

HSU PLANS LIMITED IN PERSON GRADUATION WITH ONLINE AUDIENCE

by Ian Vargas

HSU plans on holding in-person commencement ceremonies for the class of 2021 through a two day event that will have three ceremonies, one for each college.

Graduating HSU student Shira Kershner, is excited to get her diploma in person.

“I was thrilled to see that Humboldt State will be holding a student-only, in-person commencement ceremony this year,” Kershner said. “Although I wish my family could be there to cheer me on, it offers us all a chance to get some closure and to experience what it’s like to walk across the stage and receive a diploma. With the pandemic I didn’t expect to have any sort of in-person ceremony, and this is much better than nothing.”

While the school is opening up more in person activities, a lot of classes will remain closed or limited in order to stick to state and county guidelines. Both the commencement ceremony and the upcoming in person classes will require face masks, social distancing, and recommended self wellness checks.

While COVID-19 still remains a large concern, Kristen Gould, commencement coordinator and the director of marketing at HSU, says that the school has taken significant steps to limit the possibility of any infection.

SEE GRADUATION • PAGE 5



A student points off to someone in the crowd at the 2019 graduation ceremony while graduates from the College of Natural Resources and Sciences settle in on May 18, 2019 at the Redwood Bowl. | Photo by Thomas Lal

Pandemic pushes female faculty out of the workforce

COVID-19 has disproportionally impacted female faculty



by Poppy Cartledge

The pandemic has pressed the need for more gender specific policies within universities as data from HSU reveals that female faculty have been disproportionately affected by the lack of accommodation for unpaid caregiving responsibilities.

According to HSU’s data for fall 2020, 52% of faculty on campus are lecturers and of that percentage, 61% are women. Female faculty at HSU are no exception to being disproportionately impacted by the lack of COVID relief, as well as the ongoing budget cuts.

Nicola Walters is a lecturer in the Politics Department at Humboldt State

and a member of the Humboldt chapter of the California Faculty Association. She said that following the CFA State-wide’s COVID-19 Relief Town Hall in February, the CFA finally received data from the CSU on COVID-19 leave use.

“Only 2% of faculty were granted COVID-related relief from CSU administrators,” Walters said.

Walters also said that the reasoning behind why female employees in universities are being significantly affected is because parenting and elder care responsibilities fall disproportionately to women and people of color. So, the CSU administrators rejecting COVID-19 re-

“I don’t believe much will come with this awareness unless action is done.”

-Chelsea Rios, fiscal coordinator for the Women’s Resource Center

lief creates a gender equity gap. According to a study released in December to the Lancet Journal, there has been a significant drop in women authorship in research fields and an increase in male authorship since the pandemic began. The study also said

SEE WORKFORCE • PAGE 5

Index L&A.....3&4 News.....5 Sports.....6 Opinion.....7	Zoom Theatre pg 3	Outside Choir pg 4	Associated Students pg 5	Letter to the Editor pg 7
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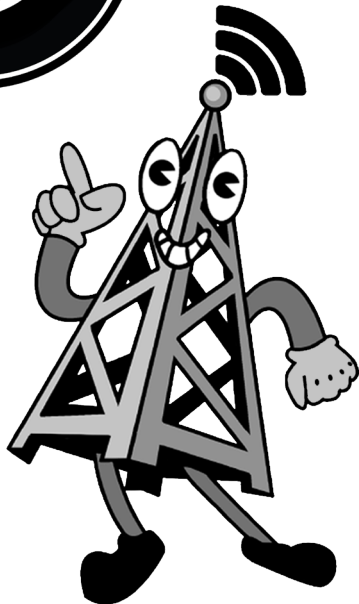
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HSU’s department of theatre, film and dance presents “Curtain Up”

A production in cooperation with Dell’Arte International School of Physical Theatre

by Whitney McCoy

On Friday, April 2 at 8 pm, the first play of two commenced as HSU students within the Theatre, Film and Dance Department presented via Zoom their own new-aged rendition of “The Living Newspaper.” With topics including the unexpected effects of gender-reveal parties, relationships with virtual friends and robots during the time of COVID-19, the erasure and silencing of marginalized voices, and more. The second play will be streamed on Friday, April 16 at 8 pm.

