-year marine science major and member of Otter Media said that the holiday-themed crafts were her favorite part of the event.

"It's been nice watching all the groups and various club members bond together over doing something fun, like making the candy grams," Berg said. "I also feel like we had a great turn out."

Cece Nepacena, a fourth-year business major and president of LitMatch shared the same sentiment. "I feel like the turn out was great, especially for a Saturday event, there was a great blend of genders present. This is a pretty introverted campus so it was nice hearing people felt

proud of mingling and that this event served as a mixer for everyone."

Hadley Joedicke, a fourth-year humanities and communications major, said that she really enjoyed the safety and mindfulness that went into hosting this event. "I met so many new people and faces. I would absolutely attend another event like this. I think having safe spaces like this on campus to explore meeting new people out of my comfort zone is super important. It was also really cool getting to know Otter Media and what they do on campus."

"I also am pro dating face-to-face versus the apps, it's nice to meet people in person then through the screen," said Joedicke.

While it's not clear that anyone walked away from this event with a date, it appeared a lot of new friends and community connections were made.

Out in STEM

Looking back on Valentine's Day, keep reading to check in with on-campus club oSTEM.



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Know your candidates

Get to know prospective candidates for California's midterm elections in June.



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"Wuthering Heights"

A polarizing film in its early release days, keep reading to hear Hayley's Hot Takes on Fennell's latest film.



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Out in STEM ‘collapses the closet’ for queer students

Tom Nolan
Staff Writer

Amid an increasingly hostile political climate, queer students at Cal State Monterey Bay (CSUMB) may have a hard time balancing their studies with seeking out a community where they can be themselves. The world of STEM – the familiar acronym for science, technology, engineering and math – where outliers are traditionally dismissed rather than celebrated, is no exception.

That search for community drove Erin Doran, a third-year biology major, to join Out in STEM, or oSTEM, shortly after the chapter was founded in 2023. A nationwide nonprofit with over 150 chapters, oSTEM is dedicated to empowering queer people to succeed both academically and professionally in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“It’s frustrating to watch people feel like they can’t express themselves, they can’t be open in science, they can’t be out,” said Doran, now the club’s president at CSUMB. She was pleasantly surprised by the liveliness of their most recent biweekly meeting, which would typically draw smaller crowds. The event featured a slideshow of queer couples throughout history, a valentine crafting activity and the gentle, jazzy tunes of Icelandic musician Laufey.

oSTEM has seen participation wax and wane over the years – most notably, Doran says, in response to the 2024 election. “Right after the election, I would say we had a lot more fear about being an open organization. And so I think tonight is kind of a good marker for that, actually, that we’re getting our numbers back up again, which is really nice.”

Alex Valenti is a fourth-year molecular biology major and secretary for oSTEM. They felt it was especially important for the club to celebrate Valentine’s Day, a holiday known for bold, colorful expressions of love.

“There’s never been a better time to be loud and expressive about love and about who you are. That’s



oSTEM saw higher attendance for their most recent, Valentine's Day themed biweekly meeting.

PHOTO BY BASIL FONSECA

the whole queer community – love is love,” Valenti said. “And so to make valentines for...whoever you call your support system or your loved ones, whether it be partners or otherwise, I feel like it’s such a good celebration of queer joy.”

Valenti shares Doran’s commitment to increasing queer visibility and representation through oSTEM. They also emphasize that the pressure and academic rigor associated with STEM studies are more manageable for queer students when they have role models they can look up to.

“In STEM, you put in a lot of hours. You’re [getting] almost six years of education in four, and so being able to see someone who looks like you, so you don’t have to carry all that on yourself...I think it’s just a big release

for people, at least for me, to be like, OK, it is possible,” said Valenti.

Many schools don’t yet have oSTEM chapters on campus. Many queer students may not feel safe embracing their identities at a time when anti-LGBTQ sentiments seem to be on the rise. The answer? According to oSTEM, the same tactics that have helped normalize the queer community for decades: being loudly, unapologetically themselves.

