

VOLUME 6 - MARCH 2022

SAC EXCLUSIVE

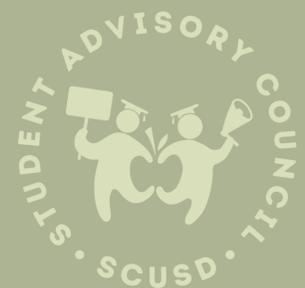
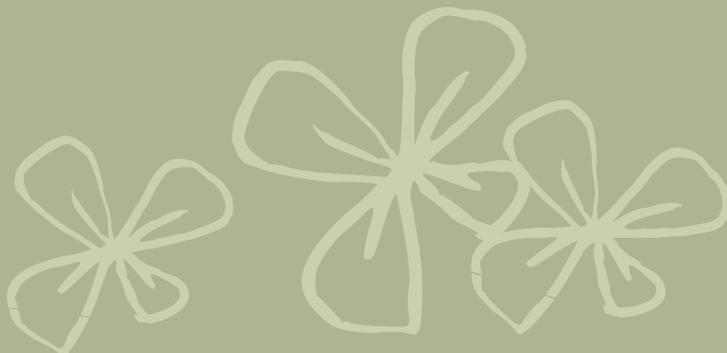
The Official SCUSD Student Advisory Council Newsletter

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MARCH MADNESS

Caleb Fox (West Campus HS)

HERE COMES MARCH!!!! That also means it is the beginning of March Madness!! For those of you who don't know what March Madness is, it is the NCAA's men's and women's college basketball national tournaments. What this means is that 64 of the best college basketball teams in Division 1 play against each other to make it to the National Championship in hopes of winning it. However, it's not as simple as that. The format consists of four brackets with 16 teams in each bracket. In each bracket, the 16 teams are ranked from 1 being the best to 16 being the worst. The seeding of teams is decided based on regular-season performance. Earlier I said that it was the 64 best teams. That is not entirely true. In Division 1 there are 32 conferences. If a team wins their conference they are automatically placed into the tournament despite not being in the top 64 teams. For some teams, this is the only way they can make it into the tournament which might mean they displace a "better" team from a different conference from entering the tournament. The format of the tournament is single elimination. It's win or go home. If you win then you move on and repeat until either you lose or win the national championship. This format creates an exciting atmosphere in the sporting world since the format can create such unpredictability in the games that it makes it so fun to watch. Upsets are very common during March Madness. An upset is when a higher seed is beat by the lower seed. Even if you aren't into sports or basketball these games can be so fun to watch. College students are so passionate about their teams. If you are interested you can develop your brackets and make your own predictions if you go to the ESPN website. It is personally one of my favorite sporting events. For the women some teams to look for on the west coast are Stanford, Arizona, Oregon and Washington State. Some teams to look out for in the men's tournament are Gonzaga, Arizona, Auburn, Purdue, Kansas, Kentucky, Duke, Villanova, Baylor (last year's National Champions). The UCLA men's team made it to the final four last year. Other west coast schools who have participated include: San Diego State, UC Davis, USC, UC Santa Barbara and Stanford.





PI DAY

SAC Collective

National Pi Day is held on March 14th, to celebrate the mathematical constant Pi (3.14...)

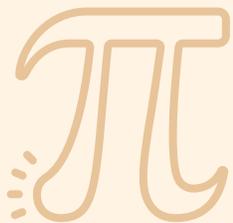
Typically celebrated by places using the month-day format (mm/dd), this year's Pi Day falls on a Friday.

First celebrated by San Franciscan physicist, Larry Shaw in 1988, March 14th coincidentally also being Albert Einstein's birthday.

Most commonly celebrated in elementary and middle school, eating Pi on pie day is a rewarding and delicious way to celebrate.

A survey asking about the popular and most well-liked pie flavors was shown to point towards the most preferred flavors being apple, pumpkin and sweet potato.

The current Guinness World Record for memorizing digits of Pi is held by Lu Chao of China, who, in 2005, recited 67,890 digits.





