



The GSEC brings community awareness to period poverty

For the first time since 2017, The Gender Sexuality Equity Center hosted Period Week from March 6-10.

Read on page A8.



PHOTO BY | MEGAN GAUER
Women's coordinator Sarah Bruno in the GSEC office.

President Hutchinson speaks on current security measures

Molly Myers and Noah Herbst
Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor

Chico State President Gayle E. Hutchinson sat down with The Orion to provide updates on safety concerns within the campus community. In particular, she focused on allegations that Chico State biology professor David Stachura spoke of killing colleagues. Stachura has denied these claims.

According to Hutchinson, the university has “been working with individuals who wish to have restraining orders.”

The California State University system requested the restraining orders on Feb. 8 and was granted a temporary order, with another court date scheduled for Feb. 27.

According to a Chico Enterprise-Record article, the court filing included statements from the two professors who participated in the investigation into Stachura, as well as another lecturer and graduate student. The article further stated that if the order is granted, Stachura would be forced “to stay 300 yards away from the four employees named in the request,” and that Stachura would need to maintain a distance of at least a quarter-mile from Chico State campus.

Hutchinson said the university is pursuing all available legal action and working with law enforcement.

As for what happens when Stachura is done with his leave, Hutchinson said: “We have to finish all that we are doing right now. We’re working very hard to keep campus safe.”

In terms of general safety around campus, Hutchinson said the university found it needs to “continually educate” staff and students about safety, and

about what resources are available. Some of these resources include emergency alerts and updates, where users can receive timely alerts and ask questions regarding safety, Chico State’s Emergency Action Plan and more.

Campus emergency alerts are automatically sent out to all students and staff through email. Text and call alerts are available for those who opt in. Hutchinson said they plan to change the system so that the campus community is automatically signed up for phone alerts, with the option to opt out.

The Emergency Action Plan encourages students to view an active shooter training video, however viewing the video is not part of any required training. Hutchinson expressed interest in making this training mandatory, and hopes all students will watch the video.

After the recent lockdown, a concern shared at the recent campus safety forum was how to lock doors on campus.

At the forum, Interim Provost Stephen Perez said, “how to lock doors is a conversation that is ongoing.”

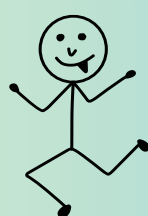
Hutchinson echoed this sentiment and added that the university is working with inspectors from the office of the Fire Marshall, because most of the campus doors are fire doors.

During the campus safety forum, one student offered the idea of putting peepholes in doors. Hutchinson specifically mentioned that the university is interested in exploring this idea, along with other student suggestions.

CALLING CARTOONISTS!

The Orion is looking for cartoons to feature in our next print edition.

Email your cartoons at fhartman@csuchico.edu



Chico State offers abortion pills

Molly Myers
Editor-in-Chief

WellCat Health Center at Chico State is now offering abortion pills to students. Chico State media relations coordinator Sean Murphy said the pills are available in “limited quantities” and that the school only offers medication, not surgical abortions.

Students are responsible for the cost of the prescriptions, Murphy said. The two-step regimen includes the following:

Mifiprex 200 milligrams \$59.90
Misoprostol 200 micrograms \$7.30

The move comes after California passed a bill in 2019 requiring University of California and California State University campuses to provide access to these services by January 2023.

The bill has come to provide a safety net for abortions in the UC and CSU systems, passing nearly three years before the overturning of Roe v. Wade. The overturning of this case

gave states the power to craft their own individual abortion legislation, with many revoking access.

Accounting for 54% of all abortions, the medication option is the most commonly used method in the U.S.

Abortion in California has been legal at varying levels of access since 1967. To ensure abortion access after the overturning of Roe v. Wade, California voters passed legislation to explicitly grant access to abortion in the California state constitution.

Outside of California, access to abortion varies greatly by state. A potential landmark case regarding access to abortion pills is underway in Texas, and could impact abortion legislation throughout the country.

The anti-abortion group, Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine, filed a lawsuit against the Food and Drug Administration claiming that it did not follow all the necessary protocols to approve the abortion medication, mifepristone.

U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk is set to rule on the case any day now.

Outside of WellCat Health Center abortion can be accessed in Chico at Women’s Health Specialists and Planned Parenthood.

For more information on this service contact WellCat Health Center at healthcenter@csuchico.edu or 530-898-5241.

Women's basketball team looking to rebound in '23 -'24 season

Alex Poletti
Sports Editor

The final buzzer has sounded for the women's basketball season, but there is much to look forward to in the 2023-2024 season. The Wildcats finished with an 18-11 season record and a 14-8 conference record, which earned them the fifth seed in the California Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament. Unfortunately, they lost to the Cal Poly Pomona Broncos in the quarter-finals, ultimately ending their season.

The Wildcats were hot and cold to start off the season going 9-6. By mid-January the women hit their stride, going on a dominant seven-game winning streak. They lost their last three regular season games and finished with an 18-11 record.

"We really wanted it, we started playing with a chip on our shoulders," junior Zhane Duckett said. "We started to see when there's adversity in the game, we could find a way out of that and still get a dub."

A highlight of the 2022-2023 season for the Cats was their impressive 11-4 home record. Chico State women's basketball team felt comfortable at home, winning .73% of the games played at Acker Gym. Unfortunately, when the Wildcats went on the road it was a coin toss, going 7-5 and winning .58% of away games.

"We were very comfortable playing at home and we have all our fans here and support here so that also helped our performance," Duckett said.

Another accomplishment for the Wildcats included four players receiving All-CCAA nods. Brandy Huffhines and Duckett both earned themselves a spot on the Second Team All-CCAA, while Haley Ison and Myli Martinez snagged All-CCAA Honorable Mentions.

This is the second time Duckett



PHOTO BY | AARON DRAPER

received an All-CCAA Second Team mention, the first being last season when she played for Cal State East Bay.

"I'm truly honored anytime they select me for anything, hard work pays off," Duckett said. "I'm more so concerned about how I was able to impact the team in a positive way."