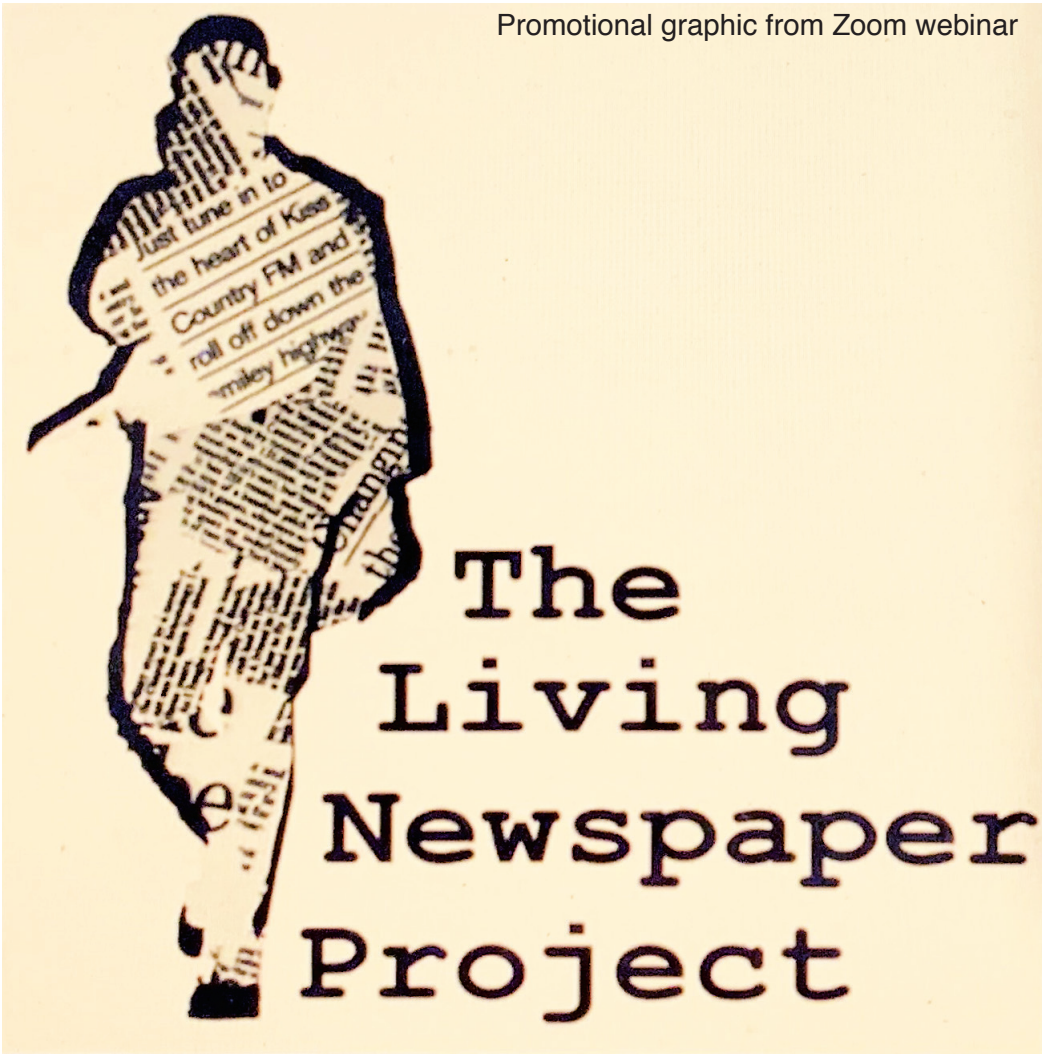
Michael Thomas, lecturer, publicist and production manager for the department of theatre, film and dance at HSU describes what a living newspaper is and where the theme originated from.

“Living Newspaper is a type of theatre that presents plays about current events,” Thomas said. “This idea was created during the Great Depression, in the 1930’s, by a government production called the Works Progress Administration. The idea was to give jobs to the people.”

Thomas further spoke upon the validity within this type of play and the importance of accurately presenting current news and events to the public.

“In the past they did shows on things that were bothering people at the moment: housing situations, lack of housing, slum housing, the lack of electricity, how some people have electricity, some don’t, they did shows on contaminated water supply and social-political conditions,” Thomas said. “They researched all the facts and put it in the plays. It’s all very factual-based. That was very important to them. They wanted people to be able to depend on this. Current events of the day put on stage — people loved it!”

This production is featuring a part-



nership with three directors from Dell’Arte: Michael Fields, Carlos Gallegos and Elizabeth Colón Nelson.

Michael Fields, founding member and producing artistic director of the Dell’Arte Company, and director of the California State Summer School for the Arts explained the intent of this project in a press release last week.

“These pieces will be ‘devised’, that is, created collectively as an ensemble in a short time with a specific intent,” Fields said. “It will give voice to this generation at HSU. It is an opportunity to experience something that has not been done before with new voices.”

Both shows are created, performed

and stage-managed by HSU students alongside dramaturg, producer and associate professor, Dr. Troy Lescher. They will be available to stream after their opening performances.

Dr. Lescher shared his excitement for the production in last week’s press release.

“[This is] such an exciting project-based learning experience,” Dr. Lescher said. “This project and collaboration with Dell’Arte engages students in creative processes that diverge from our usual approaches and encourages students to reimagine how they can participate within and serve the ensemble.”

Video games bring sorority closer together

Students were able to find a blink of hope from video games

by Kiera Price

As soon as the pandemic hit, many Humboldt State University students were cut off from the world. With isolation and stay-at-home orders increasing, staying connected to the community was often challenging. However, students were able to find a glimmer of hope for it seemed as if video games brought them closer than ever before.