WINTERGUARD COMPETITIONS

Jade Fears (Rosemont HS)

Starting Friday, the 4th, Winterguard will be having their competitions. After Friday, we will be having a comp every Saturday for the rest of the month till April 2nd. For those who might not be familiar with Winterguard, it's a competitive, performance-based sport that includes choreographed staging, dance, and the exploration of equipment such as flags and props, rifles, and sabers. The dates and locations for these competitions are the following: the 4th is at West Park High School, the 12th is at Woodcreek High School, the 19th is at Antelope High School, the 26 is at Elk Grove High School, and lastly Championships is on April 2nd at Lincoln High School in Stockton. We would if you guys decided to come out and support us.





PANDEMIC VIDEO GAMES... TOO SOON OR TOO EARLY?

Colson Nguyen (New Tech. HS)

Well hello everyone, I am back at it again with another article. However, this time it seems to be something other than Covid, how strange. Anyways I am doing an article today about the game Plague Inc. by Ndemic Creations. Plague Inc. is a simulation game that was released all the way back in 2012. In Plague Inc., you play as a plague and do your best to wipe out humanity. It has a high level of customization and allows for many different unique ways to play. You can play a small virus all the way to the Simian flu from War for the Planet of the Apes. It has been one of my favorite mobile games of all time, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who wanted a game to play.

Recently they have released an expansion called The Cure. In this expansion, they flip the script and allow you to play on the side of the humans in their effort to survive the plague. You must use a wide range of real-world strategies in an attempt to fight back against the plague. The player must take the place of a worldwide organization that is able to control various countries and order them into various lockdowns and other mandates. For instance, some of the most effective ways to control the virus in the game are to order Mask mandates and Social distancing. This slows down the spread of the virus, however, it also increases the noncompliance of the population of various countries. This makes it a fairly good simulator in terms of real-world comparison. The Cure expansion will remain free until the COVID-19 is under control. If that ever does happen. Either way, I once again would highly recommend this game to anyone. It can also useful to take some of the lessons from this game and implement them in our everyday lives.





ARE WE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR HABITS?

Jacqueline Zhang (John F. Kennedy HS)

This is an academic paper on the book *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.

This paper discusses topics such as death, rape, and sexual assault. Reader discretion is advised.

As her children grew older and demanded less of her care, Angie Bachmann turned to gambling as a way to cope with her non-eventful housekeeping life. Her gambling started small, she would occasionally win enough money for grocery shopping and telephone bills. She describes her trips to the casino as 'work shifts'; she would go once a week and spend only one hour on the blackjack table. As she got better, her 'shifts' extended, her rule loosened, and her earnings can pay off two months of rent. Bachmann continued visiting the casino almost every day with growing credits and stakes. Gambling had become a stress reliever, a coping mechanism, and an addiction for her. She had lost her parents' inheritance and her house to gambling and even faced a court case against the casino. (Duhigg 270-275, 291)

Brian Thomas killed his wife during his sleep terror – in which your brain shuts down except for the part that stores your habits or habit loops – when he thought he saw an attacker on top of his wife. The part of our brain that takes care of our habit, the central pattern generator, allows sleepwalkers to breathe, walk, and react while staying unconscious. We are so familiar with these habits that we can do them automatically without registering the higher parts of our brain. Similarly, fighting an attacker or self-defense is a habit that we have. When Thomas saw the 'attacker', his automatic response was to protect his wife by fighting, unfortunately, it wasn't the attacker that he was choking. (Duhigg 276-283)

In both of the above case studies, their lawyer argued that they acted automatically and were not conscious of their decision. Yet, only Thomas was freed by the jury. Charles Duhigg, the author of *The Power of Habit*, compared these two cases as a way to explore the neurology of free will in habits. Should we be responsible for our habits, when we learn and do them unconsciously? Besides, who gets to decide which habit is bad and which is good; why is it that spending thousands on coffee is a hobby and spending the same amount on alcohol is an addiction? We should also examine the role that society plays; perhaps the reason why Thomas won and Bachmann did not is that addiction has a negative connotation in our society while science and medical conditions are taken slightly more seriously.