Huffhines not only earned herself an All-CCAA Second Team selection but also became the first ever Chico State women's basketball player to be named

CCAA Newcomer of the Year. The Newcomer of the Year award is given to a player who has played college athletics before, but is playing their first year in the CCAA conference.

"Honestly I was pretty shocked when I heard the news," Huffhines said. "As much as I do think I had a decent season, especially coming out after three years of not playing, I do think I could have performed a lot better this season, it's just the beginning."

Although the season ended in disappointing fashion, the Wildcats are prepared to bounce back and make a run next season. With many key players set to return, the team thinks they have a real shot at going far in the playoffs this upcoming season.

"I see a very bright future for this group," Huffhines said. "We're gonna hit the CCAA with something different next season and I think we have a lot to look forward to."

Jojo Murphy freshman sensation

Wyatt Alpert
Reporter

Jojo Murphy, a 6' 2" 180-pound guard from Piedmont High School, is Chico State's first men's basketball California Collegiate Athletic Association freshman of the year since the 2001-2002 season.

Having all-conference accolades as a freshman is no easy task, but for the Wildcats, Murphy is the first to do so in over 20 years. Will Bonner was the last to accomplish this feat in the 2001-2002 season.

Murphy sees this accomplishment as "crazy" and a testament to the coaching staff believing in him as Wildcat coaching staff "usually redshirt freshman." Thus pushing their first year of playing eligibility back by one to allow freshmen the time to mature into the college game.

Coach Cevin Meador explained how Murphy's feat is reflective of the team's atmosphere.

"He came in ready and he had a great opportunity and took advantage of it, but also like it takes a lot from his teammates," Meador said.

The older guys, like Joshua Hamilton and Kelvin Wright Jr., really poured their heart into the team and set a good foundation for Murphy and the accomplishments he was able to achieve.

Murphy brings an extraordinary basketball resume to the table, but his teammates and coaches see him as more than just a list of accomplishments. To them, his impact as a player is evident both on and off the court.

Veteran teammate and CCAA first team honorable mention Joshua Hamilton spoke only positively of Murphy.

"[He] seemed to really enjoy the



PHOTO COURTESY | JOJO MURPHY

campus, he had a great personality, great attitude so I was like I'd be happy to have him here," Hamilton said.

This was the beginning of a special bond Murphy built with the Wildcats, before he eventually signed on a few months later.

Murphy ended up choosing Chico State because of: "Loyalty. I'd say because like coach Cev[Cevin Meador] would always be calling me or my family or I would be opening a letter in the mail. So seeing how much they wanted me versus like other schools."

The loyalty Murphy felt drove him to have an amazing freshman campaign that he hopes to continue and expand on

for the Men's basketball program.

Beyond the court, Murphy has a reputation of giving back to his teammates, family and community. One year he even built 12 houses in Mexico.

Murphy was shown just how fortunate he and his peers are while also building connections with people outside his environment. It was "super incredible and life changing for sure" Murphy said.

Murphy's biggest "freshman moment" of the year was a gameday where he showed up to the practice facilities 30 minutes late wearing "Crocs and sweats" while the entirety of the team was waiting for his arrival

fully dressed and ready to go. Hamilton tried to play saving grace and act like he didn't remember the incident, but Coach Meador definitely doesn't forget if someone is late and laughed it off saying, "He just didn't know what time it was."

When it comes to spending time off the court Murphy likes to make music. He unfortunately did not give us a sample for this article.

"I don't know if he's first-team All-Conference rapper," Meador said.

Murphy begs to differ.

"I definitely am. Don't listen to them," he said.

Murphy also enjoys swimming and getting to be around the beach in the summertime.

In Chico, Murphy's favorite spot to eat is Pita Pit. He also hopes one day to land a name, image and likeness deal with the restaurant.

"Pita Pit I'm y'all number one supporter, I'm trying to tell you guys that I can boost your shop but I'm still waiting on that partnership," Murphy said.

Hamilton agrees that the partnership needs to happen, and is of the utmost importance.

"Give him the Jojo sandwich," he said.

Murphy loves the Chico State community and family atmosphere around the Chico State Men's basketball program.

"I appreciate all the fans that came and watched but I would definitely love to see more of you guys next year," Murphy said.

And with a bright future and young talent on the roster, the Chico State Men's basketball fans should be rolling in for the next season of Wildcats basketball.

After the rain comes the rainbow, Late Bloomer Vintage

Gabriela Rudolph
Multimedia Editor

With all the gloomy rain and bare nature in Chico, color is scarce. Luckily, an eccentric oasis exists between Tender Loving Coffee and the Pageant Theatre on E Sixth St. — Late Bloomer Vintage Boutique.

The boutique is open Thursday through Sunday. On Fridays, there is a student discount for 10% off and also late night hours from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

I came to the shop on a wet Sunday afternoon to escape the weather and browse some potential new vintage pieces to add to my closet. As I approached the shop, I was instantly reeled in by a rack of clothes outside. A metallic Justice jacket immediately caught my eye. Part of me laughed, knowing that my 10-year-old self would have begged my mom to buy me that. Of course, it was not my size. My hands raked through various pieces, giving me just a mere taste of what was indoors.

I entered the boutique and was surrounded by vintage galore and vibrant decor. The walls were painted different colors in each section with a myriad of art pieces and record covers adorning them.

The owner of the store, Ava Moon,

greeted me. I learned that Moon opened the boutique in October, however she has been living in Chico for almost her entire life. She moved here when she was 2-years-old and got her bachelor's degree in communication design at Chico State. During her time as a Chico State student, she was involved in The Orion as a videographer.

Moon said that she used to sell art at pop-ups and festivals, however clothes were always her biggest seller.

"I started selling vintage more seriously after the pandemic," Moon said. "I had a young baby and couldn't get a regular job."

