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THE USD VISTA

New COVID-19 variant “Omicron” threatens study abroad

The announcement of a new COVID-19 variant creates discourse around upcoming study abroad opportunities

KARISA KAMPBELL
NEWS EDITOR

The end of the semester is nearly in sight, as is the completion of a relatively normal semester; students start to become hopeful of a post COVID-19 world. However, the announcement of the new COVID-19 variant “Omicron,” smothers this normality with a possible lockdown. Specifically, the students who were hopeful about studying abroad over Intercession or the Spring semester are becoming fearful that the Omicron variant will once again put their plans on pause.

While not much is known about the new Omicron variant, it is hypothesized that the variant may be less dangerous than the Delta variant, according to “The Hill.” The Omicron variant has already caused travel restrictions in South Africa and the United States, however it is possible that this is only the beginning.

Many USD students have plans to study abroad over

Intercession and the Spring Semester, however, many are beginning to have legitimate concerns about whether or not a semester abroad will be possible.

USD sophomore, Evelyn Shetzline, who is supposed to go to Italy over Intercession as part of the Second Year Experience (SYE) program, shared her concerns about the new variant.

“The new variant can be tricky with traveling, but I feel that since I’m vaccinated I feel less stressed. The university is closely monitoring it and allegedly will get back to us within two weeks about our travel plans,” Shetzline said. “I’m scared that the day before my flight they are going to say we can’t go, as USD has not given us a lot of notice in the past before on this type of stuff.”

As a requirement for some majors such as the international relations (IR) major, studying abroad is an outstanding component making it difficult for IR students to plan ahead. USD sophomore, Erin Miller, shared her IR major concerns.

See Omicron, Page 2



Students struggle to plan for upcoming semesters as study abroad plans remain in flux due to the pandemic.

Photo courtesy of Yuya Hata/Unsplash

Best of Fall 2021: Torero sports

Some of USD’s best sports moments this fall

JAREK MORGAN
ASST. SPORTS EDITOR

This sports season was unlike any other. It was defined by overcoming adversity and the ever-present unknown — mostly if the sports we love could continue. However, there were still moments of triumph, trailblazing athletes, long-standing school records broken, and several championship performances that will remain in USD’s history. Looking back, the year will be remembered for the unknowns, the uncertainties and the adjustments made by both coaches and student athletes, and in between it all there were exciting and incredible moments



USD golf celebrates their first team win of the season in Maui in November.

that won’t be soon forgotten.

Here are some of the best moments that were achieved by our fellow student athletes at USD this Fall 2021 season, in no particular order.

Cross-Country

Early this year, senior captain, Ethan Steiner, of the men’s cross-country team outlined some of his personal goals for the upcoming season. Steiner was not shy about what he believed he could accomplish with hardwork and dedication.

“It’s simple, for me and my time goals I want to run 24:30 or better in the 8K,” Steiner said. “I

know what I am capable of and I want to prove that this season.”

In a picture-perfect fashion, late October, Steiner achieved his goal when he ran a personal and school best of 24:27. There has never been another Torero athlete that has run a faster time, and it could not have been done by a more dedicated and talented student athlete other than Ethan Steiner.

See Shining Stars, Page 12

MORE STORIES

Anti-abortion speaker

See News, page 3

Kyle Rittenhouse

See Opinion, page 4

Holiday activities

See Feature, page 6

Cuffing season do’s & don’ts

See A&C, page 9

Women’s basketball wins

See Sports, page 11

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EDITORIAL

How the Rittenhouse and Arbery verdicts failed us

High-profile trials do not give people the justice they deserve

MEGAN VALADEZ
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

On Friday, Nov. 19, I was sitting in the second row of my criminology class, waiting for class to begin, when I got a notification on my phone from CNN revealing that the verdicts were about to be read in the Kyle Rittenhouse case. Everyone else in my class got the same notification, including my professor. We all listened as the jury read “We, the jury, find the defendant, Kyle H. Rittenhouse, not guilty” five different times.

Being in a sociology class where every day we discuss how unjust the criminal justice system is and how it favors White people, we really were not surprised with the verdict.

This past week, we received the verdicts of two high-profile cases. The first was in the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse for the Aug. 25, 2020 killings of two people in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The second was that of Gregory McMichael, Travis McMichael, and William Bryan for the 2020 killing of Ahmaud Arbery.

