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El leñador

mayo 2016

Al servicio de la comunidad latinx del condado de Humboldt

Vol. 6 Edición 8

Julio C. Torres takes charge leading the immigration rally through downtown Eureka with a megaphone in hand keeping spirits and chants alive on Sunday May 1, 2016. | Javier Rojas

Cinco del Tuyo

How Americans Have Replaced the Holiday with a Spectacle of Stereotypes

by Hector Arzate

“Jump on the fiesta bandwagon with these spicy recipes for Drinko de Mayo!” reads the first headline in a profusion of articles to prepare for Cinco de Mayo.

Every year, we celebrate a number of holidays with joy and good company, as we should. Unfortunately, there’s also a large problem of never truly understanding what we are celebrating and why we are celebrating it. It’s interesting to consider how the significance of our holidays have been lost to the misappropriation that takes place here in the United States.

For starters, Cinco de Mayo is actually a relatively less significant holiday in comparison to Mexico’s Independence Day, El Grito de Dolores. Sadly, in the United States, Americans often confuse Cinco de Mayo for the most important holiday in Mexico, La Independencia de Mexico, which actually falls on September 16.

Like St. Patrick’s Day, Cinco de Mayo has become synonymous with day drinking and parading around in an offensive costume. It has essentially become an excuse for white Americans to become “Mexican for a day” and relish in our “culture.”

“I feel so Mexican today!” I once heard a friend say with a Corona in one hand and a sombrero on his head.

Except that’s not who we are. We are not a caricature of drunks parading the streets in ponchos, drinking tequila and eating tacos. We are real people with real stories. We are a strong and proud people; we work hard for our families y somos capaces! We have a rich culture and history unlike any other. And while we do want to share it with others, we should not be reduced to a single stereotype of who we are.

The Real Cinco de Mayo

But Cinco de Mayo should be commemorated. In 1862, Napoleon

III wanted to capitalize on Mexico’s state of turmoil and sought to establish a Mexican monarchy that would favor the interests of the French and further maintain their foothold in North America. So the French launched an invasion in Veracruz with a formidable fleet and a massive army. They marched from Veracruz to Mexico City but were met with the considerably smaller army of 2,000 Mexicans near Puebla. There, against a premier force that was more than three times their size, Mexico defeated the invading French. Only 83 Mexican soldiers died in the Battle of Puebla and since then, no nation in the Americas has ever been invaded by a European country. May 5, 1862 is a day that should always be remembered for the unlikely victory of Mexican forces because it symbolizes the strength and unity that all Mexicans carry in their blood and should be proud of, despite centuries of European imperialism.

In the wise words of Gloria Anzaldúa:

This land was Mexican once,
Was Indian always
and is.
And will be again.

It’s important to consider how we can celebrate Cinco de Mayo appropriately. While it may seem harmless to throw on a poncho, sombrero and adhesive moustache for a day, there is real harm that you can do to real people. It’s dehumanizing, racist, offensive and perpetuates the real discrimination that people face because of negative stereotypes. You are genuinely misrepresenting Mexican culture, making a joke out of who we are and contributing the marginalization we face every day.

But some would defend this form of celebration and even argue that it’s just an outlet for you to honor and



Illustration by Hector Arzate

appreciate our culture and partake in what we “do” for a day. Unfortunately that’s probably the most misguided and terrible justification a mind could produce. Why honor a group of people by partaking in a spectacle of stereotypes? How can you oversimplify our experiences and heritage into the worst concept of who we are? Such an idea is more than just disrespectful and ignorant, it’s disgusting.

It’s the same harm that allows bigots to run a presidential campaign based on fear and hatred. It’s the same harm that dehumanizes and encourages families to be destroyed because of borders.

And you cannot genuinely experience what it is like to be “Mexican

for a day” because you will never have to worry about your family members who are undocumented. You will never have to worry about the slurs that are thrown at you for being Mexican. You will never have to experience our lived reality because you can take the costume off just as easily as you put it on.

If you actually care about Mexico’s rich culture and history, please take a moment to learn what Cinco de Mayo is about, beyond what you perceive it to be. If you want to honor who we are, celebrate our holidays authentically, without the vacuous costumes and mindless consumption.

Cinco de Mayo is a cause for celebration and people should enjoy it with their friends, family and what-

ever food and beverages they want. It should be fun, but we shouldn’t erase the significance of what it means, or willfully misrepresent who we are celebrating. We should combat the caricatures and stereotypes that are created because they dehumanize, humiliate and hurt real people. So embrace our rich culture, appreciate our people and enjoy our amazing food but don’t participate in the appropriation, the ignorance, or the spectacle of stereotypes. And please, don’t wear that fucking sombrero.



A fan attending the Queer Battle of the Bands event snaps a quick photo as Wreckage plays their set in the Kate Buchanan Room. | Briana Yah-Diaz

Queer and Here

by Carmen Pena-Gutierrez

On Friday, April 29 the Kate Buchanan Room was a space where queer people and allies could get together and enjoy good music and great company. The 2nd Annual Queer Battle of the Bands was part of the 2016 Queer Fest, a week that was devoted to celebrating queer people of color. Spaces like these are important to create and honor, they are a place where queer people are allowed to exist outside of the margins, prejudices, and stereotypes.



Vocalist, Tiffany of Chachi Hands grooves with the crowd. | Briana Yah-Diaz



Singer of Space Biscuit, Calla Peltier-Olson. | Briana Yah-Diaz



Ian Alexander of Common Deer takes over the show. |Briana Yah-Diaz

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El Leñador is a bilingual newspaper produced by Humboldt State University students of underrepresented ethnic groups. Our core values drive us to become the voice of the Latino community in Humboldt County. We are committed to keeping our community informed of the most important issues in actuality, through our newspaper, we hope to inspire other minorities to share their stories and experiences, thus creating more social, political and cultural diversity in local media.

El Leñador es un periódico bilingüe producido por estudiantes subrepresentados de Humboldt State University. Nuestros valores fundamentales, como la integridad y la honestidad, nos llevan a buscar ser la voz de la comunidad latina en el condado de Humboldt. Estamos comprometidos con mantener a nuestra comunidad informada de los eventos más importantes de la actualidad. A través de nuestro periódico, esperamos inspirar a otras minorías para que publiquen su periódico propio y original, creando así más diversidad social, política y cultural en la prensa local.

Salsacumbiando Night Comes to Humboldt

Local DJ brings Latinx flavor to Arcata

by Estee Trevizo

Every Tuesday night at Richard’s Goat Tavern and Tea Room, DJ Sonido Pachanguero, also known as Erik Cruz, hosts “Salsacumbiando Night.” While the bar offers a variety of alcoholic beverages, DJ Pachanguero mixes a variety of spanish beats for everyone to dance to.

Cruz plays everything he feels from salsa, cumbia, bachata, reggaeton and merengue.

Born in Mexico City, Cruz studied and received his masters in psychology and education.

“I came here after my little sister was kidnapped in Mexico,” Cruz said. “So my mom told me, if you love me please live in the United States.”