In order to stay connected, many sisters from Delta Phi Epsilon, a sorority on Humboldt State’s campus, had turned to video games as a way to bond and still be in touch with sisters during extremely tough times. Sorority sister Krystal Padilla had a particular love of Animal Crossing.

“I played Animal Crossing New Horizons with some of my sisters and we even made a group chat, it was nice,” Padilla said. “During the pandemic, I would just eat and sleep but playing with sisters helped me calmed down and reminded me why I loved playing video games in the first place.”

Padilla even named her island Opal which was her nickname in the sorority.

Fellow sister Tabitha Page was able to also share her experience about how the pandemic brought her closer to sisters and reminded her of her love for video games.

“Since classes take up less time, I can sometimes hop on and play on my Switch more than I could before,” Page said. “Animal Crossing had a big impact on the first few months of COVID and I was able to stay connected with some of my sisters.”

Page named her island after Lofoten, Norway, a place she hopes to visit one day. She also enjoys playing The Legend of Zelda on her Nintendo Switch.

“Similar to Animal Crossing, my older brother was really into video games, so I saw him playing Legend of Zelda



and I wanted to play too,” Page said.

Meghan Burket, another sister from Delta Phi Epsilon, also shared her experience about how video games helped her get through this pandemic.

“I started playing Animal Crossing New Horizon from the day it came out, it was something great to play with during quarantine and helped a lot with my motivation,” Burket said.



Survivor’s Guilt

Dear Evergreen, I’ve lost a year of my life to COVID. But I know others have it worse. Am I still allowed to complain?

Dear reader, I know your pain. I know I’m lucky to have survived this pandemic unscathed (so far), so a part of me feels guilty for hating my circumstances. Why do I have the right to feel so horrible when others feel worse? If you have these nagging feelings of guilt as well, remember that all wounds, no matter how severe, deserve treatment. If there are enough bandages, a cut deserves treatment even if someone else lost their arm.

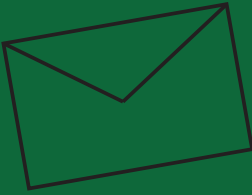
You have the right to demand change. The forces that made your life terrible for a year are the same forces that made someone else’s life even worse. So long as you complain in the right direction, your voice can amplify the voices of people who lost even more than you.

But even beyond that, don’t discount your own experiences. If only the person with the worst situation is allowed to complain, only one person with outlandishly cruel circumstances can speak. Your pain represents a pain that affects almost everyone. You’re one member a group of people that needs to advocate for themselves, not just an individual with a grievance.

Pain isn’t a quantifiable substance. We can’t just weigh it on a scale. You deserve to not be in pain. Not only should you acknowledge it, you should complain about it.

Instead of dividing ourselves into stratifications based on our level of pain, we should be acknowledging our shared experiences. We should turn our collective experiences against the institutions that caused this pandemic to be as terrible as it was. Instead of arguing about who felt the worst, we need to make sure no one has to argue about who had the worst pandemic pain again.

Complain about economic systems. Complain about healthcare. Complain about housing. Complain about inequality. You deserve to express your pain. You lost a year that you’ll never get back. Be angry. You’ll find others who feel the same.



Send questions to:
contactthejack@gmail.com

The trees are alive with the sound of music

University Singers choir class is now having in-person instruction three times a week outside

Story by Becca Laurenson
and photos by Thomas Lal

Rachel Samet is holding her choir class outside in the Redwood Bowl. The class is split up into eight students groups three times per week to meet up and sing. The class also broadcasts on Zoom for those not scheduled for the in-person choir class or not local.

Pablo Murcia, a music education major, is one of the students attending this class. He has thoroughly enjoyed the class and learning from the professor. It has been better than the alternative, strictly online through Zoom. The students practice all sorts of types of music and songs.

“There is a soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and we sing a variety of music,”

Murcia said. “We sing renaissance type music, we sing contemporary pieces, and mostly acapella.”

By singing outside while following COVID-19 guidelines, the students get the normal experience from before the pandemic. Doing it through Zoom left out that feeling.

“The way we’ve been doing it is through Zoom and we are all muted and our teacher takes us through all the different parts and warms us up,” Murcia said. “It’s been weird doing it over Zoom because, in a choir, you want to be able to hear the other singers.”

Now the students can hear and sing together in a more choral style as opposed to online video recordings. Soprano Dulcie Feinstein, a vocal performance major at HSU, has been with the group and class for four semesters and is a teacher’s assistant. Feinstein also had difficulty with choir and music

classes over Zoom.

“We started this semester just on-line,” Feinstein said. “It’s hard to know what we are doing or how we sound. It’s hard to unify those voices.”

Now, later into the semester, the class meets three times a week outside and the rest of the week online. Now that it is partially in person, Feinstein finds it motivating.