“Harness that fear, harness that strength. Realize [that] it’s strength. They’ve been strong enough to get this far,” Valenti said. “Harness the bravery into so much energy it just collapses the closet. There’s just so much happiness on the other side.”

the Lutrinae

The Lutrinae is a weekly campus newspaper covering CSUMB and its neighboring areas. Here at The Lutrinae, our goal is not only to educate and inform the public, but to entertain, to spark creativity, to encourage diversity of opinion, and to build a sense of community on campus and with the neighboring cities.

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Editorial Policy

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The Lutrinae serves two purposes: It is a training ground for students who wish to develop journalism skills and build their resume, and it is a forum for free expression of campus issues and news. The Lutrinae Editorial team will determine what to print and reserves the right to edit for libel, space, or clarity.

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@thelutrinae

Taking the stigma out of testing: affinity centers hold pop-up HIV and HepC test services

Daisy Sanchez
Staff Writer

The Rainbow Raft Pride Center and Undocu-Success Center came together to host a community health-focussed event in the Otter Student Union on Monday; a free HIV and Hepatitis C (HepC) pop-up testing site. The centers collaborated with the Access Support Network for Monterey County, an organization which provides HIV and HepC testing programs and support for Monterey County residents.

“I had always wondered, why we don’t have a testing event?” because even though the health center does do testing, I feel students don’t receive that information or it’s not communicated as thoroughly, so people don’t know that there’s that option on campus,” said Eduardo Cazarez, a fourth-year business administration major and Rainbow Raft community outreach coordinator. Cazarez worked as one of the main coordinators for the testing event.

The LGBTQ+ community holds a heavy history when it comes to sexual health. With the first reported cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the U.S. emerging in the early 1980s, thousands of people, but particularly the LGBTQ+ community with a decades long AIDS epidemic. Cazarez stressed the importance of making testing for these infections accessible and private for all. “I know the Personal Growth and Counseling Center (PGCC) is kind of far, and so students really have to go out of their way to go all the way over there. It’s kind of, in a way, a little bit too public because everyone goes to the PGCC and the health center’s right there, so we really took into account the discretion and privacy for this event.”

Cazarez said that the event followed a system in which individuals would go into the testing room one by one for their testing, and would then wait in the room for their results to optimize privacy. Each participant also received a Dollar Tree gift card after participating in the event. Cazarez claimed that the event was successful in its mission to bring accessible health services to campus at the pop-up and hopes to hold more testing events in the future and hopes to break the stigma, “I think it definitely could become a regular thing, just kind of testing the waters and see just how

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RAINBOW RAFT PRIDE CENTER AND UNDOCU-SUCCESS CENTER

they have the blood drives here in the west lounge or possibly the OSU ballroom, something that gets the ball more rolling and more people talking and such.”

“It’s not as scary as it sounds, it’s just a tiny finger prick,” said Cazarez, “...just communicate the event with your friends, just spread the word and we can collectively take care of our health.”

Campus community makes their mark with tree planting event



PHOTOS BY HAILEY MCCONNELL

Hailey McConnell
Staff Writer

The Habitat Stewardship Project (HSP) collaborated with Cal State Monterey Bay's risk, safety, and sustainability center to plant 30 trees with students and staff on Friday, contributing to the campus's sustainability goal of having 2,030 trees planted by 2030.

The 20 combined students and faculty members planted coastal oak trees, native to Monterey County, behind the campus library. Event organizers aimed to give attendees the opportunity to learn the importance of native species in habitats and actively contribute to the campus's ecosystem.

Student worker at the Stewardship Project Noah Martinez said the goal of the event was, "Getting the community involved outdoors, in nature, whether that's educating them on how the ecosystems work or just getting them interested in going outside and enjoying the sunlight."