DJ Pachanguero started DJing at family parties, as well as quinceañeras and weddings in Humboldt County.

“You make good money when you play at Mexican parties depending on how much equipment you have,” Cruz said.

Determined, Cruz followed his cousin’s footsteps after he asked him to hop on the DJ set one night. Afterwards, Cruz realized something that changed his life. Using his passion for music as a way to escape his past life.

“Music is the best drug, when you play it you forget about your problems,” Cruz said. “This drug is not bad for your body, this drug makes you very happy.”

His desire to play live music brought him to Richard’s Goat where he DJ’s every Tuesday night. Cruz said this was the first place that gave him a chance to DJ and he never forgets it.

Cruz admits that he didn’t plan for this to be his career. He ultimately wants to save up and have his own little farm house where he can grow vegetables. His ultimate goal is to have a greenhouse, Cruz feels this will make him the happiest because he very much enjoys growing plants.

“When you come to this country, you want the best future,” Cruz said. “This wasn’t really my goal, but I am thankful for this opportunity now.”

Cruz explains that there aren’t many places to go to if you are Latinx in Humboldt County and want to dance.

Because of this, he often invited his friends to where he is DJing at, and they often tell their friends. In result, usually his crowd consists of people he knows, or is very familiar with.

“I think people here particularly in this area, Latino’s don’t have any places to go,” Cruz said.

Cruz has noticed that the community of Latinx in Humboldt County is growing and Mexicans in particular seem to have to work harder than most, considering the demographics.

“I feel so comfortable because a lot of bars and businesses are opening their doors to this kind of music, and it’s given me a lot more opportunity,” Cruz said. “When I play music, it’s the best time to forget all of my problems, it’s like heaven.”

Lizette Ramirez, a student at Humboldt State, goes regularly to Richard’s Goat specifically for these nights.

“This event lets Latinos come

together and interact on a different level,” Ramirez said. “It’s cool to see that I can come here and see people of my ethnic background, but it’s sad that this night is only one day out of the week.”

Juan Carlos Ramos, a Humboldt County local who identifies as Latino, is a regular at these events as well. From Oaxaca, Mexico, Ramos resides in Eureka.

“Me gusta el ambiente, la salsa, y me gusta bailar la música latina,” Ramos said. “Estamos con nuestra propia raza.”

Aside from being friends with the DJ, Ramos comes to Richard’s Goat to just simply dance.

“No olvidamos de donde venimos, nuestro origenes, y ademas disfrutamos la musica latina que nos gusta bailar,” said Ramos.

Cristiam Marquez, an environmental student at Humboldt State, also appreciates these nights because they remind her of home.

“I think being far away from a large Latino community, it’s nice to come to a place where I can actually listen to music and feel like I’m at home,” Marquez said.

DJ Pachanguero has one rule that he sticks with wherever he DJ’s, and that is to not have a cover charge at the door. He doesn’t want to get paid from his fans, and he doesn’t ever want them to have to pay to dance.

“No me gustaría que mi gente o mi raza tenga que pagar para divertirse,”Cruz said.

Michael Olguin, a regular at Richard’s Goat on Salsacumbianda

nights says there are always people here that are willing to help out with some new dance moves.

“It’s nice, even with people who don’t know how to dance, there are people here willing to teach you.”Olguin said. “For those who are Latino and Hispanic, when you come to these events, it’s almost refreshing from that white dominated norm that were used to.”

Olguin expressed that he keeps coming back to Salsacumbianda nights becuae of the enviroment and atmosphere he can’t get anywhere else in Humboldt county.

“If you come to these events regularly, you see these new faces and it’s nice because you start to notice the same people coming back, and

returning,” Olguin said. “People here are close, and interactive. Everyone is friendly, and welcoming, and for me this is my culture, so it’s nice to have this feeling of reminiscing home.”

For more information on events like these where you can hear music straight from the soul, you can visit DJ SONIDO PACHANGUERO’s Facebook page. Also, you can find him at the following locations: Banana Hut every Friday evening; Shooters Off Broadway in Eureka every Sunday night, and Lost Coast Brewery Sunday during the day.

Estee Trevizo can be reached at el-leñador@humboldt.edu



Erick Cruz with his DJ setup. Photo provided by Erick Cruz

Community



En camino al siendo el rey

by Carmen Peña-Gutierrez | Translated by Erika Cardenas

Durante la celebración de Cinco de Mayo, la puerta trasera se abrió de un golpe en el restaurante mexicano de Carmela’s en Arcata. Un fuerte sonido fluorescente llena el espacio, todos giran su cabeza, conversaciones terminan y a la vez los mariachis tocan la canción clásica de “El Rey” que se amplifica a través del restaurante. Tomas en cuenta primeramente, los trajes típicos de los hombres, pero después la voz voluminosa te capta la atención.

“Llorar y llorar...llorar y llorar”

Jesús Mena se mueve con confianza por el restaurante con su guitarrón en mano y con una voz muy cautivadora. Si hay algo que se pueda decir de Mena es que él canta con el corazón. Ah, y a la edad de 15 años.

Mena ha sido parte del mariachi de Fortuna, California por un año. Él toca la guitarra, guitarrón y vihuela para el grupo Mariachi Herencia Mexicana aparte de ser uno de los cantantes. Es el único miembro joven que constituye de en su mayor parte adultos.

“Solamente hay dos grupos de mariachis en esta área y son mayores de edad.” dice Mena. “Ellos ya tienen su familia y otros compromisos.”

Sergio Marquez Rubio, uno de los miembros principales de Mariachi Herencia Mexicana, dice que Mena tiene un futuro en mariachi.

“Él tiene talento, puede ser su propia banda,” dice Rubio. “En el futuro le va ir mejor. Empezó con nosotros sabiendo poco y ahora sabe mucho.”

Mena se involucró con el grupo cuando fue a comprar unas botas en un comercio local.

“El dueño dijo “Ah, te gusta este tipo de botas, botas de mariachi?” y mi mamá le comentó que yo antes tocaba con un mariachi. Fue entonces cuando él me dijo que me asomara a la puerta de al lado porque estaba tocando un mariachi y quizá me contrataran para ser parte de su grupo,” dice Mena. “Entonces fui, cante y después asistí a uno de sus ensayos. Me tomo un poco de meses pero me permitieron tocar con ellos.”

Cuando no está tocando con

la el mariachi, a Mena tienen intereses como cualquier otro chavo de 15 años. Es su primer año en la escuela de Fortuna High. Le encanta jugar fútbol en su tiempo libre, toca música improvisada con sus amigos y es parte de la banda de marcha de su escuela. Su artistas favoritas son Pink Floyd y The Beatles. Es un joven simpático, tranquilo y reservado y un poco tímido, no te imaginarias que fuese un muchacho conocido por sus talentos en áreas públicas.

“Cuando me pongo mi traje siento un orgullo,” dice Mena. “Me da la fortaleza de verle a los ojos a la gente.”