“Obviously one of the pros is just to be able to do it in general, and I can already see so many improvements,” Feinstein said. “Just being in person the first day it was like wow. It’s crazy how much we have forgotten how to be a choir.”

Emily Morse, a music education major at HSU, is another soprano in the group. Morse has taken the class before and has enjoyed it so much to continue through the pandemic.

“I love being in class with Rachel

Samet, she is the best choir teacher that I’ve ever had and she has helped me improve my voice,” Morse said. “It’s kind of like a little family.”

Morse was also excited about being able to be outside while singing but it is different compared to when the choir sang in the recital hall on campus.

“Rachel has kept it pretty much the same. It’s just the fact that only eight of us can sing at a time, it kind of sucks,” Morse said. “At least we get the in-person experience to how we were before.”

Morse also enjoys the idea of singing outside in nature since the choir class is being held in the Redwood Bowl.

“It’s nice actually to sing outside, especially when the weather is nice because we didn’t get to do that before COVID hit,” Morse said. “I feel like music and nature are connected so it’s nice to be able to sing with the trees, as silly as that may sound.”



The MUS 106B University Singers class meets in Redwood Bowl outdoors while maintaining proper social distance with roughly half off the class attending virtually on a laptop used by Professor Rachel Samet on April 5, 2021. The class meets three times a week with rotating sections coming for in-person instruction.



Humboldt State Professor Rachel Samet plays the piano as she walks her MUS 106B University Singers class through vocal warm-ups in the morning outside in the Redwood Bowl arena on the HSU campus.



Emily Morse takes a moment to sit on the track while singing in the University Singers class outdoors at Redwood Bowl in the morning.



Students in the MUS 106B University Singers class go through vocal warm-ups in the morning outside in the Redwood Bowl arena on the HSU campus.



Jenna Lynn sings as part of the soprano section during the University Singers class as they hold class outdoors at Redwood Bowl. Singers masks which are specifically designed for use by singers, were supplied by Professor Rachel Samet for students. The masks are much wider than normal ones which allow the students to have more space while singing.



Humboldt State Professor Rachel Samet plays the piano as she walks her MUS 106B University Singers class through vocal warm-ups in the morning outside in the Redwood Bowl arena on the HSU campus.

The 2021 Associated Students elections are underway

Current AS President and Vice President speak about their time in office and provide some information about the election

by Poppy Cartledge

HSU students can vote for their 2021-2022 AS officers online on April 12 through April 16.

Even though the last date to appear on the ballot was March 29, students can still register to be a write-in up until April 8.

Casey Park, AS board coordinator and AS elections committee advisor, said that there are currently six fully filed candidates on the ballot who are running for five positions, and the president position is the only one right now that is being contested.

“We have 10 elected positions that are available for students to file to be a write-in candidate for,” Park said. “This week, we will be having a debate for the president candidates and discussions between pairs of our other candidates.”

The current AS President, Jeremiah Finley, is up for re-election and believes that he has a chance to continue advocating for students on campus.

“In leading the AS Board of Directors and the student body at HSU this year, I have had to challenge and probe more intentionally as the student voice needed to be introduced into spaces that it hadn’t been in before,” Finley said.

Being a part of the student government during the pandemic year of 2020, the AS board members had to face unforeseen challenges. However,

it allowed Finley to find support in places where he hadn’t thought to look and created relationships with campus partners that were previously unobtainable like with the other AS Presidents in the CSU system.

AS Vice President Malluli Cuéllar is grateful for the opportunity to experience taking part in the election process before COVID-19, as well as being a part of guiding her peers through the virtual transition.

“It definitely felt unfamiliar, but having to adapt to virtual elections allowed candidates to explore innovative ways of campaigning,” Cuéllar said.

She said that although she may have been the first VP to spend her whole elected year virtually chairing meetings, she is likely not going to be the last. Cuéllar looks forward to passing off all of the knowledge and tips that have helped her during her time as VP.

Cuéllar is especially appreciative of her time with AS and feels like it built her up and she has emerged as a confident and empowered leader ready to navigate any spaces she enters knowing that she can contribute in meaningful ways.

“The most beneficial part of being a part of the student government from my perspective is knowing that in every space I walk into, when repping the student body, I have about 5,000 students behind me,” Finley said.



Photos courtesy of HSU.
Top: AS Vice President Malluli Cuéllar. Bottom: AS President Jeremiah Finley (second from left).

GRADUATION

FROM PAGE 1

“All plans for commencement ceremonies are based on state guidelines for commencement in addition to our own stringent measures to keep our students, and any employee who may need to support the event, as safe as possible,” Gould said. “Those steps include limiting the number of people in the Bowl, spreading out multiple ceremonies over two days, and making sure that students wear masks and stay physically distanced.”