On the floor, I noticed piles of clothes in baskets and suitcases. Moon told me that those clothes were part of the monthly fill-a-bag sale and that I could fill up a bag for \$20. I grabbed a plastic bag on a barber chair, and went digging. It didn't take too long until my bag was full. I had to sacrifice some pieces that didn't fit in the bag. My haul included a Brandy Melville sweater, an Abrecombie & Fitch tank top, a denim dress with a red floral skirt and more. All of that for \$20 was definitely a steal.

I ventured deeper into the store, walking through beaded curtains to the record area, which had a large window overlooking the street. The records were \$2 each, or three for \$5. To the right of the records, there was a couch with a multi-colored tapestry draped



PHOTO BY | GABRIELA RUDOLPH

behind it. Beside that, there was a botanical wall with a neon sign spelling out "Late Bloomer." If anything was Instagram-worthy, it would be this part of the boutique.

In another section, there was a fabric push pin board with a variety of buttons, all of which were \$5. I ended up sitting there and giggling at a couple. One of them read "Protect & Preserve Mainstream Dancers, An Endangered Species." There were also baskets of graphic tees that were \$10 each.

Across the store, there was a bookcase filled with miscellaneous things like jewelry, books, home decor and bags. I found copies of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy from 1969 and gawked at the gorgeous cover, but I knew that a J.R.R. Tolkien fan would appreciate it more and put it back on the shelf.

Once I gathered a couple items to try on, I made my way to the fitting room, and was transported into a funky miniature bedroom. A tiny bed was fitted with a unicorn quilt and a green lava lamp sat on the nightstand. Each inch of the fitting room was decorated with bright colors, knick-knacks and textures.

Paying for my clothes at the cashier, I noticed stickers and small prints from local artists. Moon said that it's constantly changing and there's always something new.

Underneath the cash register were '90s and Y2K toys in a glass case: Troll

dolls, a Lisa Frank stencil and a Chuck-E-Cheese lunch pale. The vintage toys didn't end there. In the back right corner of the store, the highest shelves were lined with nostalgic toys and games. Seeing Spongebob and Patrick made me feel like a kid again.

I appreciated the store's organization. Whether you're specifically searching for a dress, leather jacket, lingerie or denim there is a designated section for you. As a thrifter, who typically shops in more traditional thrift stores like Goodwill or Salvation Army, it's nice to shop in a store that doesn't smell like a dusty granny house, or have clothes cluttered all over the floor.

I ended my shopping trip with a few more statement pieces to add to my wardrobe, and excitement for what other fun treasures I'll find next time.

"My shop is different because it's not just a store, it's a living work of art," Moon said. "It's a revolving door of wonder for customers to come in and have a new experience every time."

Moon is planning to launch a Shopify website on April 1 to expand her vintage clothes to a wider audience.

Occasionally, Moon will host events at her boutique like karaoke and stick-and-poke tattoos. On Feb. 10, she hosted a collage workshop where she donated proceeds to Safe Space Winter Shelter.

To keep up to date with upcoming promotions and events, follow their Instagram page @late_bloomer_vintage.



PHOTO BY | GABRIELA RUDOLPH

Dive into flavor: The Black Wal Street Cafe

Daisy Beltran
Reporter

Soul-food, fusion plates and quick-bites can be expected from the Black Wal Street Cafe. This underground business is run by Wal Reik, an entrepreneur ready to expand and bring a new spin on soul-food to the heart of Chico.

Black Wal Street Cafe's unique dishes can be ordered through their Instagram page @blackwalstreetcafe. The photos displayed will make you ditch your prepped meal.

Soul-food is a type of cuisine that is often associated with African American culture, particularly in the Southern United States. Today, soul food is celebrated as an important part of African American culture and is enjoyed by people of all races and backgrounds. It is often served in restaurants and at family gatherings, and is considered a comfort food that evokes feelings of warmth and nostalgia.

Reik grew up in San Diego and decided to pursue a bachelors in psychology at Chico State in 2014. His passion for cooking was sparked when

he noticed the difference of cultures between Chico and his hometown. Urban cuisines seemed scarce and the lack of soul-food inspired Reik to create his own endeavor.

"Everyone tends to say the same thing — the lack of variety is bothersome," Reik said. "What we have will bring a new wave of flavor, we strive to reach as many people as we can with our cuisine"

Reik used what he learned from his family to experiment with his own dishes. Cooking for friends is the first testament to his skills. People began requesting his cooking at their house parties and eventually the requests turned into catering. His skills were sharpened by learning from his family, but his biggest inspiration can be found within himself:

"When I look in the mirror day in and day out I see what the outside world doesn't. I know that what's meant for me will come to fruition so I must continue to do good and keep going"

Reik plans to open his first brick and mortar store in April, where customers can have an urban dining experience with live music, art and alcohol. Eventually he plans to expand throughout the state.

"I want people to enter the establishment and leave with an extravagant experience," Reik said.

One of Reik's favorite meals is the "Bubba Gump" dish, a delicious fried-shrimp sandwich with tomatoes, pickles

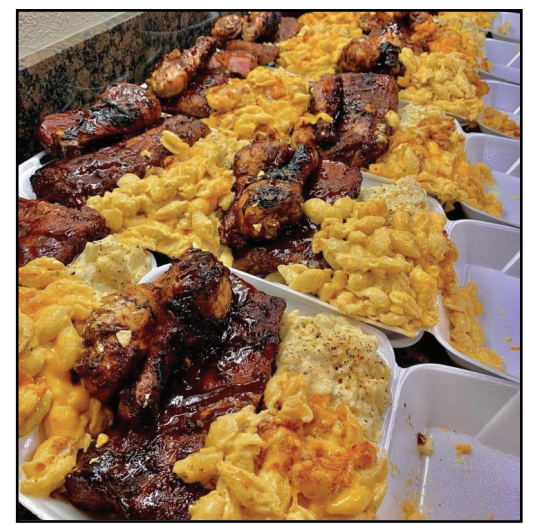


PHOTO BY | WAL REIK

and Cajun aioli, served with fries and a refreshment for \$17. Another prominent meal are his buffalo-based Rafiki wings, which come with six-pieces for \$13, along with his famous grilled chicken.