Desde los 12 años, Mena ha dedicado tres años de su vida perfeccionando y desarrollando su talento. Cuando él estaba en la secundaria, la clase de guitarra le despertó su interés y desde entonces el se ha tomado parte en los grupos de mariachi en su ciudad natal, que es Las Vegas, Nevada. Mena dijo que desde su infancia, recuerda que su mamá siempre tocaba música de mariachi. Cuando era lo suficientemente más mayor, él empezó a tocar música de mariachi porque era lo



Jesus Mena playing el guitarrón in Carmela’s Mexican Restaurant on Thursday, May 5. 2016. | Sam Armanino

único que fue expuesto durante este tiempo. Como no pudo hacer que su madre se sintiera orgullosa de su trabajo escolar, busco otra alternativa para hacer que su mamá se sintiera orgullosa de él.

“Un día cuando estábamos en el coche escuchando la ‘El Rey’ en la radio, le había prometido a mi mamá que algún día yo iba a estar cantando esa canción con un mariachi,” dice Mena. “Ella dijo que estaba loco, pero así fue. Esta memoria me es lo que me motiva.”

Saltemos cinco años que es hoy en día, Mena se mantiene al ritmo que los otro cinco hombres del grupo. Él mantiene el ambiente vivo, el favorito entre las mujeres

por lo cual él selectivamente les cerena en Carmela’s. Esta presentación fue el tercero de los cuatro compromisos que tienen por presentar el Mariachi Herencia Mexicana, y aún les faltaba uno más. La voz de Mena no parece rajarse o debilitarse. Él dice que su juventud no es de importancia en cuanto se trata de ser parte de este grupo.

“En realidad no le tomo mucha importancia,” dice Mena. “Nadamas le sigo. Nunca me detengo, continuó practicando y aprendiendo. Nunca me rajo.”

Carmen Peña-Gutierrez can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu



Illustration by Alfonso Herrera

A College Student’s Cure to Food Insecurity

by Alfonso Herrera

On April 2015, Chancellor Timothy P. White assigned Dr. Jennifer Maguire, Master of Social Work at Humboldt State and Dr. Rashida Crutchfield, Master of Social Work at CSU Long Beach along with faculty, staff, students and administrators, to conduct a series of surveys and research pertaining to food insecurity within the CSU system. Food insecurity begins with the lack of physical, social and economic access to safe and nutritious foods, dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life to flourish as a student. According to the Berkeley Wellness website, it articulates “aim for 2½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit a day, for a 2,000-calorie diet”, as only a portion of a healthy and nourishing diet. Students are required to budget their money in order to cover a broad range of expenses. At times students are required to analyze the benefit of educational expenses such as tuition, books and supplies versus healthy or organic food annually. CSU Chancellor’s research concluded, “In the CSU system, an estimate of eight to 12 percent of students live in unstable housing situations, and 21 to 24 percent are food-insecure.” Food insecurity has spread

itself more and more into the experiences of the modern day higher education due to the rise of tuition and other fees. Whether you are a student from a low-income household, or a student with plenty of wealth but no knowledge of organic and nutritional diets, these questions and answers were designed to build a stronger and healthy mentality for students at Humboldt State University. We believe student led organic gardening can provide a cure to a lack of resources to obtain nutritional food. Here are a few commonly asked questions:

Why should I value organic gardening?

By organic gardening you get the nutrition you need and enjoy tastier food. Organically grown food contains more minerals and nutrients than food grown with synthetic pesticides. Just a fun fact, the EPA considers 60 percent of all herbicides, 90 percent of all fungicides and 30 percent of all insecticides carcinogenic.

How do you to stick to your budget while eating organic?

Growing your own food can help cut the cost of your grocery bill! Seeds can be very cheap, or found for exchange or donation at the Campus Center

for Appropriate Technology located in the southeast corner of campus. For information on other organic gardening resources, such as soil, compost and recycling beds, contact CCAT.

Which herbs, fruits and vegetables can you grow in Humboldt County?

Fall semester is the best time to plant and grow trees, shrubs, vines, elephant garlic, yerba santa, primrose, viola tricolor, autumn sage, salvia chamaedryoides, salvia leucantha, tulip and hyacinth bulbs, cabbage, lettuce, spinach and swiss chard.

Spring semester is the best time to plant and grow roses, artichokes, asparagus, rhubarb, lettuce, spinach, chard, parsley, peas, beet, carrots, radishes, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower.

What and how can you grow on property you are renting?

Avoid landscaping on rented property unless authorized. Vertical gardening maximizes ground space in small gardens and planting a variety of only what you need- maximize yield and minimize waste. Check out other organic gardening DIY techniques that best fit your circumstance.

Alfonso Herrera can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu

Community

Aquí estamos y no los vamos

Immigration Protests take the streets of Eureka

by Javier Rojas

May 1 is traditionally recognized as International Workers day and for members of Eureka’s True North Organizing Network it was a chance to spread awareness about the deportation of local immigrants.

The humid 80 degree weather and three mile walk from Sacred Heart Church to Downtown Eureka didn’t deter hundreds of protesters from joining in on the march. Protesters donned white shirts and held picket signs that read “Don’t Deport My Mom” and “Keep Families Together” as they took over the streets of Eureka.

Rene Saucedo, an activist for the True North Network, a social justice organization, helped put the event together to bring attention and celebrate immigrant workers living in Humboldt County. Saucedo said the protest was also done in solidarity for the cancellation of

Sun Valley worker’s deportation orders.

In September 2008, Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided Sun Valley Farms in Arcata, arresting approximately 23 people and placing some in deportation proceedings.

“Today we’re joining with thousands of other demonstrations across the country sending a message about what really is going on in this country,” Saucedo said. “Sometimes we have to do that publicly to send a message.”

Rally members read testimonials outloud about experiences with immigration services and the personal battles they have faced being immigrants. Mariah Sanchez, 17, spoke about the struggles she has faced becoming a legal U.S citizen and the fears she still has today.

“According to the U.S I became legal two years ago,” Sanchez said. “I still live in constant fear every time for my parents when I

hear a knock at the door because of immigration services.”

Before the march to downtown Eureka, a local priest said a few words on a megaphone praying for all the immigrants and protesters in attendance. The chant of “aquí estamos y no nos vamos” rang as the crowd took to the streets.

While California Highway Patrol tried to subdue protesters off the streets, marchers complied and took over sidewalks in stride. Onlookers came out of their homes and honked their cars in approval of the protest.

The immigration march ended in front of the ICE offices at D Street where a press conference was held and Saucedo urged community members to push this effort beyond just today.

Javier Rojas can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu



Protestor stands in solidarity at Immigration Rally on Sunday May 1, 2016 | Javier Rojas



Priest from Sacred Heart Church speaks to protestors before the march. | Javier Rojas



California Highway Patrol intervenes with protestors as they approach Downtown Eureka. | Javier Rojas

Colorful memories

I came to Humboldt State because I’m part of a program called UGRAD (Global Undergraduate Exchange Program) , which is sponsored by the Department of State of the United States. When I applied to this scholarship I didn’t know where I possibly could go to study, but I trusted God and I took the risk. I would never guess the place where World Learning, the organization who administers this program, placed me to be a wonderful, little and unique town that had filled my memories with a lot of color.