A single trial, though, is not a referendum on social justice, and looking to criminal convictions to solve our problems only further entrenches them. But, despite the outcomes – an acquittal for Rittenhouse and convictions for Mr. Bryan and the McMichaels – no verdict can resolve the systemic issues in the criminal justice system.

Convictions in high-profile cases, like that of Kyle Rittenhouse, are not paths to justice in my book. It does not matter that Rittenhouse was a 17-year-old who shot and killed two people with a military caliber weapon and then fled the scene. Rittenhouse having a gun while underage does not matter when he is pleading self-defense. What matters in these cases is the fact that the jury is tasked with applying a specific set of laws to a specific set of facts.

In this case, Rittenhouse’s defense used Wisconsin’s self-defense law to his benefit. This law allows a person to use deadly force if he or she “reasonably believes” it is necessary to prevent “imminent death or great bodily harm.”

I, and most people, thought that Rittenhouse would at least be found guilty of weapons possession, because he was a 17-year-old with a rifle, who also crossed state lines. According to Wisconsin law,



A guilty verdict does not mean justice for Black lives as the justice system is still a work in progress.

Photo courtesy of Logan Weaver/Unsplash



Kyle Rittenhouse’s verdict sparked a huge protest in Los Angeles, as well as many other cities around the U.S.

Photo courtesy of Mike Von/Unsplash

minors are not allowed to carry guns, but one subsection could be interpreted to exempt long rifles from this law. It was known that Rittenhouse had an AR-15, which is a long barreled, semi-automatic, military-style weapon, and the judge dismissed the charge.

The story that an officer told while testifying is most interesting. He stated that Rittenhouse approached his car with a weapon on his chest and his hands up in surrender, but the officers ordered him to move out of the way because they were in search of the shooter.

The shooter was standing right in front of him, with a weapon, yet it did not register

in their minds that a young, white teenager could be the one to kill multiple people. Of course, police believed it had to be someone in the crowd of protestors or “looters” because that is usually who our society chooses to hyperfocus on when looking at violence.

I think it is also important to talk about the fact that people who are on trial in high-profile cases have the money and resources to have very powerful defense attorneys, which most people do not have the luxury of having, especially people of color. Kyle Rittenhouse even posed for pictures with the judge, Bruce Schroeder, unhandcuffed in the courtroom. That would never be

the case for any person of color.

Using these trials to repair social damage is not possible at all. Our criminal justice system was built on slave codes that still serve to reinforce racial hierarchies. As Americans, we are told that punishment will solve all problems, but it does not. Even though I was relieved to know that the McMichaels and Mr. Bryan will be going to prison for killing Ahmaud Arbery, that does not mean that the murders of innocent black people will stop.

Just because Derek Chauvin will rot in prison for killing George Floyd does not mean that police brutality will just magically go away.

Injustice is much deeper than just police abuse. There are endless other injustices in our society, such as voting restrictions, homelessness, public housing, food scarcity, and so much more. It is clear that wins for the prosecution in the Arbery case or the Floyd case do not address any of the real problems or racist ideals that exist in today’s legal system.

Our legal system needs abolition. In order to create change, we need to build an entirely new system that is not built on the racist ideas of old white men.

Abolition seems pretty impossible, especially considering how many brainwashed racists still exist in our society today. But, I think a solid step in the right direction includes equality for all – which in this case, means equal representation for all. People should not be found not guilty for murdering two people just because they have the money for a good defense attorney.

In the same criminology class I mentioned earlier, we learned about what goes on inside the Cook County Courthouse in Chicago, Illinois, where we see a double system of justice – one for people of color and the poor, and one for the wealthy whites.

There are visual terms of racial segregation in this courthouse, like a parking structure for lawyers, judges, jurors, and cops, and limited, metered parking for the poor people of color.

This one example shows the way racism pervades the criminal justice system. Most of these low-income people of color spend their entire day at the courthouse just for a judge to make a decision about their case within minutes. Most people do not even have representation, and if they do, they meet their public defenders minutes before entering the courtroom.

This makes me think about the structures that must be dismantled or changed in order to create the change we want. Guilty verdicts in high-profile cases are a step in the right direction, but are not enough whatsoever. We must address all of the problems our criminal justice and legal systems face each day in the courthouse and out on the streets. Maybe then low-income people of color will be afforded the same dignity in which was given to Kyle Rittenhouse.

The views expressed in the editorial and op-ed sections are not necessarily those of *The USD Vista* staff, the University of San Diego, or its student body.