"Habitat restoration is also an important part of it, the native habitats provide a lot of food [and] shelter for a lot of the different species, whether it is mammals, insects, birds, it is a really intricate system that we are trying to restore in the Monterey area."

Equipment to plant the trees were distributed at the sign-in desk when participants arrived. They were

set up right behind the Tanimura & Antle Family Memorial Library and 30 potted trees were distributed across the fields. Next to each potted tree were flags, designating where the hole would be dug for the planting process.

Once gloves and shovels were in everyone's hands, Project Director Laura Lee Link introduced the event through a group huddle. She, along with Derek Martin, the associate director of the Safety, Risk, and Sustainability Office, explained the importance of the trees and how they were brought to our campus.

"Student fees brought these trees to campus, everyone is contributing to this project. With this event we will be on track to our goal with 935 trees planted so far, but by the end of February there will be 955, on the 27 we are planting 20 more trees, next to the police station," said Martin.

Before the digging began, they also set aside time to read out a land acknowledgement to recognize the Indigenous lands campus resides on.

Students and faculty then gathered around Link and Martin as they gave a step-by-step demonstration on how to plant the trees. Starting with making sure the holes were wide and deep enough for the plants. With the plants out of their pots, the next step was to cover

the roots with a gopher net to protect the roots from getting eaten by mammals in the area. Once the trees were netted, they were placed into the hole and covered with the native soil, to make sure the plants were properly prepared to grow in the area.

Attendees were put in pairings or groups of three for each tree, taking turns digging and transferring the trees to the ground.

"As a marine science major it is really important for me to bring back native species, even if it is not marine native species, it is really fun and makes me feel good," said Venura Entova, a first-year marine science major. "I want to take care of the beautiful places on campus."

Each person had the opportunity to plant at least one tree within the two hour time-period. In between taking breaks, stopping for water or grabbing a snack provided by organizers. With the dedicated work, all 30 trees were planted before the last person left the event.

"I think it is cool that the school invests in planting native plants and have their students partake in it," said Jennifer Aguirre-Franco, a third year psychology major. "It kind of makes you feel like you left your footprint on the school, a little hand print right here."

Students should be doing more to test the limits of Time, Place, and Manner

Opinion



Dear Students,

When groups like the anti-abortion activists The Survivors are seen on campus, like last week, it can be natural to ask why they are even allowed to be here in the first place. The basic tenet underlying their presence on campus is free speech. But many may not be familiar with Time, Place, and Manner - the set of restrictions and guidelines governing free speech on college campuses. According to systemwide policy, "Individuals and groups may assemble, march, demonstrate, and protest on University Property in Public Areas at all times except outside the posted operating hours for each University," which in CSUMB's case runs from 8 a.m to 10 p.m. Time, Place and Manner restrictions by their nature both protect and limit freedom of speech. Groups such as The Survivors intentionally test these limits by approaching liberal campuses with controversial topics. CSUMB has repeatedly stressed its commitment to freedom of expression, through Time, Place and Manner, but as controversial as The Survivors are, they prove that students should be testing the limits as well. After all, not all issues important to college students are politically neutral.

From,
Sean Tubo
Staff Writer

Sean T

An Otter's guide to choosing California's next governor



Chad Bianco (R, 59)



Katie Porter (D, 52)



Eric Swalwell (D, 45)



Tom Steyer (D, 68)



Steve Hilton (R, 56)



Xavier Becerra (D, 68)



Matt Mahan (D, 43)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PICRYL AND WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Tom Nolan
Staff Writer

Cal State Monterey Bay students, like many California voters, may not yet have tuned in to this year's gubernatorial election. Yet with just twelve weeks until the primary begins, failing to get involved sooner rather than later could force the deep-blue state to choose between two Republican candidates in November.