HSU has received me with open trees, I mean open arms; this amazing and green campus is always so fresh and peaceful. Since the first day, people have been very friendly and supportive. I am from Honduras, a beautiful country located in Central America. As an international student, it is not easy to come to an unknown place where everything is new and different, but I have found a sweet home during these nine months I have been here.

Since I came here I have discovered many things. I’ve discovered more about the beauty and variety that the world has. I am so privileged to have met people from around the world, that even when we are so different, even when we speak different languages, we can still be together and have a great time. We can laugh and learn from each other and I think that is priceless. Thanks to the Center for International Programs (CIP) and also to International English Language Institute (IELI), we, as international students could have great activities and awesome experiences together that have enriched our time as foreigners.

I have discovered my country. I’ve been living in Honduras all my life but now, I can see it in a different way; I appreciate my culture and traditions even more.

Finally, I have discovered more about me. I value my family, my friends and everything back home more. I am so blessed to be where I am now. I thank God for bringing me here, for giving me the privilege to study at this awesome school, for giving me a lot of friends that will last forever. Now it is time to go back home and embrace new challenges and projects, but I encourage all of you to take the opportunity to study abroad, that’s something that will change your life.

Until next time Humboldt!

P.S.: Don’t forget to visit Honduras, you’ll love it.

Sincerely, Grecia Romero



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Agàchate y cubrete

HSU Student brings awareness to earthquake and Tsunami in Spanish



Hector Flores reads the translated Del Norte earthquake manual during Tsunami Awareness Week. Photo provided by Hector Flores

by Emily Fajardo

Hector Flores is a geology and Spanish major here at HSU, and currently the vice president of the geology club. He has been involved in the Humboldt County community since transferring from Huntington Beach, Calif. Flores worked on translating and designing the Del Norte earthquake and tsunami pamphlet guide for the Latinx community here in Humboldt and currently works for the Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration broadcasting emergency alert tasks and translates and revises for the “Living on Shaky Ground” magazine.

E: What was the main inspiration for you to start translating tsunami information in Spanish?

H: I had a geology professor, Lori-Dangler here at HSU and she told me that she had two geology internship positions available. She brought it up and mentioned she needed help. She also mentioned the large Latino Community in Humboldt County. My inspiration comes from being active in my home community, I feel like I am a product of community outreach from where I’m from. I believed that having this opportunity would help me integrate into the community and I like using this as a means to helping other.

E: Since when were you interested in this kind of service?

H: I started getting involved back when I attended Community College in Huntington Beach, Calif.

E:How do you identify as?

H: Chicano

E:Coming from that background and seeing the need for a Latino representation, was there a motivation to help bridge that gap?

H: Yes, with everything happening in the world, more specifically in the U.S, it’s important to show humbleness. It’s important to show we are a different generation from the previous ones, we think differently and we have really stepped up our game. Our parents work didn’t go in vain. We are an important group of people in the U.S and we need to show that.

E: Where are you from and do you think your experiences from home shaped who you are today?

H: I’m from Stanton, California where we have a very diverse community, primarily Arab and Hispanic living literally right in front of each other, we’re all neighbors. I find it amazing how similar we are and how much we share and have in common whether it be how we value traditions, cultures to the kind of spices we use. Growing up in ELL or English Language Learners programs, all the teachers at my schools were Latino and Latina and they could empathize the struggle with not knowing the language. That helped form my dialogue to wanting to help Latinos and others in any ways possible. Watching how they helped us and how they devoted their time helped me realize in ways I could also help out.

E:What do you say to the underrepresented students here on campus that need an outlet or a project like you did to make a difference in the community?

H: I like to get people involved, especially in my translation/interpretation classes or if they are into the same work I am. I would say that is they have their own projects and ideas I hear them out and think they should definitely pursue it. I want them to know that it gives a great feeling knowing you are devoting time to something you like. We have some many opportunities here at HSU and I think that we should all take advantage of them. I encourage all to find something we love and are passionate about.

Emily Fajardo can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu

How HSU Took Back the Night

“El pueblo unido jamás será vencido”



Alexia Siebuhr during the Take Back The Night March that led to the Arcata Plaza. | Briana Yah-Diaz

by Olivia Drake

Most students look forward to Fridays for anticipated relief and freedom. April 8 was a particularly different Friday for all involved in Humboldt State’s annual Take Back The Night event.

Throughout the day, a colorful array of shirts hung from the guardrails of the top floor of the University Center, expressing important messages pertaining to the right to one’s own body. Each shirt conveyed a firm stance opposing domestic violence against women, as inspired by The Clothesline Project which originated in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 26 years ago.

As the sun descended, countless individuals stepped forward to share their personal stories and poetry in a safe space set in the KBR. People regardless of gender had a chance to speak about their own abuse, their fight against forced gender or sexual identity and the pain it caused them and the people in their lives.

There were tables set up along the walls of the room for support outlets such as the North Coast Rape Crisis Team, United Indian Health Services and the Raven Project. The center of the room was packed with a full attentive audience, the atmosphere in the room hung heavy overhead for three hours as wounds both fresh and scarred were expressed. As the last of the volunteers had shared their piece, it became time for the march.

The “Women Identified, Feminine Identified, & Femme Identified March” is a tradition for HSU’s Take Back the Night event and its guests. Any and all who identified within the feminine gender spectrum gathered in the UC Quad, and began to chant as a collective force.

They marched with monitors at their sides and lead at least 60 voices to march from campus all the way down to the

Arcata Plaza. Ariel Fishkin, a graduate student in applied anthropology, was one of those monitors.

“I decided to be a monitor because I think it’s important to have as many people as possible available for support at an event dealing with these types of issues,” Fishkin said. “Honestly, it’s also very empowering to be able to take a role like this.”

Take Back the Night has existed as a concept for over half a century. The first North American march took place in 1978 in Vancouver, British Columbia. In 1981, The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centers declared the third Friday of September to be the designated date for Take Back The Night marches nationwide, focusing on eliminating sexual and domestic violence in all forms.

According to the Justice Department’s National Crime Victimization Survey, which gathered data from 2008 through 2012, “an average of 68 percent of assaults in the last five years were not reported.” A more recent study published in September of 2015 by the Association of American Universities states that the most common reason for not reporting incidents of sexual assault and sexual misconduct was that it was “not considered serious enough... or [they] did not think anything would be done about it.”

“We have a community that is not afraid at all to stand up to spaces of unjust,” said Alexia Siebuhr, a Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention coordinator who has led the Take Back The Night function for the last two years. “There’s silence on this campus most definitely, but there are so many voices that are demanding for the silence to end and standing up for a world without violence.” Siebuhr said.

The unfortunate truth is that no space is ever truly “safe.” While HSU isn’t inherently safer than other institutions, many students are shedding light on the federal law known as Title IX, which not only equalizes the rights of college athletes regardless of their gender, but protects the rights to proper support and protection for victims of abuse in their universities.

The HSU march roared in the night with every means of support propelling it forward.

“I identify as a woman, and it’s common discourse that women should not travel without the company of a man, or a somebody masculine, at night,” Fishkin said. “So those of us who are women-identified, femme-identified and feminine-identified took back the night.”