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

Not feeling particularly cheery this year (or at the moment)? Here are events and spots in San Diego for a well deserved break from all that studying.

EVENTS AND SPOTS FOR SOME HOLIDAY FUN BEFORE FINALS



Photo courtesy of @super_scooty/Instagram

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES TO SPREAD JOY AND BRING YOUR MIND BACK TO EARTH

Ice skating is a great workout for a de-stress moment as well as a fun activity to do with friends during the holiday season! You get the best of both worlds ice skating right next to the beach at the Hotel Del Coronado from now until Jan. 2. Admission is \$35 and the proceeds benefit the Make a Wish Foundation.

Liberty Station also offers ice skating from now until Jan. 9,. Admission is \$15 and benefits the Peckham Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Rady Children's Hospital. This is the perfect opportunity to have fun with friends while spreading the holiday spirit.

Other options to just get some fresh air are going for walks. This is a great way to wind down from studying, why not add in some holiday light shows? From now to Dec. 30, the Botanic Gardens at Balboa Park is hosting Botanic Wonderland, a walk through the botanical gardens with festive lights to guide the way. Admission is \$22 for a thirty minute window to enjoy a nice walk and other holiday cheers, such as carolers, food trucks, and possibly some Santa sightings.



ICE SKATING @
Liberty Station

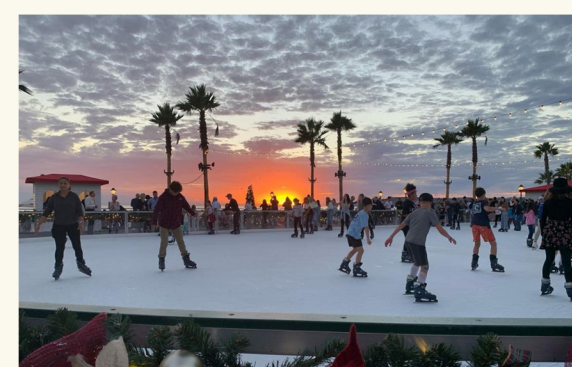
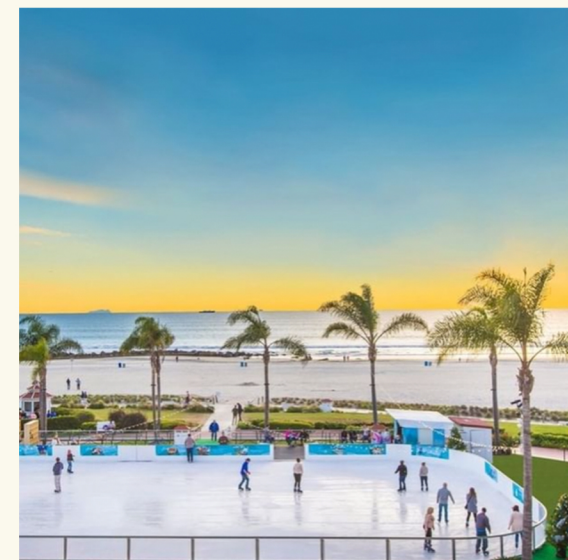


Photo courtesy of @delcoronado/Instagram

IF SOME CREATIVE ENTERTAINMENT IS MORE YOUR STYLE...

For a more laid back activity for your study break, try heading to the theaters. Rooftop Cinema Club in Downtown San Diego is showcasing holiday themed movies such as "The Grinch" (all versions), "Love Actually," "Home Alone," and of course, "Elf." Show times vary but tickets start at \$16.65 with the student discount.

If movies aren't really your thing but the Grinch is, look no further than the Old Globe Theater for their showing of Dr Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" or "Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Christmas Show" based off of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. Tickets for the Grinch start at \$69 and tickets for The Big Christmas Show starts at \$45. Both shows run from now until shortly after Christmas.



HOLIDAY SHOWS!



Photo courtesy of @rooftopcinemaclub/Instagram



Photo courtesy of @gaslampquarter/Instagram

HOLIDAY PET PARADE



Photo courtesy of
@charlie_surisup/Instagram

IF PARADES AND PERUSING FESTIVE LIGHTS ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT WILL EASE YOUR FINALS NERVES...

Head to Oceanside Harbor for the Parade of Lights on Saturday, Dec. 11. Boats are showcased on the harbor, glowing with festive lights. It starts at 7:00 p.m. and it is free to the public. Make sure to bring a chair, some hot cocoa, and blankets to enjoy the parade of boats.