Payments can be made through Venmo or Cashapp. New dishes can be found every Sunday ready for pick-up at a designated time and location varying throughout the week.

Preschool teacher and business owner Samantha Rosales said: "All of his food is made with heart and full of flavor. He is the sweetest and goes above and beyond to make his customers happy."

Chico State student Shae Pastrana said that Riek does all the work for his business alone. About his food she said, "It's fucking dank."

If the reviews haven't convinced you yet, find out for yourself so you won't miss out on the latest soul-food spot.



PHOTO BY | WAL REIK

Crawling through Chico's local plant nurseries

Heather Taylor
Reporter

Promotional material for Chico's ninth annual Local Nursery Crawl stated the event would take place "rain or shine." Falling on Feb. 24-25, participating nurseries and shoppers saw stormy conditions, bursts of sunshine, and even some rare snowfall.

Despite inclement weather, the local shops welcomed crowds of people looking for plants and garden supplies or advice, which was offered with a friendly smile.

The nursery crawl began in 2014. "We were thrilled that so many local nurseries were willing to give this idea a go! And that first year was a success and it has grown in attendance and local nurseries ever since," event organizer and owner of participating nursery Magnolia Gift and Garden, Courtney Paulson Hunter said.

For this year's crawl, 12 local nurseries from Chico and the surrounding area participated. The Local Nursery Crawl website advertised, "Each nursery has a different focus and passion to help you design your dream garden or landscapes." While many of the nurseries had some plants in common, each had items which set them apart, or specific services to provide to the community.

Customers on the crawl printed their own flier with the addresses of the stores and received a stamp or sticker at each nursery they visited. After visiting at least six of the nurseries on the list, participants



PHOTO BY | HEATHER TAYLOR

were entered into a drawing to receive a \$25 gift card.

While there were many benefits for attendees, the business owners said they saw positive reasons to participate as well.

"The nursery crawl is always a fun early-spring opportunity to get the spring fever started. It's a day to discover and rediscover the varied garden centers in the area," The Plant Barn owner Denise Kelly said.

Those discovering The Plant Barn, Chico's oldest local nursery, found a large selection of outdoor plants and houseplants. From outside, the nursery looks small, with the focal point being the almost 100-year-old barn that houses the gift shop. Inside, customers can browse a sprawling two acres of plants and about 14,000 square feet of greenhouses.

"We lay out our merchandise in such a way that it feels as though you are wandering in a secret garden of sorts," Kelly said. "We let the trees grow wild and plant up containers all over the property, including our dear old vintage truck."

Another busy nursery with plenty of room for the crawl crowds was Magnolia Gift and Garden.

"The Local Nursery Crawl is also a great community builder; not only between the nurseries themselves, but the 'crawlers' have a great opportunity to support local independent businesses," event organizer Paulson Hunter said.

Magnolia Gift and Garden, started by Paulson Hunter and her husband, has been in operation since 2008.

"We are fortunate enough to do what we love every day," Paulson Hunter said. "This community really values supporting small businesses like our own, and for that we are grateful."

The nurseries also give back to the community that supports them. Many provide native plant species which thrive in local growing zones.

Deja Vu Gardens Galore Nursery of Paradise was ultimately not able to participate this year due to heavy snow, but owner Cindy Dawson has been involved with the Local Nursery Crawl in the past.

"We get lots of new customers every year," Dawson said.

Customers purchasing from Deja Vu's 30,000



PHOTO BY | HEATHER TAYLOR

item inventory, including about 3,000 roses, make it possible for Dawson to give back to the Paradise community. The nursery offers fire survivor discounts to help those who have lost their homes to wildfires and wish to redo their landscaping.

Another participating nursery provides care to the community in another way. Little Red Hen's Plant Nursery offers vocational training and jobs to people with disabilities.

In addition to having a perfect name for a plant nursery employee, Poppy Fields has been the manager at Little Red Hen's Plant Nursery for two years. Fields said the Local Nursery Crawl is "a good day for people to find out what we're about."

Judging by the limited parking spaces available on Saturday, many people were exposed to the nursery's purpose. Started by a Chico resident, Teresa Wolk Hayes, The Little Red Hen now includes six distinct retail locations, including the nursery, and an online department which ships all over the world.

Those who did not attend the crawl are always welcome to stop by and ask questions, Fields said, or explore the volunteer opportunities offered.

With the variety of nurseries participating, each offering different garden supplies and plants, Local Nursery Crawl participants are left looking forward to next year's event — hopefully with blue skies!

BACKGROUND PHOTO BY | HEATHER TAYLOR

Orion critic high on 'Cocaine Bear'

Mawil Mateo
Reporter

"Cocaine Bear," released less than a week ago on Feb. 28, is a must-see movie for those looking for a fun time.

It has made \$78.1 million at the box office. Directed by Elizabeth Banks and inspired by a true story, this horror-comedy film depicts the discovery of a large amount of drugs by a bear in the 1980s, that were dropped from a drug smuggler's plane.

The bear eats packages of cocaine and emerges high with renewed strength. The bear transforms into a mix of Tony Montana, the main character in the film "Scarface," and Jason Voorhees from "Friday the 13th."

The film has the feel of an inside joke and consistently invites you to laugh at it. Some critics have praised its dark humor and uniqueness, while others have criticized it for being a little bit too goofy and not taking the story seriously enough. It depicts dark consequences that can result from a single moment of reckless behavior.

Charles Pulliam-Moore film and TV reporter from The Verge wrote, "it's fun, but it doesn't know when to stop."

Variety's film critic Owen Gleiberman said: "You must go on opening weekend! And submit to the madness! I can't get enough of this motherfuckin' cocaine in this motherfuckin' bear!"

The film's bizarre and intriguing storyline has generated buzz, by keeping the audience hooked and attentive as they don't know what will happen next. The film surprises everyone scene after scene as the scenes get crazier and crazier.

Screenwriter Jimmy Warden included many waves throughout the film, most in which the audience laughs at the bear's violently playful interactions.

There were thrilling plot twists that made the audience dislike the bear and others that inspired love and empathy with the creature. The film illustrates the effect of the drug trade on animals.