An important, little-known fact about California's gubernatorial elections: the state employs what is known as a "jungle primary" system. That means that rather than nominate one Democratic and one Republican candidate to face off in November's general election, the primary identifies the two candidates of any party who receive the most total votes. Polls indicate two Republicans, Chad Bianco and Steve Hilton, dominating the current landscape and consistently beating out nearly every Democratic candidate. How is such a thing possible in a state where only about 25% of voters are Republican, and 45% are Democratic?

The answer lies in a sharply divided Democratic field. About five candidates currently seem to have a fighting chance; all of them are vying for left-leaning voters who seem aligned on most key issues. Two steps will help Democrats avoid the worst-case scenario in November: choosing a candidate to support as soon as possible, and keeping an eye on the polls in case the primary necessitates a last-minute pivot. That said, those looking for details to help inform their decision will find a brief overview of leading candidates below, including ages and party affiliations for each.

Chad Bianco (R, 59)

The Riverside County sheriff has taken the top spot on every 2026 poll so far. Cowboy hats and anti-establishment politics have conjured an "Old West" image that seems to endear him to conservative Californians disillusioned with the state's Democratic leadership. A staunch supporter of President Trump, his tough-on-crime platform focuses on homelessness and eliminating California's immigration protections, including sanctuary city policies.

Katie Porter (D, 52)

Initially the Democratic frontrunner, Porter's standing in the polls took a dive in October, after an interview where she refused to answer a question about how she would appeal to Republican voters. Alongside a resurfaced 2021 clip where she snaps at a staff member to "get out of [her] f*cking shot," this raised concerns about her temperament and fitness for office. Setting aside the possible gendered double standards of those concerns, the former U.S. Representative and self-styled minivan mom is a pro-union candidate who has been critical of corporations and gained national renown for wielding a whiteboard to lambast executives at congressional hearings.

Eric Swalwell (D, 45)

Considered a more moderate Democratic candidate, Swalwell has capitalized on Porter's fall from grace and has become a leading contender. The former lawyer currently serves as the U.S. Representative for California's 14th district, and his main appeal to Democratic voters seems to be anti-Trump animus; he was a congressional leader of Trump's 2021 impeachment and has been a vocal critic of his second administration. With a history of positions on various House committees and a notable endorsement from California senator Adam Schiff, many see him as the Democratic establishment favorite.

Tom Steyer (D, 68)

Advocating for affordability and higher taxes on billionaires led the San Francisco Chronicle to dub Steyer, a billionaire himself, "the ultimate unicorn." His story is an unusual one: After amassing his fortune as a hedge fund manager, Steyer, then 54, had an apparent crisis of conscience in 2012. He quit his job at Farallon Capital, divested from coal and other carbon pollutants and began a career of robust environmentalism and political advocacy. Now, as a gubernatorial candidate, he continues to trail Swalwell and Porter in the polls — yet Steyer's particularly vocal backing of progressive policies seems

to threaten his competitors, who often attack him for his wealth.

Steve Hilton (R, 56)

Hilton is perhaps best known for his work with Fox News, where he hosted the weekly right-wing commentary show "The Next Revolution." Before that, the British-born media personality served as an advisor for former prime minister David Cameron. He blames what he calls "staggering incompetence" from Democrats for the biggest issues facing California, and takes a pro-business stance on issues like housing and the environment.

Xavier Becerra (D, 68)

An attorney and former U.S. secretary of health and human services under the Biden administration, Becerra was the first Latino in the position now held by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. His campaign, like Porter's, seemed promising initially but was rocked by controversy; in November, a scandal erupted when staff for both Becerra and Gavin Newsom were discovered to have stolen about \$225,000 from a dormant account that Becerra owned. While not personally accused of wrongdoing, the incident raised questions about how such a thing could have occurred without his knowledge.

Matt Mahan (D, 43)

The San Jose mayor and tech entrepreneur is the most recent addition to the gubernatorial race, which may be contributing to the limited success his campaign has found so far. Mahan has joined other Democratic candidates in advocating for affordability, but also criticizes Newsom and the other candidates' focus on speaking out against Trump. His pro-business leanings are unsurprising given his Silicon Valley background, which earned him support from tech CEOs but has failed to impress progressives - including elected officials from his own city, many of whom have instead endorsed Steyer for governor.