Pets in decorated outfits march the streets of the Gaslamp Quarter in the Gaslamp Holiday Pet Parade. On Dec. 19 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. enjoy the adorable animals dressed up in their most festive costumes as a great activity to wrap up a successful finals season.

Finals can be a stressful time of the semester. It's important to give your mind and body breaks from all of the diligent studying. These holiday activities will get you in the mood for festivities and allow for some quality time with friends during these busy weeks.

FEATURE

Reimagining STEM for kids

USD senior Taylor Brown unpacks STEM topics in her children’s book

YANA KOURETAS
FEATURE EDITOR

During much of Taylor Brown’s adventurous summer spent in Sweden, she auctioned her time off between conducting research in a lab and writing a children’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) alphabet book — two seemingly different activities that Brown managed to interconnect. A senior industrial and systems engineering student at USD, Brown began the process of writing and assembling the children’s book during this past summer in Sweden. Her book titled, “What do you know about STEM?”, sought to introduce STEM-related topics to younger audiences, in a way that could be easily processed and understood.

Over the course of two and a half months, many manuscript drafts later, and the utilization of Canva for illustrations and images, Brown logged onto Amazon and became a self-published author.

“I have always wanted to write a children’s book ever since I was a child. It was something that my mom encouraged me to do for a while and I was just pushing it off. Over the summer I had an internship in Sweden and I talked to my mom and I

was like ‘I’m kind of bored after work and I don’t know what to do,’” Brown said. And her mom said, “‘Oh, you should get started on writing your book.’”

Because she found out that self-publishing on Amazon was super easy.

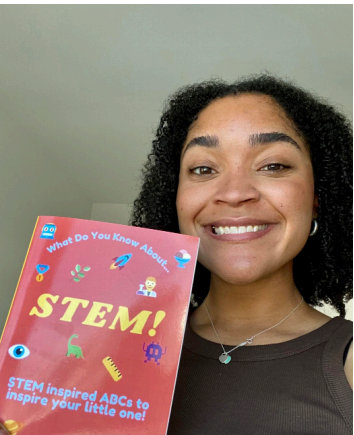
When brainstorming what kind of children’s book Brown wanted to make, she decided to create an alphabet book because it was the option where she could generate the greatest range of ideas and information within STEM. Brown stressed the significance of her approach: introducing an assortment of things one could do, topics to learn about, and cool facts in STEM fields and careers.

“The reason why I decided to do STEM was because I noticed that I wasn’t really introduced

to the idea of being an engineer until I was in high school,” Brown said. “And I thought that this idea should be introduced sooner and I thought the best way to introduce this topic in a fun, creative way would be to make a children’s book targeted for young kids so they could get excited about it and get more interested and maybe start trying a little bit harder in their science class, and it can sprout from there.”

Although writing a children’s alphabet book might seem like a direct process, as a current senior in college, Brown had to reimagine herself in her five-year-old shoes – one of the more difficult tasks of the entire undertaking. Consequently, Brown took more complex concepts and associated them with more familiar terms that a child would likely know.

“I was just trying to put my head in the space of a child; like what would I find interesting, what’s interesting and cool to me, what do I want to learn about, what can I handle, that was probably the most challenging part; leaving out the technical words and keeping it light and fun,” Brown said. “So for example, ‘A’ is for astronaut, so that is a career they can follow, but ‘B,’ is for bear, which is an animal, so that is kind of getting them interested in animals, and leading



Author, Taylor Brown and her book.
Photo courtesy of Taylor Brown



A page from Brown’s book.
Photo courtesy of Taylor Brown

them into veterinary medicine.” In addition to wanting to serve her passion and interest in STEM through this book, Brown is equally as passionate about STEM outreach. For her, a children’s book symbolizes a great possibility: having the space to ensure that underrepresented individuals and people of color in STEM could be introduced as early as possible to younger audiences. “I am currently Vice President of USD’s chapter of the National Society of Black

Engineers and one of their main mission statements is to increase the amount of underrepresented people in engineering roles,” Brown said. “So I feel like this is me contributing to that goal by preaching to younger kids and getting them excited about STEM and showing them that they can do it too and that it’s fun and interesting, and not something scary.”

Moving forward, Brown looks to continue her book-making ventures, especially with children’s alphabet books. However, for her next project, she is interested in catering to a slightly older audience, one that is looking at potential career paths in STEM. Additionally, Brown plans to continue to highlight underrepresented, established individuals in STEM professions, so that younger generations can look up to successful women, engineers, and people of color.