PHOTO COURTESY | UNIVERSAL

Undeniably, "Cocaine Bear" is a thought-provoking and daring exploration of nature. The song "I Just Can't Get Enough" by Depeche Mode used in the film describes the bear's addictive tendencies toward wanting more and more, and parallels the greed of the drug lords.

Banks manages to balance the film's comedic moments with its more serious themes, creating a cohesive and engaging viewing experience. Keri Russell, and her explosive performance portraying the life of Colette, a nurse and single mother. Syd

is played by Ray Liotta, a drug dealer whose life depends on finding the rest of all the lost cocaine.

All actors add realism to the plot, making it come to life. They all play the circumstances extremely well by making the audience feel like they are also being chased by a giant bear. They effortlessly move between comedic and dramatic parts with ease.

Russell told The Daily Beast, "Well, obviously, I'm always gunning for Oscar nominations, which is why I chose an award-worthy project like 'Cocaine Bear.'"

Liotta died May 26, 2022 at 67-years-old and did not get to watch the final product. In an interview with Entertainment Tonight Banks said, "He never saw the final movie, but he did see all of his scenes."

Overall, "Cocaine Bear" is an unconventional movie that leaves a lasting impression on viewers. Its unique premise and thoughtful exploration of addiction and consequences make it a film worth watching, even for those who may not immediately be drawn to its peculiar storyline.

The real preserved bear sits as an exhibit at the Kentucky fun mall. Before that it was kept inside country star Waylon Jennings' home until his passing in 2002.

While it may not be for everyone, it's certainly a memorable and entertaining experience for those willing to take a walk on the wild side.



PHOTO COURTESY | UNIVERSAL

Juanita Mottley at leadership symposium: ‘Stop telling me to be strong; I don’t need to be strong’

Ariana Powell
City Editor

The Bell Memorial Union Auditorium was transformed into a space for empowering dialogue on March 3, as the Associated Students hosted the third “Women Like You” Leadership Symposium.

Four panel members and five guest speakers stepped onto a t-shaped stage that lay under tungsten LED string lights and a glinting disco ball.

The panel members included Chico State President Gayle Hutchinson, Vice President of Business and Finance Ann Sherman, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Monique Sendze and Chief of Staff Seema Sehrawat.

During the panel Hutchinson described her journey as a woman. Growing up Hutchinson said that she often got comments such as “What do you know about that Gayle? You’re a girl.” However, Hutchinson said that once she established credibility at Chico State she was accepted as a woman.

Similarly, Sehrawat shared a lesson on the importance of being uncomfortable. The chief of staff described how she has always been uncomfortable throughout her life, but today she can choose to be uncomfortable because that’s where the most growth and learning happens.

The first guest speaker, electrical engineering and computer engineering associate professor, Hadil Mustafa, told the story of Hatesheput, the first Egyptian woman pharaoh. She described how prior to the leader becoming pharaoh, the statues depicting her had an obvious feminine look, but after becoming pharaoh, her statues were more masculine-leaning, even showing her to have a beard.

Mustafa used this as an example of the confidence gap, a term she gave two definitions for. It is “the tendency of women to be less assured than their male counterparts,” or more simply, the lack of belief in oneself.

She ended her speech with a message, “Women deserve to be treated the same as men in any field, don’t be afraid of sharing your story.”

Between each guest speaker, attendees were given 10 minutes to have a discussion lead by facilitators. The area around the stage was split into 10 “pods,” where people could sit and talk.

AS director of social justice and equity, Autumn Alaniz-Wiggins, shared her journey. Above all she praised her mother for teaching her the “Alaniz way.” To Alaniz-Wiggins it’s not just a last name, but a way of life.

Growing up her mother worked in other countries to make money to support her children from afar, because “it was better than being in a broken home.” In her mother’s absence she describes how she conformed to her father’s views of what a woman

should be, where “any sign of



PHOTO BY | ARIANA POWELL

Autumn Alaniz-Wiggins smiles out at her audience as she prepares to begin her speech.

resistance was met by a backhand.”

When she took a year and a half off of college she lost her grandmother during this time. After her death she discovered that her grandmother, who like her was a Black woman, had a masters degree in business from a historically Black university.

“She grew up in Jim Crow segregated south, and she was a trailblazer,” Alaniz-Wiggins said.

Alaniz-Wiggins ended her journey by saying that whether you’re having fun or experiencing trauma, people will say you shouldn’t do or be something. However, she knows her worth and will follow the Alaniz way.

Stefanie Marchiano, a licensed marriage and family therapist at the WellCat counseling center took the stage next.

Throughout her life, her authentic values did not match that of society’s. Due to this she decided to stay in the closet for many years out of fear of being judged, or murdered.

“Do I live the life I want to live? Or do I live the life society wants for me, and suffocate to death in the closet?”

When she was 34-years-old, she was misdiagnosed with cancer, and it was then that she came to a scary realization that her life was of no consequence to her.

“I was living a life that was designed to keep me safe, but I wasn’t being me,” Marchiano said.

This realization sparked change within her, and she chose to step out of the closet. Marchiano has known hardship, but discovered joy within her newfound, authentic life.

She closed by saying “I am not perfect, but I am perfectly me.”

Next came associate vice president for student support programs, Juanita Mottley. As soon as she stepped onto the stage she stated that she would be sharing her trauma.

The most prominent story that Mottley told was of her own battle with

breast health.

At a certain point in her life Mottley said that she was “existing, not living” as her breast health declined. After a benign tumor diagnosis, Mottley made the difficult decision to have a double mastectomy. After she underwent the surgery, the doctor told her that both breasts were malignant.

“To this day it was the best decision I made. I am proud to say this year I am at my eighth year cancer-free,” Mottley said.

Over the years she lost more important people in her life.

“Stop telling me to be strong, I don’t need to be strong,” she said. “I need to be myself.”

The last leader to take the stage was college of agriculture student and former AS commissioner of sustainability affairs, Michelle Borges. She opened her speech with a poem by Linda Ellis, an author, speaker and poet. Her poem, “The Dash,” describes the time from birth until death as a dash.