The school’s lockdown has been loosening gradually as more and more vaccines are available and the county returns to the red tier. Humboldt County has had a very low number of cases and has remained relatively isolated from the bigger surges that are



Family and friends pack the bleachers at Redwood Bowl as they file in with umbrellas to watch students graduate from the College of Liberal Arts on May 18, 2019. | Photo by Thomas Lal

seen in other parts of the country.

According to Cris Koczera, the interim director of risk management and safety services at HSU, despite the loosening of restrictions, the school is still proceeding with caution to avoid a possible rise in infections.

“While we’re all excited for the return of in-person commencement ceremonies, most events are canceled at least through the summer,” Koczera said. “Of course that could change, depending on many factors, and the university continually revisits and occasionally adjusts its operational plans based on what’s safest and what makes most sense for our campus community in consultation with Humboldt County Public Health.”

While plenty of students are still remaining cautious, a lack of any kind of normal college experience has been draining for many. The move to hold an in-person commencement ceremony is a return to some sort of normalcy during a stressful semester.

WORKFORCE

FROM PAGE 1

that the unexpected day care, school, and workplace closures exacerbated many of the well documented challenges women in academia face already during non-pandemic times.

Meghan O’Donnell, CFA associate vice president of Lecturers for the North, said that faculty within the CSU are expected to meet standards

set by their university’s reappointment, tenure, and promotion policies each year.

“There’s been many professors who have been stuck with caregiving and parenting responsibilities during COVID and have just been totally unable to do the required research and publications, as well as attend conferences and engage in professional development,” O’Donnell said.

She mentions that although there are many men who also take on primary caregiving responsibilities, the majority are women, particularly women of color.

O’Donnell said that with the issues of racism and gender inequality, institutions and businesses have notoriously created policies and practices that are gender-neutral and race-neutral. The reality is that by doing this, it actually harms those populations, it doesn’t support those populations.

“I think one of the solutions is to really focus on creating policies that support women, particularly women of color in academia,” O’Donnell said.

Another solution O’Donnell suggests for institutions to help their female faculty is to provide accessibility to paid leave and support, as well as

being flexible with accommodations. She said that the recognition of unique needs is important.

Chelsea Rios, fiscal coordinator for the Women’s Resource Center at HSU, is not surprised that women, especially women of color, have to prove their existence yet again in male dominated spaces, but wants more for women than to simply be recognized.

“The pandemic highlighted how disproportionately women are accounted for in the workplace, but at the same time, I don’t believe much will come with this awareness unless action is done,” Rios said.

Would you like to contribute to The Lumberjack?

There’s more going on in our community than a small group of student writers could ever hope to cover. If you’re a member of the student body we serve, you have a valuable perspective that we’d like to help you share.



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Humboldt softball goes on a seven game tear to start the season

The Jacks’ hot bats and solid pitching have carried the team to an early 7-1 record

by Justin Celotto

Humboldt State Softball is off to a great start, winning seven straight games after dropping their first of the season against Montana State University Billings on March 27. While on this winning streak the Jacks’ offense has been on fire, scoring no lower than four runs a game. Senior second baseman Danica Grier leads the Jacks with 4 home runs with 12 RBI’s.

The defense has also done their part allowing an average of three runs from the opposing teams while on the seven game win streak. Starting pitcher Karen Di Dio has held down the bullpen with 4 wins and an ERA of 2.33 to her name.

Emily McAdams, a transfer from Oregon Tech and starting pitcher for the Jacks, recorded her first win against MSU Billings on March 28. McAdams has held an ERA of 3.85 through her 3-1 record. McAdams’ transition from Oregon Tech to Humboldt state has not been seamless, but she looks forward to her time with the Jacks.

“The transition from my [junior college] to Oregon Tech and then to here was interesting to say the least,” McAdams wrote in a Humboldt State softball

blog post on the HSU athletics website. “It came with lots of adjustments and I had to overcome a lot. After leaving my Juco I kind of got a wake-up call and had to figure out how to do things on my own softball wise. I no longer had someone right next to me for every bullpen I threw, helping me figure out what needed to be fixed.”

Junior outfielder Jenna Sobrero has played great as of late. Sobrero has 3 RBI’s and an OBP of .348. Sobrero has been a star on the defense as well with 15 putouts on the young season. While being a standout on the field Sobrero has also had to juggle school with her play.

“It has been extremely hectic but with the help of Coach Fox and my teammates I am able to have a better focus on my academics,” Sobrero wrote on the HSU athletics website. “I try to utilize the days off and our study hall hours to turn in homework.”

Freshman shortstop Vanessa Saltos has started off her first collegiate campaign strong with a home run in just her second game. Saltos couldn’t contain her excitement after hitting the home run.

“ It was almost like I was re-experiencing the moment I hit my first ever



Photo by Thomas Lal
Humboldt State outfielder Katelyn Dendas makes contact with a pitch during the Lumberjacks game against Sonoma State on Feb. 28, 2020 at HSU Softball Field.

home run,” Saltos wrote. “What made the moment extra special was just seeing how excited my team was for me. They were jumping up and down and cheering. It will be a moment I will forever cherish!”