The experience of writing and publishing a book is like no other. Through something outwardly simplistic, such as a children’s book, Brown used a lens to apply her experiences as an engineer and looked at what she wishes she would have known about the field growing up. She leveraged her power to write and saw it as an opportunity and a responsibility to bring accessible information to a younger audience.

USD undergradate play raises awareness

How the theatrical production brought attention to LGBTQ+ issues

HALEY JACOB
ASST. FEATURE EDITOR

Before Thanksgiving break, the Undergraduate Department of Theatre completed their four-show run of the play, “fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life.” The show ran from Nov. 19 to Nov. 21, bringing in audiences eager to attend the department’s first in-person production since the pandemic.

The play tells the story of a lesbian high school student who struggles to find her place amidst the peers of her Catholic institution.

The themes of self-discovery and self-acceptance are profound as the character learns to own her sexuality in the face of bigotry from the community. The plot addresses heavy topics such as homophobia and hate crimes to stress the message of perseverance through adversity and inspire audiences to show empathy to human differences.

The Director of the Undergraduate Theatre program, Scott Ripley, shared his reasons for selecting the play.



“fml: How Carson McCuller’s saved my life” was put on in the Studio Theatre in Sacred Heart Hall.

“I wanted our LGBTQ+ community to know that we love them. I was like, ‘how can we do that?’ Well, we produce a play that’s from their perspective. We tell their story,” Ripley said. “We have a big LGBTQ+ community here on campus, and I want them to feel supported and honored and respected; I want everyone to feel like that.”

Assistant Scenic and Projection Designer and USD sneior, Daniel Long, shared his student perspective on the importance of bringing a play that highlights the

LGBTQ+ experience to USD.

“I think there needs to be more visibility on this campus. My experience as a queer person is that it’s not easy to find other queer people, and when I do, it’s great, but the allyship on our campus has been lackluster,” Long said. “What we really need is that outward show of ‘we’re here for you.’ This play is important because it’s a way of creating visibility into an aspect of queer culture that people wouldn’t otherwise have access to, and wouldn’t be able to express otherwise.”

Photo courtesy of Arlene Gill Ripley shared that having the play take place in a Catholic school made him nervous, and he didn’t know how audiences would receive the content and message. However, he knew the LGBTQ+ community deserved to be represented and celebrated.

“I was definitely nervous. But, you know what, I go in my classroom pretty much every week and tell people they’ve got to be brave. Well, then I have to be brave. It’s not fair for me to ask my students to be brave if I’m not brave,” he said. “I was like, we have to tell this story,

and if in some way it hurts me, I will accept that. But luckily, we have these progressive people like Jim Harris, Gail Baker, the Provosts, and my entire chain of command in support.”

Senior cast member, Jazmine Mitts, who played Emma, shared the message she hopes people took away from the performance.

“I hope this play made people realize the issues queer youth face and how even if they’re not directly contributing to their struggles, being a bystander has an effect as well,” Mitts said. “Not speaking up can cause a ripple.”

The decision to perform a play that acknowledges and celebrates the LGBTQ+ community on our campus is a step in the right direction for making USD a welcoming environment for all students.

The play’s message of acceptance and empathy towards marginalized peoples sparks important conversations crucial for achieving greater inclusivity and open-mindedness.

After all, to be a changemaker campus means allowing for every story to be told, especially those often silenced.

ARTS & CULTURE

Cuffing season: more than just mistletoe *‘Tis the season of reconnection*

ANNA VALAIK
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Traditionally, the holiday season is filled with festive celebrations, wintery treats, and fun moments with loved ones. However, in more recent years, Gen Z/millennials have created another season that too coincides with the changing weather and cozy mood of November and December; it’s called “cuffing season.”

However, this season is maybe not what you think it is. Yes, it’s a romantic phenomenon for some, but it’s also a reminder that the holiday season is all about spreading love and enjoying time with our loved ones. After the crazy year and a half the world has gone through, we should all be embracing the mood of cuffing season. Let this be a gentle reminder to build new friendships and rebuild the forgotten ones when given the opportunity. At a time of such busyness and chaos, especially with the end of finals season, all college students deserve the chance to find connection with whomever they choose, which could simply just be choosing yourself.