“Wuthering Heights” is not weathering reviews well



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Hayley Matto
Staff Writer



Despite earning \$3 million on its opening night Thursday, “Wuthering Heights” is facing backlash from reviews. My hot take? It is still worth watching.

The biggest issue people seem to be having is that it’s not a true book-to-scene adaptation, the film isn’t dedicated to its source material. Some feel that director Emerald Fennell’s take is too modern, and fails to match Emily Bronte’s 1847 tale. However, for me this film was surprisingly emotional and incredibly fitting as a modern re-imagining of the Victorian romance.

The film stars Jacob Elordi as Heathcliff, as well as Margot Robbie as Catherine. We’ve seen Elordi before in Fennell’s film “Salt Burn,” which if you were a fan of “Salt Burn” you should be running to the theater for this film too. The directorial style and cinematography were incredibly similar. One could even argue that the universe is one in the same, with each film taking place at different moments in time. The whimsy, animalistic style and sexual tropes all were met, if not even more exaggerated, in this film than what we saw in “Salt Burn.”

While fans of the book were disappointed in the narrative straying too far from the original story, I would argue that Fennell captures the dark intense tragedy that resonates with our current generation,

much as Bronte had when publishing her work.

Besides the stellar cinematography, Charlie XCX’s soundtrack was incredible. It felt like the perfect blend of new aged tunes and classical - more fitting for the time - instrumentals. Which for me added to the atmosphere and world building for this story. Especially in pairing the backtracks to the more whimsical elements of this film one could really begin to understand the emotions guiding the story moreover then the plot itself. I am curious to listen to the album separately now, to see how the album holds up not paired with the film.

The use of exaggerated fruits, lighting, costuming and fairytale-like color schemes also added to the whimsical nature of Fennell’s directorial style. These elements worked well in carrying the point that no matter how romantic, dreamy and perfect one set of circumstances can be, without your true love, none of it matters. I encourage you, while watching this film, to count how many peculiar moments you can catch that serve solely to illuminate the facade of magical perfection. For me these moments stood out in the best way, for reviewers it seems they felt they only found them outlandish and distracting.

Lastly, I want to celebrate the use of the wind in both

sound and presence. For a story framed around a place called “Wuthering Heights,” the wind played a key role in mirroring the emotions of our two lovers. Fennell did an incredible job of using this element to her storytelling advantage; a wonderful nod to the book in my opinion and use of symbolism in this rendition.