“What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash,” Ellis’ poem stated.

Borges said she has only recently come to understand where the rest of her dash will go, and that our time is limited.

“We have to take advantage of the countless opportunities Chico State has to offer,” Borges said. “On our graduation day we have to be content with all of the decisions we made during our college career.”



PHOTO BY | ARIANA POWELL

Michelle Borges steps on the stage to begin her speech, the last one of the event.

WOMEN LIKE YOU ARE EMPOWERING BECAUSE...
We are our own best advocates. We put that into action by fighting for our rightful place by leaning on one another. Thank you for being part of my story to: McKenzie Kushnau!

PHOTO BY | ARIANA POWELL

PHOTO BY | ARIANA POWELL

Left to right: Michelle Davis, Gayle Hutchinson, Ann Sherman, Dr. Monique Sendze and Dr. Seema Sehrawat. The panel members sit on the stage giving advice to all in attendance.



A uterus-owner's guide to birth control

Gabriela Rudolph
Multimedia Editor

So you're having sex. There's nothing to be ashamed about. In fact, most of the student body is doing the horizontal tango. According to the Health Resources & Services Administration, 94% of college students are sexually active.

If you are a uterus-owner, you may be wondering what kind of birth control to be on so no unwanted babies start popping up. From the birth control pill to the IUD, there are many options and it can seem a bit overwhelming at first. Don't worry. I will guide you through the options to help you make your decision.

Just remember that none of the birth control options listed below prevent sexually transmitted diseases or infections. In a study by Washington & Lee University, they found that one in four college students have an STI. So if you are engaging in sexual activities with multiple partners, make sure you're either using condoms, or have all those involved get tested, which can all be done at the WellCat Health Center.

The pill

This is the most commonly known form of birth control, and happens to be

the first form of birth control I had ever used. The pill works by taking it once at the same time every day. A good tip is to set a reminder on your phone.

According to Planned Parenthood, the hormones in the pill and other hormonal birth controls prevent pregnancy by pausing ovulation and creating mucus around the cervix to stop sperm from fertilizing the egg.

There are two kinds of birth control pills: combination pills and progestin-only pills. These are also referred to as the "mini-pills." Combination pills are combined with estrogen and progestin, while progestin-only pills contain just progestin. Sometimes if one of the pills is causing negative side effects for the user, they can opt in for the other pill.

Pros: 93% effective, non-invasive

Cons: Having to remember to take the pill

The patch

Just within the last month I switched over to the birth control patch and it has quickly become my personal favorite. To be honest, I hadn't even heard of the patch until I heard my co-worker talk about her experience with it. So, I brought myself over to the health center and they gave me a full year's supply of birth control patches. All you need to do is stick on a Band-Aid-looking patch and

change it weekly. The patch is great if you don't want anything invasive such as the IUD or the implant, but also don't want to have to remember to take a pill every day.

The patch works just like any other hormonal birth control and has the same effectiveness as the pill. Just make sure you place the patch on a spot that won't be rubbed too much by your clothes, such as your waistband or bra strap.

Pros: 93% effective, non-invasive, only needs to be changed weekly

Cons: Patch may be difficult to hide during summer months, patch can fall off

The IUD

IUD stands for Intrauterine Device, and is a small device inserted into the uterus. This is a great option for people who are forgetful and want a one-and-done situation because the IUD lasts for up to 12 years.

There are five different IUD brands: Paragard, Mirena, Kyleena, Liletta and Skyla. The five are divided in two categories, hormonal and copper. The hormonal IUD works similarly to the pill and the patch where the hormones thicken around the cervix and stop ovulation. The copper IUD works by repelling sperm, according to Planned Parenthood.

Pros: 99% effective, long-lasting

Cons: May be uncomfortable to get inserted and removed

The implant

Another low-maintenance birth control is the implant, which is also known as Nexplanon. The implant is placed in the arm and uses the progestin hormone to prevent pregnancy. This method is highly effective and lasts for five years, so you'll definitely be baby-free throughout your college years — unless you happen to be a super, SUPER senior.

Pros: 99% effective, long-lasting

Cons: You can feel the implant in your arm

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PHOTO BY | GABRIELA RUDOLPH

The depo shot

If having to change a patch every week is still too much to remember, there is also a birth control shot, which is known as the depo shot. The shot also contains the progestin hormone and is injected once every three months, or 12-13 weeks. Make sure to set up a reminder so you don't forget your appointments.

Pros: 96% effective, only needs to be done every three months

Cons: Needles, remembering to make the appointment

The vaginal ring

Lastly is the vaginal ring, which is inserted into the vagina where it releases hormones throughout the body to prevent pregnancy. There are two kinds of rings, the NuvaRing and the Annovera. The NuvaRing has to be changed every five weeks. The Annovera lasts for an entire year, but has to be taken out every three weeks for seven days, then re-inserted after those seven days.

Pros: 93% effective, only needs to be changed every three to five weeks

Cons: The Annovera needs to be washed between each use, can't use oil or silicone-based lubricants

Whatever birth control option you decide, it's important to note that everyone's bodies react to birth control differently, and some might experience symptoms and others might not.

To learn more and access any of these birth control options, visit the WellCat Health Center, or the nearest Planned Parenthood.

Pushing a new perspective on 'pussy'



PHOTO BY | ELLIE MARTY

Junior media arts major Leah McKechnie exemplifying pussy appreciation!

Ellie Marty
Copy Editor

I don't have a problem with cursing, but I do have a problem with one word in particular — pussy.

Everyone curses. Whether it be done casually, circumstantially — or in special cases like mine — used as adjectives, curse words bring the zing into life that I find sometimes to be necessary. I'm thankful for them.

However, the word 'pussy' is harmful and used offensively toward both men and women. For women, it's used to strip them of their humanity and reduce them to a sexualized object.

"I'm totally getting pussy this weekend," frat boy Brad says.