“So, what is cuffing season?” one might ask. Cuffing season is the time period in which single people search for a short-term partner to keep them company during the colder months. For many, October, November, and December (although months of celebration), are marked by colder temperatures, fewer activities, and just generally lonelier times. It’s no longer the summer season – where there seems to be endless things to do and people to see thanks to the beautiful sunshine. So, when the sun fades into grayer days and people are less motivated to leave their homes, humans naturally begin searching for a partner to hunker down with. This tends to

be during the holiday season, as well. As most college students know, it’s becoming more and more common to return home for Thanksgiving break and have that one annoying uncle ask why you are still single. On top of that, it’s becoming less and less likely to make genuine, long-lasting romantic connections in an age that prioritizes hookup culture.

Yes, the holidays are a time of rest, but they also involve finals, travelling, and oftentimes intense emotions for most college students; it isn’t always just snowflakes and Santa Claus. On top of that stress, this is also the first semester back in-person for USD students. This means, for many, it’s been busy and chock-full of schoolwork, reconciliations with friends, and extracurricular activities. Since everyone has been so busy, many have lost touch or drifted away from even their close friends. It’s hard to juggle so much at once, and the transition back to school has not been perfect for anyone. All in all, students haven’t had the chance to just take a step back and breathe.

For this reason, it’s time to normalize cuffing season for everyone, not just those searching for romantic partners. Cuffing season is more than just Netflix and chill; it can be a time of connection, which can look different for everyone.

During this time, students should challenge themselves to reconnect with old friends, spend those extra few moments with their parents, or simply just practice some much-needed self-love.

Considering the semester ends and many go back to their hometown, this means people can finally take a break and refocus their priorities. They can finally slow down and enjoy the present moment. Everyone, and especially college students, deserve to know and be reminded that they are worthy of love and support. So, the next time you hear “cuffing season” and stress about being single or not taking part in this trend, reframe the narrative. Here’s some inspiration on how to do it.

Plan a date with a hometown friend

Because many of us attend school away from our hometown, the holiday season is the perfect time to reach out to high school, grade school, or work friends from home. Last year, COVID prevented us from seeing these people in person, so take advantage of this precious time if you feel comfortable. If you don’t, even setting up a long FaceTime call would help you reignite friendships and remind you that you have people who care about you everywhere.

All these “dates” and more will give you that beautiful feeling of community and connection with someone else.

Reconnect with a sibling or family member

As annoying as it can be to return home and no longer feel the independence of college, it’s also a blessing in disguise. You can finally let loose and take a break from all the mundane adult responsibilities that come with college life. In turn, you will find yourself spending an inordinate amount of time with your family.

So, if you and your sister haven’t hung out for a while or if your mom is dying to go Christmas shopping, spend time with them. Many students don’t get to see their family as often as they once did, and because of that, family time for some is incredibly important to fostering happiness and a sense of belonging.

Date yourself

Finally, and arguably most importantly, cuff yourself. At the end of the day, the way we feel and think about ourselves affects how we will act toward and treat others. Feeling secure and comfortable in your own skin is a beautiful thing, and something we should constantly be working towards. Often, college involves a whirlwind of emotions: confusion, stress, imposter syndrome, and discomfort. When school maintains a go-go-go pace, rarely do we take a chance to wonder how we are genuinely feeling. It’s incredibly difficult to internalize experiences and emotions when we are juggling countless responsibilities.

With that being said, the holidays truly are the time to reconnect with ourselves. We have finished all our tests, group projects, and presentations, and now can just do what makes us feel good, what makes us happy. Although cuffing season is branded as something only for romantic partners, that simply is just not the case.

Life isn’t all about constantly searching for someone to affirm and love you. Life is about loving yourself first, and then letting all the beautiful connections flow seamlessly into your life after that.

Reframing narratives to fit your unique life is important, and reflecting on cuffing season is no different. It’s a beautiful season, to say the least.

Let’s promote connection and community, no matter who it may be with or what it may look like. It’s obvious the world needs it right now, and all USD students deserve this sense of inner peace, too.

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Follow them @usdtvnews



The holidays are a time to reconnect.
Anna Valaik/The USD Vista

How to combat Seasonal Affective Disorder

Avoid “getting SAD” this holiday season

MEI FLORY
ASST. A&C EDITOR

The months of November and December are supposed to be the happiest of the year, with families and friends coming together to celebrate national holidays and engage in other festivities. Plus, winter break means no school and all the time in the world to relax and sleep in. As much as everyone wants this to be reality, it isn’t always true.