Olivia Drake can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu

North Coast Rape Crisis Team

It is not your fault. You are not alone.

We all deserve a community free from sexualized violence.



If you or someone you know has been assaulted, we are here to support you.

Confidential 24 hour line at (707) 445-2881

www.ncrct.org

Campus

Five-day event on the world of animal studies

Symposium highlights student interest in connecting injustices

by Kevynn Gomez

One student’s passion for creating change

The flyers Jessica Suarez made for a recent campus event included a photo of a woman’s bare legs. She thinks some students did not like that and might have torn them down.

The incident highlights intersecting topics about injustice that passionate students at Humboldt State are talking about.

Suarez is an environmental studies major at HSU. She is part of the newly-formed Critical Animal Studies Club and helped organize a week-long event focusing on the use of animals and the impact of this use in modern culture. For her, the event was a way to combine different topics that are all important.

“I saw it from a feminist perspective so that’s how I came to it,” Suarez said. “I wanted to broaden my view.”

The HSU senior is from Compton, California and finds interest in topics like the meat industry’s environmental impact and food inequity for people of color. Suarez doesn’t want to eat meat because of what she has learned but struggles with the cultural and economic challenges facing people

like her in modern America.

“It’s a money thing,” Suarez said. “Trying to be vegan in a place that it’s not accessible is a problem.”

Suarez appreciated having the keynote speaker, feminist philosopher Carol Adams, at the event and wants more discussion about Adams’ topic of the sexualization of meat to take place at HSU.

Student clubs discuss injustice

The Critical Animal Studies Symposium was held April 25-29 and consisted of student presentations on animal-related topics as well as a keynote speech.

Topics at the symposium ranged from racism in animal cartoons to the sexualization of meat and ethics of animal experimentation. The event lasted five days, but student groups like the Critical Animals Studies Club and the Vegan Club provide an outlet for students to talk.

HSU student Kylie Mosbacher co-founded the CAS club with fellow student Rachelle Howard and wants the club to be a meeting ground for students looking to safely discuss the ways animal use intersects with other topics of injustice.

“The discipline is not about condemning practices, it’s about exploring from as many angles as possible the relationships between human and non-human animals,” Mosbacher said. “It’s very much about inviting conversation and discussing things.”

Mosbacher wants to be more inclusive of students of color who might feel left out of the vegan and animal rights movements.

“Intersectionality is kind of one of the core pillars as I see it,” Mosbacher said. “Critical animal studies is kind of a beautiful way to bridge many of those gaps.”

M.E.Ch.A. held an event at the symposium about decolonizing one’s life by changing diet.

The presentation, titled “Re-Indigenize Your Diet,” looked at how post-colonization added more meat, dairy and processed food to indigenous communities and the return to pre-colonial plant-based diets.

M.E.Ch.A. member Priscilla Baltezar said eating plant-based meals is an important way to reconnect with her indigenous Mexican heritage.

“I’ve done quite a bit of research

in my undergrad into agriculture,” Baltezar said. “Most striking to me [is] the meat industry; it’s basically degrading the environment the most.”

Baltezar said since attending HSU she has cut down on the amount of meat she eats and has been vegetarian at times.

Finding solidarity between social and hard sciences

An original plan for the CAS symposium was to include presentations from science departments on the quantitative side of the injustice issues. Mosbacher says that science departments weren’t included in the symposium because of last-minute planning and miscommunication about the intent of the symposium.

Jack Gates, president of the student-run Vegan Club, notices the lack of involvement from science students.

“Being a [previous] engineering major and seeing what the hard sciences go through, it’s hard to find time and it’s scary,” Gates said about science majors not being more involved.

But Suarez sees it differently. “Science people are detached from the social sciences,” she said. “People have this idea that it’s a mainstream

movement and what they see on TV.”

One way Suarez thinks the disconnect between hard and social science students on topics of injustice can be bridged is to create events on a specific topic—like the meat industry— that several departments would participate in.

“There needs to be a connection—just coming together and having this understanding,” Suarez said.

Student discussions in moving forward

Both Mosbacher and Suarez of the Critical Animal Studies Club hope to continue the CAS club next semester. They want the club to encourage discussions about more than just eating animals. Vegan Club President Jack Gates wants students who didn’t attend the symposium to think about their relation to the topics covered.

“I understand where you’re coming from but there’s a bigger picture and it’s not all about you,” Gates said. “There are big ramifications for your dietary choices.”

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Oh, the Places You’ll Go... Maybe.

How the class of 2016 is preparing for the real world

by Hector Arzate

With the academic year coming to an end, so has the journey of Humboldt State’s finest, the class of 2016. Graduation is right around the corner and so is the “real” world. But some graduates feel more prepared for it, while others not so much.

Like many of our greatest endeavours, there are many mixed emotions that students are having about reaching the finish line.

Students like Vita Romano, a psychology major, said the feeling of graduating has built from four years of anticipation at Humboldt State.

“So much buildup for four years. It’s actually happening but it doesn’t feel real or even worth it,” Romano said.

But students like Louis Ramirez, a journalism major who graduated last fall, felt that the college experience was worth more than the degree itself. Working as a reporter with the local ABC station right out of HSU, he acknowledged the advantage he had.

“I am extremely lucky to have a job right out of school. Not a lot of people have that opportunity,” Ramirez said. “I recommend going out of your way to learn and research on your own. Get out of the classrooms. Try something different.”

Following this ethic, Ramirez was able to work as a production assistant before graduating and was offered a position when he received his degree.

“Your degree is worth what you make of it,” Ramirez said.

In an age where many college graduates are left unemployed right out of school, the importance of undergraduate experience seems evident. In a 2015 Economic Policy Institute research, the unemployment rate for young college graduates is currently 7.2 percent (compared with 5.5 percent in 2007), while the underemployment rate is at 14.9 percent (compared with 9.6 percent in 2007).

Melissa Nino, a child development major, also described the feeling as unreal. “Graduating is the plan, but I still have to work out all of my classes,” Nino said.

In terms of being prepared, Nino said HSU helped her put many things on her resume but still there is lingering feeling of uncertainty.

“I feel like I have some killer interview skills. But really with a small major, I had a lot of field experience with resources like the Child Development Lab and working at an



Illustration by Ariana Hendren

actual elementary school,” Nino said. “But I have to work for a year before I can apply for grad school. I have to keep applying for jobs until I get something, whether that’s in my field or even retail.”

While for Romano, a R.A.M.P mentor on campus, did not feel as prepared from her major alone.

“R.A.M.P prepared me more for my career than my major,” Romano said. “I feel disappointed with such a large major that was lacking in support for its students.”

Being prepared can be a mixed experience for many and getting out into the “real” world with a college degree no longer seems like a sure thing. However, there are other options.

Although she had mixed emotions about graduating, Romano plans to attend graduate school at Seattle University in Washington next fall.

“I want to explore what I can do in higher education,” Romano said. But the road to achieve a post-Bachelor’s degree can be even harder than simply finding a job out of college.