Since the home run Saltos has seemed unstoppable with a batting average of .500 and 7 hits. However, Saltos’ transition into college from high school could have been the biggest hurdle if it were not for her friends and family.

“What helped with the transition was having my teammates to turn to,” Saltos wrote. “I am living on campus with the freshman class and it helps because we are all going through this new experience together. Then we are also able to turn to the upperclassmen for advice and guidance because they have been in our shoes before.”

The Jacks will aim to continue their hot start as they wrap up their road trip with a five game series at Central Washington University.



SOFTBALL

HUMBOLDT STATE VS SAINT MARTIN’S

APRIL 6

	1	2	3	4	5	6	FINAL
HSU (7-1)	2	3	3	1	0	3	12
SMU (10-12)	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
			HSU (7-1)		SMU (10-12)		
HITS			13		7		
ERRORS			1		2		
HOMERUNS			3		0		
STOLEN BASES			6		0		
PITCHERS							
WIN				LOSS			
#23 KAREN DI DIO				#14 LEXI CARLOS			

Letter from Associated Students President Jeremiah Finley

by Jeremiah Finley

Often times elections bring new ideas, new hope for every side of the political spectrum or group you are a part of and as we, 2020-2021 Associated Students Board of Directors, approach the horizon of our end of session it's important to take a step back and reflect on some of our accomplishments, challenges, and experience navigating the already turbulent scene of university politics. Let's not forget that famous line of "in the middle of a pandemic."

We started the fall term by creating our yearly priorities, which are: **ACCESSIBILITY TO STUDENT RESOURCES & EDUCATIONAL NEEDS** with the goal being for colleges to provide more research and professional development opportunities that are easily accessed by students through increased communication and up-to-date online presence. Our next priority being **AMPLIFYING STUDENT VOICES** having our mission outcomes to be creating a feedback form for asynchronous feedback with a button on the AS website. Design social media policy that expands public comment to our official platforms. Finally, **TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, ENGAGEMENT** with our goal being to create measurables for AS funding, for instance post-grant surveys and monthly financial reviews. Extend the time allowed for appeals in the budgetary process. Develop and provide more training and information

on the AS website. And I'm happy to say that we have made enormous strides in each area. We have been able to hold multiple student resources forums gathering feedback from students. We are utilizing our social media to receive information and communicate with students on a number of hot topics. We have initiated ongoing professional development and are making plans to ensure that all AS employees are fully trained and equipped with the support they need to help improve the student experience. And we are promoting other professional development opportunities that are occurring within each college. All while ensuring that our staff members are recording this data to furnish the incoming Board with ample support.

The 2020-2021 AS Board of Directors, like many before it, began new things that will leave a blueprint for the next Board to potentially follow. The most notable of those changes are working through our academic breaks. COVID-19 has enabled the Board to be across the town, state, and at times the nation, and still meet whereas before we all had to be in the same room for business to get done. In seeing this and working with the Board Chair, Malluli Cuellar, we developed a summer meeting scheduled that was approved to come forward for a vote and it passed unanimously. During this summer period we were able to appoint a full board before September, pass resolutions in direct response from student calls such as: A Resolution to Call for the Restructuring of the

University Police Department, An Act to Formalize the Associated Students Social Justice and Equity Committee, Resolution to support the former Hilltop Marketplace be designated as a Food Sovereignty Lab and Cultural Workspace, Resolution In Support of the student voices that initiated the Change.org petition titled, "Expel 2 Racist Students", A Resolution In Support of the Creation of a One-Unit Academic Course Fulfilling the F-1 Visa Requirements, An Act to Update the AS Fiscal Code, and A Proclamation titled Associated Students In Solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Over Winter break, we encountered issues around the University Center, so AS leadership engaged where it was thought necessary to challenge and probe our Administration to shed the light of transparency onto what seemed like a murky scenario. As we approached spring break we ensured that students were informed of our plans to re-establish core programs which are in essence central services that AS provides to students and we responded to their needs and have altered our plan based on student feedback.

During the regular academic session we have been able to pass many resolutions and internal legislative pieces such as: A proclamation titled Associated Students to Affirm Student Voices at HSU, Resolution to Create Long-Term Nutrition Alternatives, An Act to Alter the Method of Legislation & Resolution, An Act to Create a Staff Compensation Review

Policy, Resolution in Support of SQE Demands, and a Resolution to Support Trans Lives & Prosperity. Still, there are many more resolutions in the pipeline and we hope to get as much done as possible before our transition on May 7th. We have also had the opportunity to be the first Board of Directors to update the campus community in the University Senate on our yearly goals, progress made, and make a call for candidates for our elections. Additionally, we were able to bring an update to some of the student staff in housing and residence life.