Seasonal Affective Disorder, ironically known as SAD, is commonly referred to as “seasonal depression”, “holiday blues”, or the “finals funk”. According to the Mayo Clinic, extreme cases of SAD are rare, but an estimated 20 percent of the population will experience a mild form of SAD during the holiday season.

The actual cause of SAD is relatively unknown, but researchers believe that a drop or disruption in the balance of serotonin and melatonin levels may affect whether an individual feels SAD. Additionally, the lack of sunlight during the winter months may throw one’s circadian rhythm (also known as the biological clock) off track, which can affect emotions and the body’s internal sense of time.

Symptoms of SAD include: oversleeping, weight gain, fatigue, appetite changes, feeling depressed, loss of interest in activities or hobbies, and having



Cloudy days in San Diego can contribute to cloudy, sad moods.

difficulties concentrating.

It’s easier said than done to not worry and just be happy. Stress, anxiety, and other negative feelings can occur during busy times like these, and it’s totally normal. But, persistent feelings that prevent people from completing their work and enjoying the holiday season can have larger consequences on mental health.

To prevent SAD from limiting one’s enjoyment of life, there are many ways to help combat its effects, especially in mild cases.

The Mayo Clinic suggests trying calming practices such as yoga, meditation, and mindfulness. Some popular apps like Headspace and Smiling Mind are designed to lead users through guided meditation sessions to help relieve tension and stress. Other simple but effective suggestions include engaging in self-care practices, trying out stress management

Mei Flory/The USD Vista techniques, and exercising.

Self care can involve participating in calming, creative activities such as painting and drawing, or it could be staying in and watching a new Netflix show. Some students may find that studying with friends, taking a walk around campus or going for a run can also help clear their minds and make them feel refreshed.

Rachel Fernandez, a USD junior, shared some other ideas for self-care and stress management. She finds that listening to calming music, napping, and journaling help her not just during finals, but throughout the entire semester. Fernandez really likes watching and listening to the “Zenimation” meditation series on Disney+, as well as playing piano or lo-fi music when studying.

“Talking with friends and practicing self-care such as taking long showers, putting

on face masks and painting my nails really help my self-esteem. When I take care of myself and feel like I look better physically, I feel better emotionally,” Fernandez said.

Dianne Catapang, a USD junior, also feels the effects of SAD each year, especially during finals season. She takes prescribed antidepressants for when she feels her worst, but Catapang has other ways of reducing her levels of stress and anxiety.

“I have a self-care journal where I log how much I eat, physical things I do and mental things I’m thinking. I sometimes write songs,” Catapang said.

Catapang described what she found to be the quickest way to calm down.

“If I’m anxious, I like to sit in a corner and breathe because I have two walls to lean against for extra support. I like taking walks and going on drives with friends. Not to anywhere really, but just the ride itself,” Catapang said.

Since darkness, colder temperatures, and finals stress tend to heavily contribute to SAD, other ways of reducing negative feelings involve changing up one’s environment and going outside. Instead of going to Copley Library, try studying at the UC’s. Or, instead of eating inside at the SLP, try grabbing a table outside La Paloma. A brighter, sunnier environment can help boost serotonin levels, which can help lessen the stress.

A part of what makes SAD difficult to deal with is the lack of control that an individual may feel. To regain a sense of control, individuals could try re-decorating their room or re-organizing their desk. Sometimes cleaning up seemingly trivial things such as emails or sorting one’s Spotify playlists can create a therapeutic effect that helps individuals feel productive and motivated. As always, if one is experiencing SAD, one does not have to experience it alone.

USD provides students with great mental health resources such as the Wellness and Counseling Center. Talking with friends, reaching out to trusted professors or other faculty members, and contacting family members can help. For more extreme cases or intense feelings of depression, getting in touch with a therapist or a counseling center can also be a great source of help.

SAD is normal, but extreme cases are a cause for more concern and may require prescribed medications. Seasonal Affective Disorder happens, and that’s okay. But it’s important for everyone to remember that someone cares about them and loved ones are always there for support. It can be challenging to reach out to others, but there are many ways to take care of yourself this holiday season that can help combat experiencing SAD.

Virgil Abloh passes away after battle with cancer at 41

Remembering the admirable fashion designer and his legacy

SPENCER BISPHAM
CONTRIBUTOR

On Sunday, Nov. 28, Virgil Abloh’s seven million Instagram followers opened their phones to a heartbreaking post from his account.