The person that is addicted does not choose to be addicted; it's not a choice to take the drug." – Nora Volkow, the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse once said in her speech *Addiction Is a Disease of Free Will*. This does not seem like the general consensus in our society. In Angie Bachmann's case, after her parents had passed, she moved to another state in hopes of quitting gambling. Though she later gave in to the temptation and eventually fell back into her bad habit, this is an approach that Duhigg used to prove why Bachmann was held accountable for her actions. Compared to Thomas, who was not aware of the pattern of his sleep terror, Bachmann was aware of her gambling problem. (Duhigg 295) The distinction between Thomas and Bachmann is that Bachmann can choose whether or not to enter the casino, while Thomas cannot choose to sleepwalk.

Though, there might be another reason why Thomas was objectively a victim; sleepwalking is seen as a medical condition while gambling is thought to be a choice that addicts make. The discussion of whether addiction is a brain disease sheds light on the severity of addiction: are addicts responsible for their addiction? Duhigg mentioned the brain research done by Reza Habib, where they found that pathological gamblers see near misses as wins (Duhigg 287-290). Volkow also said the reason why addicts take drugs was that their brains are much more sensitive to the rewarding effects of drugs (Volkow, 2015). Studies have shown that smokers who label their smoking as addiction have a relatively harder time quitting compared to those who think of it as a bad habit. Ted Fenton and Reinout Wiers put it as such: When you believe you have lost your free will you can more easily shrug your shoulders, because you are actually not to blame (Fenton and Wiers 2). These pieces of evidence support the idea that addiction can affect brain functions, which leads to the loss of control in addicts. In retrospect, addiction is as serious as sleepwalking. It is believable that Bachmann failed to control herself once she entered the casino. Yet, we still return to the same issue: addictions are bad habits that can be broken (Fenton and Wiers). Bachmann is to blame for not reaching out for help and not putting a stop to her addiction. "The most important ingredients in quitting addictions are the person's belief that they can, and their commitment to doing so." (Peele) If only Bachmann had gone to Gambling Anonymous meetings and had stronger will and commitment to quitting, then she might've saved herself from debt and a lawsuit. Though, we should also note the role that society plays in addiction.

From cigarette advertising to the stigmatization of addiction to the lack of casino regulation, our society is filled with temptations for addicts. Bachmann returned to gambling partly due to the credits and plane tickets that Harrah's, the casino, offered as bait (Duhigg 290-291). There aren't clear laws that restrict casino marketing. Moreover, the criminalization of substances offers no help for addicts. The legalization of marijuana in recent years has helped lift the stigma. We as a society need to do better and offer assistance to addicts.

Other than Thomas' murder example, Duhigg touched on how rapists have also used automatism as their defense, which usually worked and they were found not guilty. To examine more cases, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine published a study, compiling medical-legal cases in regards to sleep-related violence (SRV) and sexual behavior in sleep (SBS). The interesting aspect of both SRV and SBS cases is that all defendants are male and almost all victims are female. Focusing on SBS cases, most cases used sleepwalking as their defense, and all but one case had resulted in acquittals. The victims of SBS cases studied share similar characteristics: female, age ranged from 4-10, related to the defendant.

The habit that is exhibited in these sleepwalking or sleep terror cases is fulfilling sexual arousal. According to Duhigg, it is our ingrained habit to satisfy sexual urges (Duhigg 280). That being said, the overwhelming sex imbalance suggests that men are more susceptible to sexual urges. A way to look at this would be the long history of men dominating discussions around sex. Teenage boys have always been encouraged to engage in sexual activities while teenage girls were taught to save their virginity as a symbol of purity. What's normal for men to talk about – masturbation, sex, pornography – is 'slutty', unusual, gross for women. However, we cannot blame men only, as society is also responsible. The traditional view of gender roles of men being arrogant, dominant, sexual, strong is ultimately why it's more 'normal' for men to fulfill their sexual urge. Theoretically, men who have the urge to engage in sexual behaviors would give in and women would fight the urge, which would explain the SBS cases studied. In one of the cases, a 26-year-old man raped a 4-year-old girl; In another case, a 36-year-old touched his 9-year-old daughter; A 38-year-old fondled his 10-year-old stepdaughter. This supports the hypothesis because these victims were next to the defendant, thus becoming the closest target for releasing their urge.