Now, only a week or so away from our potential successors being elected, and in reflection of this past year, I, like many of my board members, would say, are grateful to have advocated for all students here at HSU. While we have had to challenge more than our predecessors, we were still able to collaborate with our campus partners, providing feedback on multiple space recommendations, funding opportunities, campus initiatives like the recent work with the HSU Strategic Planning Committee and now the Polytechnic self study. There will be multiple opportunities for people to get involved next year, through board positions and though committees, so if you're interested, and want to make an impact come to our AS website and check out all the amazing resources your student government has to offer or bring to our attention what you want to have offered.

OPINION

There's no place like home

by Dakota Cox

The best memories in life involve the people we love most. With the passage of time, simple occasions become extraordinary through the tint of our rose colored goggles. All too often, we fail to appreciate the blessings in our lives until we no longer have them.

Celebrating Easter with my family on my grandmother's lawn, on the cliff overlooking the ocean, I think to myself: "what could possibly be better than this?" But we all have our own idea of happiness.

When I was a freshman in college, I woke up one day to tragic news. The family loaded up in the car and we drove two and a half hours from our house in Etnersburg to pick up my grandmother in Ukiah. Then, we drove back, past our home, to Whale Gulch, where she lived.

When she was in her twenties, my grandmother moved from the city to Humboldt County, bought a house, and gradually added to it in the years to come. For more than half of her life, she lived off the land, harnessing energy from the sun, growing vegetables in the garden and pumping water from a well. Then, in an instant, it evaporated in a cloud of smoke.

I didn't really believe it until I saw it for myself. All that was left of a lifetime of meticulously collected and maintained possession was a smouldering heap of ash, shattered glass and unidentifiable tokens of the past. For hours, we watched helplessly, as the smoke continued to rise from the ground. Then, the sun disappeared behind the trees and we drove back to Etnersburg in silence.

For nearly two years, my grandmother struggled to motivate herself to research the values and put together a list of everything she lost in the fire, for the insurance company. For nearly two years, she focused all of her energy on a project that constantly reminded her of the loss she suffered – she no longer had a home. For nearly two years, she wasn't the same joyful grandmother I



Syreeta Cox takes in the aftermath of her former home on April 3, three years after it burned to the ground.

Photo by Dakota Cox

grew up with.

Time passed and my grandmother eventually found a new home in Shelter Cove, on the cliff overlooking the ocean. Out of the woods, she no longer has to be concerned with collecting her own water and power. Her new house is not as large, but more than makes up for that fact in elegance. Despite the breathtaking view, however, the land is drastically smaller and less private. The property is amazing, but it's not home.

Since beginning college, I've lived in five different locations. The place I currently call home is a roomy apartment, centrally located between nature and society, and only a brisk walk away from campus (if it were open). I love where I live, but it's not home. My

home is up the street from my grandmother's house in Shelter Cove, where I spent the formative years of my youth riding bikes and playing Pokémon.

Standing now on the ground where my grandmother's home used to be, weeds have begun to take over, but evidence of the destruction that took place here clearly remains. All I can see, however, is the house where I spent countless hours shooting baskets on my Nerf hoop and riding my big wheel down the driveway. I see the table where we played board games, cards or dominoes each time I would visit. I see the couch where we rewatched the same dozen Disney movies a million times and where my grandmother read me bedtime stories from the Clifford the

Big Red Dog collection. I see the outdoor bathtub where I would play with my collection of rubber pirate toys. I see the room my grandmother set aside for me when my mom threw me out of the house.

Nearly three years have passed, since I or anyone else stepped foot inside my grandmother's home. Just because it's gone, however, doesn't mean that it no longer exists. Home is much more than just a destination on a map. Home is an inescapable connection you share with an environment and its inhabitants – for better or worse. Though there may come a time when you cannot physically return, home will always live on within you and those you've shared it with.

An emotional support animal saved my life

Trigger Warning: Eating disorder, suicide, mental health

by Elise Fero

I have never experienced a so-called “normal” life. I’ve never experienced a brain that wasn’t plagued by anxiety and lacking the proper chemicals to make me entirely happy. I did experience mocking of my mental illnesses. I did experience doctors who didn’t believe me.

I remember one doctor telling me “you don’t look like you’d be mentally ill” when I first reached out for help. How does one even “look” mentally ill?

I never experienced truly fitting in with other people. I couldn’t maintain friendships with many. I only really had one person who consistently understood my brain. But I did feel connected to nature and to animals.

I grew up with dogs and cats, and always the occasional fish, hamster, or currently, a tree frog. Days of mental hardships always led me to them. I would hold my pets close to me when I felt alone.

I felt afraid of the world often. It scared me. But not as much as my own brain. I became suicidal. I developed body dysmorphia. I struggled from multiple mental disorders. I tried medications and therapy, but sometimes those things didn’t work.

My two consistent forms of support were my best friend and my pets. When my head was shaking and the world screamed at me, my dog Peanut would sit with me and lick my tears away— a comfort I couldn’t attain from people, a connection that was completely made of love and support, held together with no judgement or hate.