According to Peterson’s, a company owned by the student loan conglomerate, Nelnet, the annual tuition on average, at public colleges and universities totals

almost \$30,000 and nearly \$40,000 at private schools. That amount does not even include the cost of books, supplies and transportation. There are no federal grants for graduate school, and while the financial side of graduating can be hard, Romano said she is grateful for unforeseeable situations.

“My stepmother passed away recently and left some funds to make grad school possible for me,” Romano said. “I’m very grateful for that and I know it wouldn’t be happening if it weren’t for her.”

For graduates fresh out of college there are many barriers, ranging from a lack of experience to harsh financial situations.

Romano did have some advice to offer underclassmen and unsuspecting juniors.

“Try things that make you nervous, get out of your comfort zone. Everything I did academically and in my extracurriculars always paid off,” Romano said. “Those were the building blocks I used to get me where I want to be.”

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Interview with Darian Fambro

by Jocelyn Lopez

What clubs or organizations were you part of while at HSU?

D: I was part of Brothers United, I was part of Pre-Vet club for a year and the Animal Behavior club. I was also part of a HSU track team for five years and coached my last year.

What was your experience like being a minority in the science classes here at HSU?

D: I was often the only colored person in the class. I was definitely recognizable because of how I dressed and how I carried myself.

Did you like that attention?

D: It was only bad when I wanted to miss class. And they could definitely tell when I wasn’t there because of who I am.

What motivated you to stay in your major?

D: Because there really weren’t any other people like me in my major. It’s something I’ve always wanted to do since forever. When I was younger I didn’t know what zoology was actually called. I knew that I wanted to work with animals. I just wanted the prestige of me being who I am and graduating with this degree because no other African American athletes have graduated with this degree and I wanted to be the one to say that. I am like the only one to do that.

What advice would you give to other students of color that are thinking about majoring in one of the sciences at HSU, but are afraid of doing so because they are a minority or because the sciences are presented as too hard of majors?

D: If you really want to do it then just do it. No one is forcing you to do anything, it’s all on you. It depends on what you want to with your life and how much you want to eventually get paid. Whatever your passion is don’t let anyone or anything discourage you from doing it. If I did it you can do it.

Would you say that your major or field is highly competitive? Do you think that your field is in need of more people of color?

D: I know its highly competitive. A lot of people who work with large animals, I know that you have to be strong to a certain extent. They can’t have someone who is 5’1 work with African Elephants because that would be a problem in case something happens. So I think since I am a little bigger I have a bigger advantage, but academically and experience wise it’s challenging to get internships. And because I can run really fast.

What are you doing after graduation?

D: During the summer I have an internship with the Oakland Zoo working with African Elephants. After I want to see if I can work with tigers at a rehabilitation center. Aside from that maybe go over seas and find work there. I want to go to Australia, the southern pacific, there is a lot of biodiversity there so a lot of places for me to work at.

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Opinión

Stuttering but Striving to Achieve

by Katherine Miron

“Crap, he’s looking at me why the hell did I look up? Why did I think getting out of bed today was a good idea now I’m going to have to- oh thank god he didn’t choose me!”

That’s my anxiety causing my inner monologue to go crazy. My heart meanwhile is beating like crazy and I’ve broken into sweat thanks to my face having turned crimson.

I walked out of lecture and held my breath until I was out of the crowd but with my luck I was stuck doing the who-walks-where dance with a stranger walking downhill as I made my way up to Gist Hall. This dance would have be much easier to get out of, if my “excuse me” hadn’t been a whisper.

Extroverted friends and family have always teased me for being so awkward but in reality it’s my social anxiety and depression that makes me their opposite, an introvert.

Being so different from friends and colleagues always makes me feel like the odd one out. I admire how they have the ability to go out and make friends everywhere they go meanwhile I have to stutter my way through a sentence when someone asks me a question.

Sure, I have my good days where I find myself out at social events but sadly there are days where I can’t even get out of bed. Those are the days when I find it incredibly hard to breathe and my mind is going into overdrive. I run through every single scenario in my head where I have made a fool out of myself and convince myself I am worthless.

Now I know the saying “I know how you feel” isn’t exactly all that reassuring or used sincerely in today’s world, but I, for one, wrote this piece to pay homage for those who have conquered yet another semester or have made it to graduation with mental health issues.

Being in college and struggling with your mental health isn’t an easy thing. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, has conducted research based on the mental health of college students and showed that “one in four students have a diagnosable [mental] illness and “40 percent [of them] do not seek help.”

Personally, I am not able to cover the cost to meet with my psychologist. I have to struggle with my illnesses alone and deal with it my own way. I’ve had to curse myself out of my seat to give presentations in front of the class or just simply raise my hand to ask for help.

Being sick shouldn’t be how we spend our college years, the time we should be having fun before having to join the “real world.” But somehow we manage and earn our course credits.

So here’s to all the students also cursing themselves out to keep their composure and the ones that made it to their G.E. class that wasn’t offered online. Your inner demons haven’t gotten the best of you and you’ve made it out alive, so take a breath.

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Pinta un bosque y piérdete

by Erika Cardenas

Como quisiera que las cosas fueran distintas,
pero las cosas no cambian de la noche a la mañana, de un día para el otro.
No quiero seguir las reglas de nuestra sociedad
que nosotros los humanos hemos inculcado.

Después de mi experiencia de estudiante,
me di cuenta de que no quisiera empezar una carrera en este instante,
Ni siquiera me conozco lo suficiente para decidir mis próximas palabras...

Quisiera viajar, vivir en otro país,
me ha ayudado vivir en lo más profundo del bosque,
Entre la neblina, la lluvia y los pocos rayos del sol que se filtra entre los árboles.

Aunque he tenido mis enfrentamientos con los árboles gigantescos sobre los rayos del sol,
aquí he apreciado aún más nuestra interconectividad con la naturaleza.

Necesito del O2 que los árboles producen
igual que ellos necesitan mi CO2 que exhalo,

Un día logramos coincidir nuestra respiración,
yo y los árboles gigantescos y todo lo que se encuentra dentro del bosque.

Llenaba mis pulmones de aire y a la vez el bosque parecía inhalar,
imitando mi profundo aliento que había tomado...
Exhale.... y también el bosque deja escapar su aire fresco,

Ya teníamos rato respirando profundamente cuando...
le quise tomar por sorpresa,
y me atreví a interrumpir el ritmo que llevábamos
pero se dio cuenta de mis intenciones.

En ese instante me sentí como cuando era pequeña,
con las manos en la masa,
haciendo una travesurilla.

Y me suelto a carcajadas
revolcándome entre la tierra y el follaje,
con un ataque de risas incontrolables,

este encuentro con el bosque aún me hace retroceder a la infancia despreocupada.....

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Relax, We Made It

The privilege of graduating and the pointless fears of the future

by Aren Fikes

I am a 22 year-old college student who is about to graduate and despite all of my planning ahead, I am scared out of my mind. But I know for a fact that I’m not the only one.

I can’t help but feel the pressures of succeeding in life after college. With no “real” job as of now, how could I afford the lifestyle I currently live? What kind of career do I feel most passionate about pursuing? What city can facilitate my progression best? These kinds of question run through my head most days.