This hypothetical example has undoubtedly been said before by a real frat boy named Brad. It is also used to demean men in order to paint them out to be fragile, cowardly and overall not masculine "enough".

"Quit being such a pussy," frat boy Brad's brothers say to him in reaction to an average display of emotion from Brad.

If you're like Brad and this has happened to you, I'm really sorry.

Pussy is derived from the word 'pusillanimous' which means showing a lack of courage and determination. The definition of the word actually has

nothing to do with women. While this may be surprising, its misinterpretation is still used to dig at sexist stereotypes of women, leading to overlapping notions and blurred lines regarding the term.

The term's relation to femininity can be traced back to the 16th century when men coined the term from 'puss,' which was used as a call-name for cats. It originally came into play as a term of non-sexual endearment and was used generally toward women until the 19th century. It was around this time the term gained its sexual connotation through being associated with the vagina and referring to something soft, warm and furry.

The word has become prominent in American slang, signifying sexual intercourse and giving it a vulgar and overall negative connotation.

'Cunt' is another slang term with a negative connotation that directly relates to female genitalia. The Oxford English Dictionary has numerous definitions for the word, none of which read to be particularly pleasant.

Today, some feminists attempt to reclaim and embrace pussy and cunt with a positive attitude. Others insist

on the problematic aspects of the terms and condemn both entirely.

Now back to pussy.

It's not the word that makes me uncomfortable, nor should it make you uncomfortable. My problem stems from the fact that the word is used in a derogatory manner the majority of the time I hear or see it being used. I have a big issue with the way it's been used in the past, and continues to be used today.

Using the word 'pussy' in a sexist regard truthfully doesn't make sense to me. As silly as it may sound, vaginas are strong. With this being said, I propose an alternative to the term — ballsack or nutsack.

Even though pussy is not meant to be interpreted or used as a dig on female genitalia, ultimately it is one. So let's talk about vaginas in a high regard for once.

Female genitalia is pliable and vigorous, much more so than men's testicles. In 2009, a woman named Tatyana Kozhevnikova earned the unofficial title of World's Strongest Vagina after lifting over 30 pounds with her crotch muscles. Sorry to all the boys reading this, but I seriously doubt

your penises nor balls are capable of performing such a task.

When considering the process of birth, a vagina pushes a multiple-pound human being out of its dilating hole that starts at the size of only a couple centimeters and has the resilience and durability to go back to the size it once was.

They're also made to take a pounding in more ways than one, a concept I'll leave up to the reader's interpretation. Vaginas are lean, mean, self-cleaning machines, which is an awesome principle to recognize on its own.

Testicles, on the other hand, are weak and sensitive, making a much better fit for a slang word used to describe exactly that. One little flick and a man is down for the count, some men even get physically ill in response. I can remember multiple instances throughout my life where boys and men alike have argued that getting a swift kick in the balls hurts considerably more than what childbirth probably feels like.

So the next time someone tells you to grow some balls, perhaps work toward growing a vagina instead.

It's not all rainbows

A look at biphobia

Hunter Casperon
Opinion and Layout Editor

I realized I was bisexual when I learned what scissoring was and responded with, “that sounds so hot I would totally do that.”

It wasn't until summer of 2021 that I started questioning my sexuality. I fit all of the closeted gay stereotypes. I was self-proclaimed “straight, but gay when drunk,” “straight, but only gay for Halsey,” and “straight, but would be down to kiss girls.”

In a heteronormative culture, it is common to unconsciously assume that people are heterosexual until proven otherwise. I internalized this and because I experienced attraction towards men, I assumed that I was straight.

Part of the reason it took me so long to publicly come out as bi stemmed from me not wanting to intrude on the LGBTQIA+ community. I had an internalized belief that if I came out as bi, I was taking away from others within the queer community.

I felt unsure if I would be welcomed into the community — even if it was one meant to represent acceptance.

There is an issue with biphobic members of the LGBTQIA+ community who have created an undertone to the community implying that bi people are less worthy of representation.

The term “straight passing” refers to a person who identifies as queer, but who is perceived to be straight. This term has been used to insinuate that a bi person, who is in a heterosexual relationship, experiences privileges that other members of the LGBTQIA+ community cannot. It has become an isolating term that is often used in a context that implies that bi people are not true members of the queer community.

Growing up, I did not see a lot of representation surrounding bisexuality. In fact, the only representation of bisexuality in pop culture I saw was never labeled as an actual sexuality, but acted out as a stereotype. Often this representation looked like a side character known to be a cheater or was deemed ‘slutty’ for making out with girls and guys at parties. It was often the character who was seen as “easy” and not respectable.

Under these circumstances, who would be eager to label themselves as bi?

Shortly after I realized I was bi, I found myself at a bar in Chico flirting with a woman. We were both confident and bold with the help of alcohol, and ended up kissing in the middle of the bar. I remember sobering up in my mind as I kissed her and thinking, “Well, I guess I am publicly out now.”

After kissing her, I felt buzzy with an energy I had not experienced before. It wasn't the same as when I first kissed a boy, it was a braver and more powerful buzz. Part of me was scared because I did not know how this would change my life, and I had just committed to being seen as gay — at least by the people in my immediate surroundings. This was my first time publicly going against society's grain. It was both terrifying and enthralling.

A man in his mid-thirties, loomed over with a grotesque expression on his face.

While looking at us, he said one word, “ew.”

He wasn't violent, but his expression

of disapproval, combined with my knowledge of gay history made me feel small and dehumanized. Even in small moments like this, there is nothing as disheartening as the feeling of other people's hate surrounding who you love. Granted, I was not in love with this woman I had just met, but I was happy. I was like an elementary school kid who had just been given a flower by their crush — giddy and excited. To have another human want to shame me for something as pure and natural as that, is a heartbreak difficult to describe.

Prior to this I had imagined I would experience homophobia through rare encounters with extremists who hated me. What I did not expect were the constant microaggressions from heterosexual homophobes, as well as biphobic people within the LGBTQIA+ community.