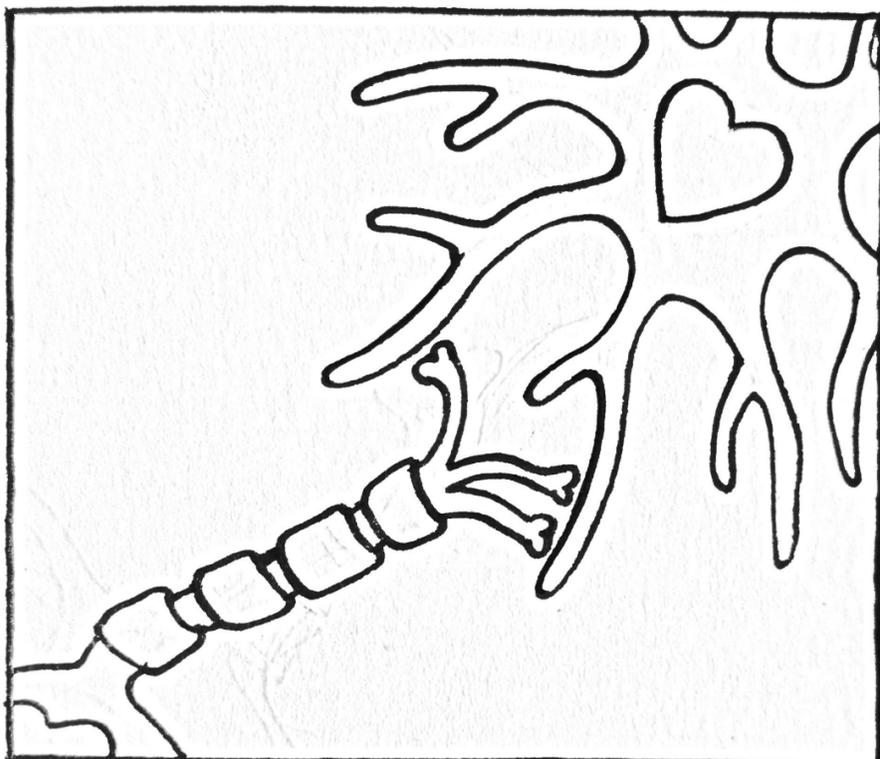
My only wish for this film is that we got more. The film spans just over two hours and has a rather large time jump in the plot of about five years. I feel that we didn’t get enough of Elordi’s Heathcliff in those sped-through years as we had with the character of Catherine. The choice does leave the audience just as excited as Catherine does after the five years have passed, but I still think in terms of plot the audience would have benefitted from having a little more of his story presented.

All in all, I rate this film a solid four out of five on the spicy scale, a must watch for fans of Fennell’s other work, a give-it-a-go if you’ve read the book and a definitely-check-it-out for those who haven’t read the story but are a fan of tragic romances - or actors Elordi or Robbie. A perfect film to toss on as well if you are having a belated galentines celebration. Stay tuned for next week as Reading Raft’s Eli Heck and I dive into another spicy storyline, comparing “Heated Rivalry” the book to the TV show.

Neuron Series: Connection

Cartoon submission by Jacqueline Schmidt (biology major)

What did the Axon say
to the dendrite?



I’m looking for a
connection ♡

Women's Leadership Initiative celebrates Galentine's, This Valentine's



Isaac Gonzalez-Diaz
Contributing Writer

Friendship was celebrated at the Galentine's, This Valentine's mixer in the Otter Student Union. Organized by CSUMB Psychology Society, Associated Students, Office of Community and Belonging and Students of Love, the event prioritized self, friendship and community love. A special presentation by Shannon Snapp, associate professor of psychology, called Love in Action: How and why to invest in your friendships and neighbors right now also took place. Taking place as part of CSUMB's Women's Leadership Initiative, a potential affinity center for women, non-binary and femme identifying people is in the works.