My college experience has taught me that there are obstacles to overcome in adulthood that sometimes I cannot prepare for. Moving from San Diego to the more rural town of Arcata has proven to me that, in the eyes of others and the institution from which I learn, my race and ethnicity matter to those who have never met me. I am just another number; another colored college student to add to some list, or another person to be racially antagonized. My education has taught me that in various ways, I am automatically at a social disadvantage for being a mixed-race minority despite my suburban, middle-class upbringing.

Looking at the bigger picture, there are millions of people out there who do not even have the luxury to feel the particular fears that those of us preparing to graduate may feel. Even in the midst of discrimination, graduating truly is a privilege.

Travel over 7,000 miles across the Pacific to the Philippines and my relatives would tell you that the issues mentioned before are trivial. Here in the states we have an education system that works and the majority of us have roofs over our heads and

meals on the table. That is more than can be said in comparison to a number of regions in the world.

I have not been to my mother’s hometown since I was much younger. Shortly after graduation I plan get back to my roots and travel to the Philippines for my grandmother’s 80th birthday and as a graduation present. Now as an adult, I wonder if my perception of life and what it means to be happy will change. Half of my family still see the lingering effects of natural disasters, a lack of government assistance and poverty on a daily basis. And here I am, wondering how much money I can get for selling my college textbooks and what shoes I should bring on this trip.

In 2013 the typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda, devastated my mother’s coastal hometown of Tacloban City in the province of Leyte. This was one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded. Flooding submerged my uncle’s two story house, and he and my cousins were forced to string a cable to a neighboring building and hoist themselves over in order to reach higher ground. Luckily, my father had remodeled my uncle’s house years prior to make it more weather resistant, but others in the area were not as fortunate.

Homes were gutted as the floods rushed through, the stench of dead bodies and sewage filled the air and outbreaks of violence took place as the looting of stores and businesses meant surviving for a few more days. Over 6,000 lives were lost and nearly four million people were displaced. To this day, many are still recovering.

It is difficult to break the cycle of poverty in certain areas of my motherland. Although metropolitan cities are on the rise, certain provinces are

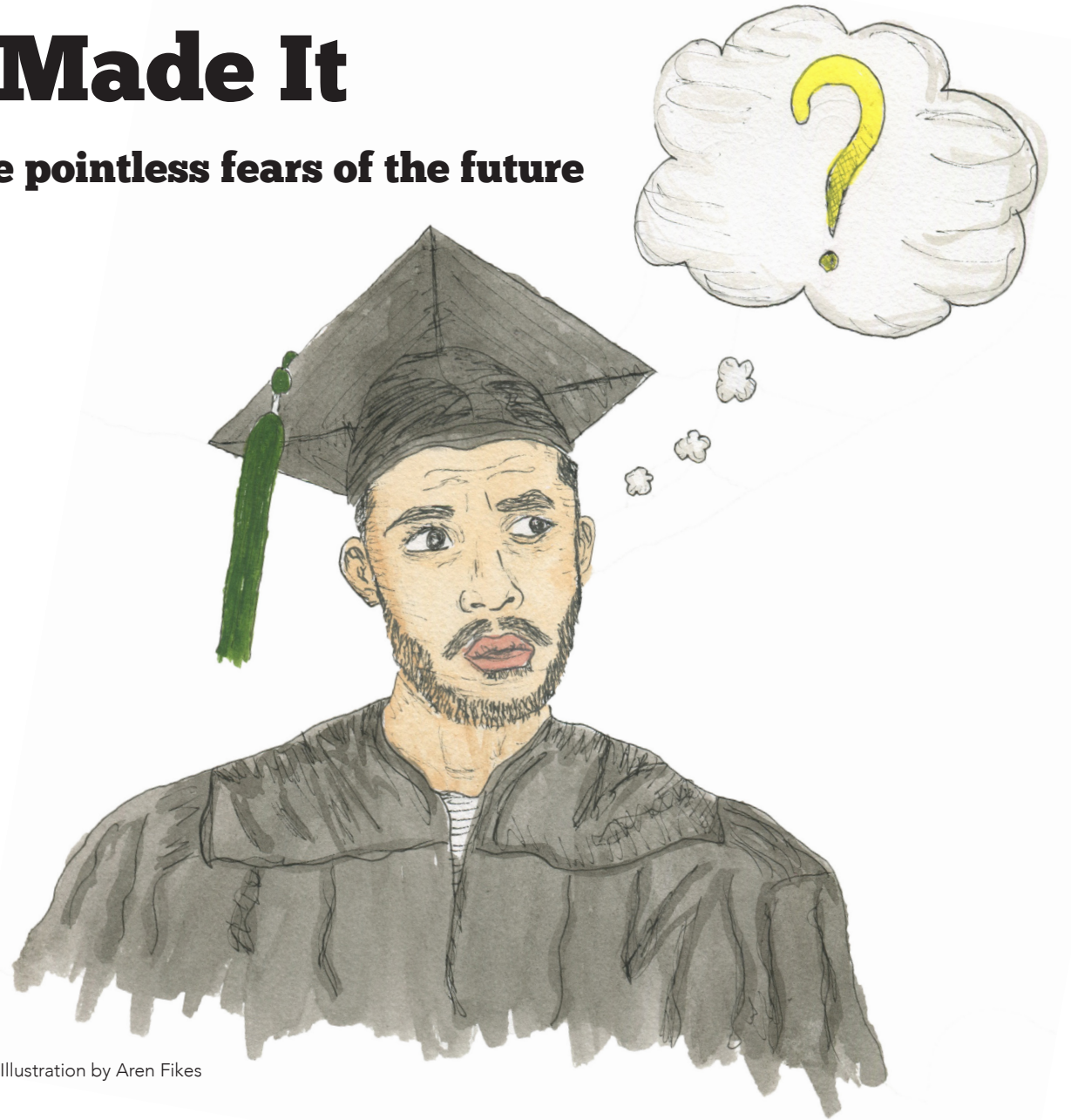


Illustration by Aren Fikes

still developing. The Philippines has one of the highest rates for natural disasters and experiences typhoons more than any other country. They are only increasing in strength and severity as time goes on. Think about this: living off of a daily wage or from paycheck to paycheck only to have your home destroyed by a typhoon or flooding, year after year after consecutive year. This is what a real struggle looks like. However, I am proud to say that my culture has an unparalleled sense of resilience and determination to go on, which I will always admire.

If there is anything that being

Filipino has taught me, it is that we are a positive and appreciative culture that can overcome anything in our path. This is the mentality that I must remember to retain as I step into the real world. Those of us who are graduating have every right to feel anxious about starting the next chapter in our lives, but we must keep in mind that what we have accomplished so far is commendable. I get so caught up thinking about my future that I forget to appreciate what I have now—a college degree, a strong, supportive family and the drive to keep pushing forward. Everything, whether I acknowledge

it or not, is temporary so I should probably slow down, take a breath and stop stressing as much. Life is too short and too unpredictable to be worried all the time.