Rape is different from murder. When victims survive rape, they have to navigate life through trauma. In all of the SBS cases, victims are minors. This trauma that stemmed from childhood can disrupt their adulthood when they start exploring sex. Dworkin et al. wrote in their review and meta-analysis of sexual assault victimization and psychopathology:

A qualitative review of the prevalence of various mental disorders in survivors of adult SA (Sexual Assault) found that 17%–65% of people with a history of SA develop PTSD, 13%–51% meet diagnostic criteria for depression, 12–40% experience symptoms of anxiety, 13–49% develop alcohol use disorders, 28–61% develop drug use disorders, 23–44% experience suicidal ideation, and 2–19% attempt suicide.

In today's world where rape cases can be excused because the victim wore red underwear and where victim-blaming is still rampant, justice is rarely served for rape and sexual assault victims. We are living in a world where 97 percent of women face rape or sexual assault at least once in their lives yet only 1% of cases lead to convictions. Shouldn't the defendants be held accountable for the damage and trauma that they have cast on their victims? By setting these defendants free, who's to say they won't commit the same assault on another victim; By setting them free, is the court of law suggesting the pain and suffering that the victims endured deserve no compensation or justice? On the other end of the spectrum, should we imprison a rapist or murderer who acted out of a genetic, medical condition? It is an understatement to say that this is a moral quandary.

In conclusion, are we responsible for our habits? We have the responsibility to change our habits, as demonstrated by Bachmann's addiction example. Are we responsible for habits that we do unconsciously? In the discussion of crime, the law might free defendants due to the lack of mens rea; but does it mean there shouldn't be consequences for crimes that one commits unconsciously? In the eyes of morals, we are responsible. Intended or not, the effect was done, a victim was hurt. Instead of fixating on whom to blame for addictions or crimes, a more rewarding conversation perhaps would be what actions we can do for the prevention of incidents like Bachmann's or Thomas'. To recall, there should be more regulations regarding casinos and company marketing. The stigmatization and criminalization of addiction contribute to the hardship of overcoming addiction, which indicates the need for us to change. Gender roles might be the primary influence for sleepwalking sexual behaviors, Therefore, we should start defying traditional views. We should also protect women and victims of rape or sexual assault by serving justice and educating men.



MINI MOVIE REVIEWS

Mayani Bowens (George Washington Carver HS)

Hello and welcome to my mini movie review corner!

I'm no film critic or expert by any means, but I do enjoy movie-watching and would love to share with you all, my thoughts on the movies I've seen recently!

So, some minor spoiler warnings for the following films:

Encanto (2021), Coco (2017), and Uncharted (2022)

See ya'll next month, enjoy!



Encanto (2021)

dir. Bryon Howard and Jared Bush

I think the story was a really important one, and one that needed to be told, especially to younger children. However, the world and the characters were so interesting and I had wished to see a bit more of them. I had watched Pixar's *Coco*, immediately after this and was reminded of how much of an emotional punch that movie packs, too. The animation was great and Lin Manuel-Miranda's music is *chef's kiss* amazing. Overall, it was a good time and I enjoyed the movie.

My rating: 3.8



Uncharted (2022)

dir. Ruben Fleischer

Honestly, I'm not a huge action-adventure fan. And usually game to movie adaptations don't go over very well but I thought this was okay. Antonio Banderas was my favorite part but he was only there for such a short amount of time :(The storyline was a bit generic but the acting was pretty great so no complaints from me.

My rating: 2.7



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