Walking to a new day

Photo by Neil Dela Cruz

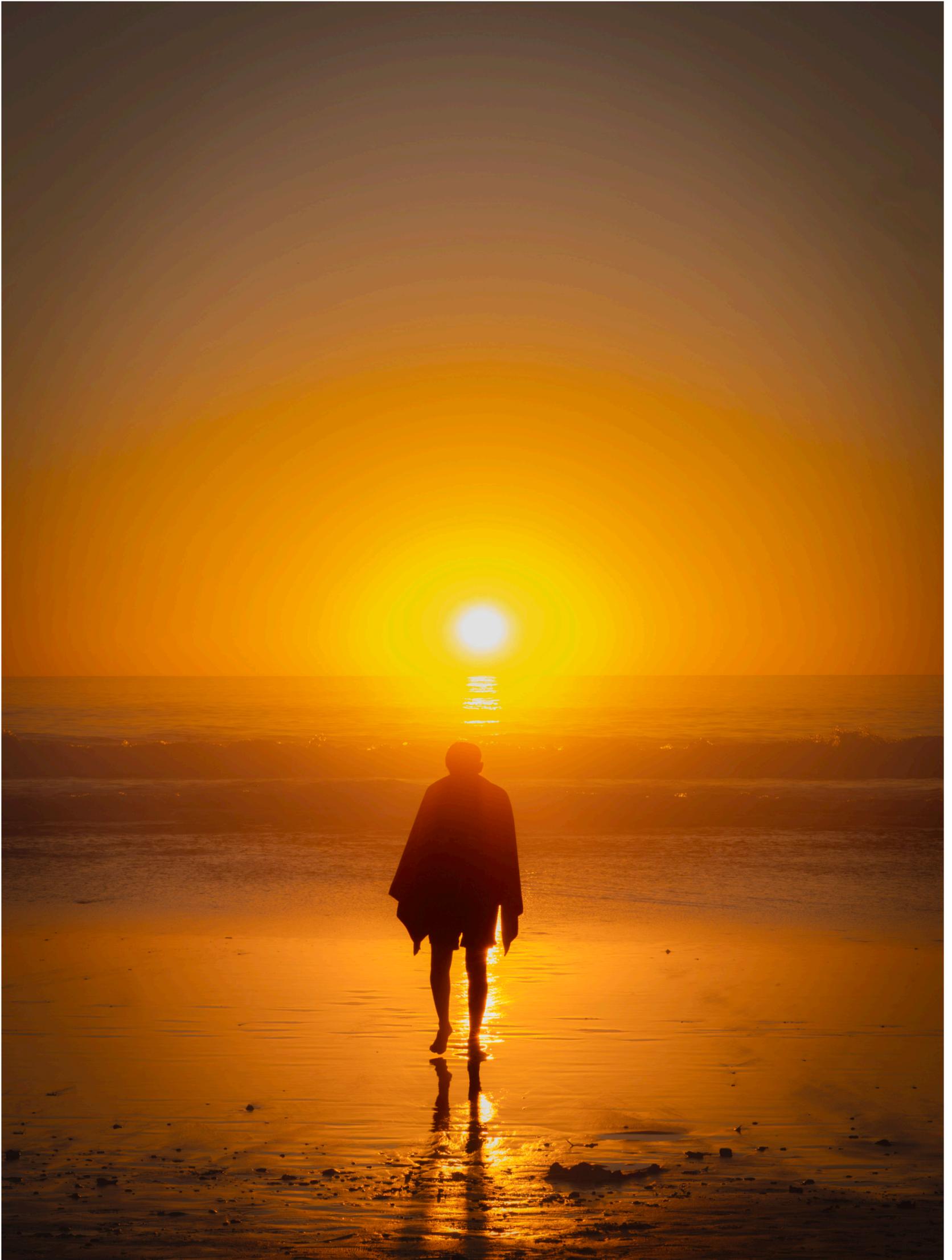


Photo of the Week

Looking to showcase your photography? Enter our ongoing photo contest throughout Volume 9 for a chance to have your work featured in our weekly issues. Check out our Instagram [@thelutrinae](#) for more details!



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Feb 18

Decompress with Otter Care's Golden Hour Yoga from 5 to 6 p.m. at Mountain Hall, Dance Studio, 2053 Inter-Garrison Rd.

Thursday, Feb 19

"Is mayonnaise an instrument?" If you get that reference, come down to the OSU Ballroom from 8 to 11 p.m. for the Bikini Bottom Rave!

Friday, Feb 20

Join Main Campus Lavender Living for a night of Queeraoke at OSU's The Rookery from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb 21

OtterCare is hosting a free Saturday Brunch at the Dining Commons from 10 to 11 a.m. Receive a meal voucher for you and/or your family and fuel up.

Puzzles

WORD SCRAMBLE

An annual solar eclipse will take place Tuesday, Feb 17. Celebrate by unscrambling this list of celestial themed-words

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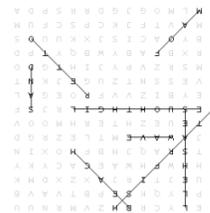
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ANSWERS:

meteor, observatory, lunar, solar, nebula, comet, star, astronomy, constellation, galaxy,



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