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Stop Touching My Hair!

by Nick Garcia

No part of my physical appearance is a bigger source of frustration, confusion, or conflicted pride than the tight, curly mass of nappy hair atop my head. My background is Puerto Rican and Mexican but my hair grows in a fashion most often seen in the African American community. This has led to regular speculation about my ambiguous ethnic makeup, summed up by a barber who once told me, “you may not be black, but your hair definitely is.”

When you look at me, my hair is what sticks out. Why? Because it is literally sticking out in an afro. I began letting my hair grow long around the age of 10. It’s a lazier alternative to maintaining a short buzz cut, although it requires more daily maintenance. People ask if I’ve grown it as a joke rooted in irony or if I’m trying to make some sort of statement, but the fact is, it’s simply the way my hair grows and I’ve finally learned to love it.

There are social and racial implications that come with having an afro with which I’ve had trouble coming to terms. How can I proudly wear a traditionally black hairstyle when I identify as Latino? As a kid, comments on my hair were typical, but they were mostly some mix of awe and amusement. Often, though, middle aged and older black men would stop me really intrigued that I let my natural hair grow so long. Back then, I didn’t understand the afro was an established symbol of black

pride in America, that it was used to demand an oppressive society accept a group of people for who they were, or that wearing the hairstyle helped countless people embrace the beauty and strength of their culture after being told for so long that it was somehow less significant.

The reality of an afro is impossibly foreign to some people and, over the years, I’ve endured the same line of hair-based questioning more times than I can count, so let’s get some of that out of the way here. Can you touch it? Please, just ask (more on that later). Do I have to comb it?/ What do I use to comb it? Yes, and a pick. Does it get wet? Of course it gets wet, it’s hair. The list goes on, but what’s really frustrating about these questions is that if you have hair, you could likely answer them by thinking about what happens to your own.

“Can I touch your hair?” is easily the most frequent question I get about my afro. Generally, I will begrudgingly say yes and allow your probably grimy mitts to pat my head a little bit. But, I’ve found everybody has a different idea of what constitutes a touch. It ranges from a single finger poke to both hands working through my hair as if they were kneading bread dough. It’s just regular hair, but some people reach in like they’re expecting to pull a rabbit out. Even this, I will generally put up with. But, it’s not uncommon for someone to just come up and lay a hand on my hair unprompted. Aside from it being rude, I find it kind of gross.



Photo illustration by Sam Armanino

It could just be me, but I don’t understand the appeal of running your hands all through a stranger’s hair. I don’t know where your hands have been, and you don’t know where my head’s been.

When I air my grievances about this subject, I get asked, “So, why don’t you just cut it all off?” I have, but I keep letting it grow back because most of what I don’t like about my hair is external. What I mean

is the most bothersome parts come from others: other people messing with it, other people asking incessant questions. I shouldn’t be compelled to change my appearance because some part of it is foreign or exotic to others, especially when it’s only natural.

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To the Class of 2016

by Amanda Walker

Dear Grad,

No destination will be too far
And no mountain will be too steep
For you have walked a very long road
To get to where you are
And life is way too short
To let all your dreams just sleep.

None of your ambitions will be small
Nor your efforts, paper thin
For you have crossed many of life’s rivers
To reach for them all
And to have such courage as yours
Can be hard to find within.

May the embers in your soul
Always continue burning bright
Whenever you do something you love
For your plans will be your light
To finding the answers in your heart
Of the things that make you whole.
By: Amanda Walker

Congratulations HSU students of 2016!

Amanda Walker can be reached at el-lenador@humboldt.edu

“Be Home by 12”

The truth about going home for the summer

by Monica Ramirez

Can I be awake at 2 a.m. and cut myself a slice of cheesecake? Can I go into the living room at 3 a.m. and strike up a conversation about our current political state and go over how racial injustice happens across our institution and the world? Will I be up at 5 a.m. pulling my hair out because I have a four page paper due by 8am and I’m only on page two?

The sad yet beautiful answer to these questions is no. My parents are in bed by 9 p.m. so any movement or sound other than the grinding of my sister’s teeth and my dogs finding yet another spot on the ground to sleep are acceptable. Going home is another freedom with just as many sacrifices as going to college.

For those that are going back after their first year of college, good luck and have fun but realize that three months is a lot longer than winter break, so around mid-July you may even be wishing for the new semester to start. It’s great to be home and spend time with family and friends but sometimes you have to deal with the fact that family and friends may be picking out every single thing you do differently.

You have to begin to accept the fact that you are a completely different person than when you first passed the gates to Humboldt State. You now have opinions about politics or the environment and people back home will say ‘why are you so angry and opinionated?’ or the worst one, ‘wow, you think you’re smarter than us now that you go to university?’ and even if you try to explain your right to your opinion, you just get tossed off like any other passing conversation.

However, despite these annoying conversations you may have to deal with, there are plenty positive moments in the summer because it is the summer. You no longer have to make food for yourself or depend on The J because you have home cooked meals waiting for you. Your friends might be waiting to hang out with you and you can do it all without having that annoying feeling of having an essay to write or an exam to study for.

Overall, the summer is full of moments that you will either never forget or never want to remember, just like college is. Enjoy each day and don’t think too far into the future, wherever you are in the following semester has nothing to do with how well you can spend the summer next week. You can go out for dinner at 8 p.m. with friends, enjoy a cheesy conversation about high school at 10 p.m., but be home by 12 p.m., house rules.

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El Leñador staff spring 2016.

Editorial

Dear readers,

It’s over. Well, not exactly. This will be my final issue as Editor in Chief and comes the ending of a special part of my life. I come from an East Los Angeles suburb and grew up surrounded by a 95% Latino population. Like most students from Southern California coming to Humboldt State wasn’t easy. I had to adjust and more importantly I had to figure out who I was here. Being involved in the school newspaper brought amazing opportunities and people into my life that influenced me in ways I could never imagine. For the past two semesters I’ve had the honor of leading a bilingual newspaper in an underrepresented area that needed a platform to be heard. I’ve met protestors, musicians, painters, activists and more importantly people in the Humboldt community that never had a voice. Their stories will stick with me forever and hope my time getting to know them, whether it be a one minute interview or a three mile march in Eureka, made an impression on their lives as much as they did on mine. They all had a story, just like me and wanted to be heard beyond their communities. There are stories everywhere waiting to be told, whether it’s the quiet kid in the back of the class who plays the accordion just waiting for someone to listen or the lady who sells raspados on a cart but is doing everything she can to support her three children. These people are everywhere and their stories need to be told, they just need someone to listen. I still don’t know who I am today but I have an idea of what I want to do in life. Whether that be interviewing in the back of a pickup truck or doing a profile on the next Santana, I want to give a voice to the underrepresented. We are all capable of making a difference in this world, big or small we can make changes. I choose to use the small time I have on this earth wisely, whether that be telling my story or even yours.

La Lucha Sigue!

Sincerely,
Javier Rojas
Editor in Chief
El Leñador

Corrections April 2016:
Erika Cardenas was the translator for the story Indocumentados en el condado de Humboldt hoy.