For the first year after coming out, I was loud about my sexuality. I wanted people in my life to know I was bi. It was a piece of my identity that had been missing and once I found it, I wanted those who cared about me to know how much I loved women. I had a friend who even told me I seemed “too excited” about being gay.

Being more open about my sexuality, I started noticing a change in conversations others would have with me. The topic of threesomes was brought up more frequently, and people asked me for details about my sex life.

I'm not one to mind a playful conversation about sex, but this repetitive conversation took a different tone.

It became apparent that my bisexuality seemed like a “way in” for other people's sexual fantasies.

Whether a fantasy of participating in a threesome, or a fetish of lesbian sex, my sexuality — and therefore part of my identity — began being sexualized on an almost daily basis.

“You should pick up a hot girl and then hit me up,” “We could share her,” “So you like to eat pussy then? That's hot.” “You must have threesomes all the time then huh?” are all phrases I've heard countless times.

As an athlete, the most demoralizing piece of this came from teammates and friends. I did not expect people who I train with — and assume to have mutual trust and respect with — to use my sexuality for their personal benefit. Even if it wasn't conscious, my sexuality was viewed as a door for them; not as a piece of what makes up my experiences in the world.

On a Friday over winter break, a girl that I was dating visited Chico for the first time and we went out for drinks. It was dark and we were walking together holding hands. After being violently yelled at from passing cars twice on our walk, we dropped hands and walked a further distance apart from each other because we felt it was safer.

I am not going to be thankful that “things are better now than they were 50 years ago,” because frankly, “things” are still pretty bad. Instead, I will be thankful for activists like Bayard Rustin, Audre Lorde and Billie Jean King who went against society's grain and pushed us toward a more loving, and accepting standard.

But, there's still work that needs to be done.

GSEC brings community awareness to period poverty

Megan Gauer
Reporter and Layout Designer

For the first time since 2017, The Gender Sexuality Equity Center hosted Period Week from March 6-10. This week-long event intentionally coincided with Women's History Month and the GSEC organizers focused primarily on period poverty across campus.

GSEC is a student-run activist group that has been on campus for over 50 years. They aim to "empower all students," according to their mission statement. The center is divided into two programs, the Women's Program and the Queer Program. GSEC is currently made up of 13 members: one director, three coordinators and nine interns.

Period Week consisted of five events including a slam poetry reading, a documentary viewing and discussion, a yoga-for-cramps session, a break-the-stigma day and ended with a period drive for menstrual projects.

Senior Sarah Bruno, the Women's program coordinator and organizer of Period Week, explained her intentions with the series of events:

"This year we really focused on period poverty and how it affects not only people abroad, but college students," Bruno said. "Not everyone has access to menstrual products and schools don't provide them; it's really rare to find them for free in bathrooms here on campus."

Senior Dakota Gravink, a first-semester intern for the GSEC's Queer Program, explained that Period Week also helped reach those without access to an appropriate level of education surrounding sexual health and periods.

"For a lot of people, the only information they got about periods was through their moms, their female friends or Googling things on the Internet, which doesn't turn out well," said Gravink.

Though this is the first Period Week in over five years, there have been recent student attempts to inform the community of period poverty on college campuses.

Last spring, a group of students attempted to address Chico State's period poverty problem through a group project in their Writing for Public Audiences course. The goal of the assignment was to create pieces of rhetoric to address issues in the community.

Sophomore Julia Hess, a collaborator and supporter of GSEC, aimed to gain attention for period poverty related issues, alongside her all-female group, from both the community and faculty.

The group's initial goal for their class project was to get the university to provide free menstrual products in all student bathrooms. However, the girls continued their work outside of the classroom, recognizing the importance of solving the issue of



PHOTO BY | MEGAN GAUER
Dakota Gravink, Sarah Bruno and Naomi Jones pose by the facts and myths table on March 9.

period poverty on campus.

The group administered menstrual products in some bathrooms in April of last year, but they are not finished with their mission.

"This project is ongoing and we are still hoping to get movement on it. Nothing has been officially added to the budget," Hess said.

She added that the project is currently on pause as they search for a new team. However, she noted how important it is that GSEC is bringing awareness to period poverty.

"Period poverty is so prominent in our community and dismantling the harmful stigmas associated with periods is so important. Period week can help educate students on campus to learn about menstruating as well as urge faculty to supply period projects to students," Hess said.

Though Bruno helped coordinate the events of Period Week, she emphasized that she did not act alone. Sophomore Alysa Cringle, the Feminist Friday coordinator, helped Bruno come up with some of the events and junior Naomi Jones, a first-year intern, created the pins that GSEC distributed during the week.

On Thursday March 9, the activist group had a whiteboard outside of the GSEC office for students to write lies they were told about their periods, and a table with facts and myths about periods that Jones researched and compiled.

"Having the facts and myths that we had out there gave people the chance to look at them and think about them critically, and hopefully approach their

own biases and misinterpretations around periods and process that," Jones said.

Gravink added that by having these lies and myths on display, students could acknowledge not only that they had been taught lies, but that other people were told the same ones.

Though Bruno feels the turnout was on the smaller side, she is confident about Period Week's impact on the student community.

"I know that it did spark conversation, which is honestly all I wanted," Bruno said. "We're trying, and that's all that matters."



PHOTO BY | MEGAN GAUER



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U P Y K G W Q K W L W O O B F B N D
M I C H E L L E O B A M A W F O M Q
L Z C U O R L W T X Z F W A O L H R
D Q L H B U S V K E I D O E C D F O
K L E F W E O P R A H K M Z T I A S
K Q O O W B Y X C D E P E U C W Q A
L F P T G X N O R Z O C N B R G B P
U S A N H E L E N K E L L E R M W A
Y O T J F V L U Y C T S M J Y O G R
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P S A L E Z F R I D A K A H L O C S
J J F E M I N I S T Q P B R A V E D

- 1. Feminist
- 2. Beyonce
- 3. Brave
- 4. Bold
- 5. Frida Kahlo

- 6. Women
- 7. Helen Keller
- 8. Empowerment
- 9. Michelle Obama
- 10. Rosa Parks



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