I moved over 1,000 miles away from everyone I knew to start fresh, away from every person who had ever hurt me and every fear I had in my old town. But this also meant the support of my pets was left behind as well. I felt more alone than I ever had.

I knew I needed an animal in my life, other than my tree frog, who doesn’t provide the same connection that a dog or cat would. I spoke with people I knew who have mental illnesses and it came to my attention that I could get an emotional support animal. It would give me a reason to wake up, a reason to go outside and a reason to stay alive.

I felt hopeful, yet hopeless. Was I



Winnie Fig Georgia poses for a Spring Photo Shoot on Feb. 28. No poisonous daisies were consumed by Winnie.

even ill enough to deserve this form of help?

I began the process of adopting an ESA, afraid that if it fell through my loneliness would only grow worse and that my nightmare of mental health would continue— not that a single animal would solve all my problems, but it would absolutely help.

I began meeting cats and kittens, hoping I’d find one that I felt a connection with. It took a few weeks before I met her. She was alone in the shelter in a little room and immediately greeted me as I walked in. Her sweet brilliant blue eyes gazed up at me with hope that she’d finally be going home after being a stray and now a shelter cat.

Her name was Georgia, likely named after Curious George, because she is immensely curious about everything. She

had a unique look, calico and siamese with polka dots on her back and every color of cat on her face, with a little racoon tail and the softest white toes.

They told me Georgia was quite young, just out of kittenhood and had already given birth. But now sweet Mama Georgia needed a home. I had seen her online before I met her and immediately felt hope. This was the connection I was looking for, and I knew she was going to impact my life.

Two days later I took her home, and those two days of waiting were the longest of my life.

While I loved her name, I didn’t feel it belonged to her. Now her last name, as it was part of her past. Winifred Fig Georgia, that would be her name. One that felt full of love and light and gave her a new beginning.

Because Winnie was so young, she learned quite quickly to fit my emotional needs. She discovered how to help during my breakdowns, how to be there for me in my anxiety, and how to cuddle with me when I need love. She never leaves my side, even joining me on walks and hikes in the forest and on the beach.

I now have a reason to get up in the morning, instead of sitting in my sorrow, because my Winnie needs food and attention. I have a reason to leave my room because she needs exercise and to go on walks every day. She reminds me of the importance of eating, because if she, a little kitty can eat, I can too.

Winnie comforts me in ways a human being can’t. I’m able to cuddle with her when I feel most alone. She helps me function. When days feel like anxiety filled years, I have a companion to remind me of the beautiful little things in life, and appreciate them. She motivates me to get up and actually live my life.

I have never felt so supported as I am now, with Winnie. I truly believe Winnie saved my life by giving me a reason to be here everyday. If you are struggling, I highly recommend getting an ESA. Give yourself a reason to be here, one that can’t just go away. Finding my best friend and biggest supporter in the form of a cat has been more than the world could give me.

Every day I wake up and remember the face of joy that Winnie is. She has given me a purpose in life, as now my life isn’t the only one I’m caring for. She is my tree, the thing that keeps me rooted to life.

The difference between bananas & banana slugs

It’s not just the flavor



Photo by Dakota Cox
Slug girl summons her herd on Sept. 20 2020.

by Elise Fero

Yellow. Long. Squishy. Banana... Slug? If you aren’t in an area that these creatures are home to, you probably think this is a made-up creature from the movie Coraline. Luckily enough, we live in our own magical world and these creatures ARE real.

Let’s cover the basics. Can you eat a banana? Yes! Delicious! Can you eat a banana slug? I wouldn’t advise it due to their slime and mucus as well as possibly carrying a parasite that could kill you. Who knew these creatures were so hardcore? But some people deep fry them and claim them to be delicious. That brings a new vibe to carnival food.

“If I had a slimy banana I’d be very concerned,” said Thomas Lal, Editor in Chief of the Lumberjack.

One is going to fight more when you pick it up. That’s right, a banana who has a skin peel to protect it from being eaten, although like a slug, it’s not the greatest protection. A banana slug only has a layer to it’s head, but if stepped on will in fact smush it. At least they have that in common.

Bananas grow on trees, whereas banana slugs come from a different place. When two slugs love each other... Fun fact, banana slugs both carry the eggs and the sperm, so they each produce about 20 eggs after mating.

Banana slugs can live up to 7 years! Bananas grow four to six months and when ripe, go bad within 9 days. There is definitely a difference in lifespan. So if you want a long living friend, a banana slug is a good choice. If your child needs a first pet, choose a banana.

Bananas do not lay eggs. In fact, if your bananas are laying eggs please go to the doctor. What does a banana egg even look like? Banana slugs do in fact lay eggs, but I wouldn’t advise eating them for breakfast.



Illustration by Jen Kelly



Winnie Fig Georgia explores the redwood forest behind HSU with Elise Fero on Feb. 27.