The 41-year-old designer lost a two-year-long private battle with cardiac angiosarcoma — a particularly aggressive form of heart cancer. While he endured treatment behind closed doors, Abloh was responsible for overseeing footwear collaborations with his personal brand, Off-White, curating art exhibitions, and creative directing for Louis Vuitton (LV) menswear.

Bernard Arnault, LV’s CEO, released a statement via Instagram about the designer on the day after his passing.

“Virgil was not only a genius designer and a visionary, he was also a man with a beautiful soul and great wisdom,” Arnault said. “The LVMH family joins me in this moment of great sorrow and we are all thinking of his loved ones on the passing of their husband, father, brother, son, and friend.”

In addition to his time at Louis Vuitton, Abloh’s resume of professional accomplishments extends far beyond the traditional scope.

He is best known for his brand, Off-White, which is popular for its contrasting, loud, and deconstructed design language.

Within this brand, Virgil also produced products in collaboration with companies like Levi’s, IKEA, and Evian Natural Spring Water.

The range of these collaborations touched USD senior, Enoch Waiswa, who is interested in pursuing a career in fashion design himself.

“The way Virgil let people in on his process was special and exciting to those who were fans of his,” Waiswa said. “His versatility across different mediums was inspiring to see and be a part of.”

The most famous of his collaborations, however, is undoubtedly his work at Nike. Since their initial project titled “The Ten” back in 2017, Abloh and the sportswear giant released at least one shoe design per year, most of which have a resale value of more than double the original price. Prior to “The Ten,” sneakers weren’t on the radar of big fashion houses.

However, because the shoes were an instant hit, people of all backgrounds became hungry for more of his designs. The Air Jordan 1 silhouette became a token favorite among celebrities, worn by Beyoncé,



Beyoncé’s personal pair of Off-White Jordans.

Photo courtesy of @virgilabloh/Instagram

Serena Williams, Kendall Jenner, and Frank Ocean.

During the process of unveiling another special-edition Nike Air Force 1 collaboration, Abloh curated the “FIGURES OF SPEECH” exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in late 2019.

As museum-goers walked through, they were able to see the massive collection of his past, present, and then-unreleased sneaker designs. Not only were these groundbreaking products, but they were presented

to the world in a format that had not yet been seen.

In fact, the MCA exhibit represents one of Abloh’s most important contributions to pop culture: the barriers he broke for those after him. Many young, BIPOC fashion creatives are looked over or their designs are outright stolen (ex: Dapper Dan) by luxury brands.

Virgil Abloh was one of the only black designers whose work received consistent and positive attention on such a wide scale. His work at Louis Vuitton, Off-

White, and a myriad of other brands allowed other BIPOC designers to feel seen and appreciated in the fashion world. He was known for his work ethic and design quality, as well.

In an article for the Wall Street Journal, reporter Jacob Gallagher gave a summary of the impact that Abloh had.

“The fashion world has looked down on certain garments. They’ve looked down on hoodies, they’ve looked down on t-shirts, they’ve looked down on sportswear, things that traditionally, if we’re being honest, were cornerstones of Black style,” Gallagher said. “And Virgil was not the first designer to do this, but he was probably the most notable designer in the past few years to take those staples seriously and to treat them as things that could be made at a very high level, that could have price tags that are more than some people’s rent, that belonged on the runway.”

Virgil Abloh brought sneakers to the feet of everyone, from the suburbs to the cities, and this is why his legacy will remain untouchable for years to come.

Abloh built an empire based around his collaborations, and created the hybrid of luxury-street-style fashion. The world will never again experience a designer like this.

SPORTS

Women's basketball starts season off strong

Big wins over San Diego State and Hawaii critical to USD's early success

MARI OLSON
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of San Diego women's basketball team started their season on Tuesday, Nov. 9 with a big win over the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and their early success continued as the games started to stack up.

The Toreros' big win over the San Diego State University (SDSU) Aztecs on Wednesday, Dec. 1, was yet another stepping stone towards a highly successful season for USD. The team won 63-51 against SDSU at Viejas Arena, outscoring the Aztecs in all but the second quarter.

Senior guard, Steph Gorman, led the Toreros with 14 points on Wednesday evening, while graduate student guard, Sydney Hunter, had 11 rebounds to propel USD to the win.

The City Championship, as the rivalry game is known locally, is a big deal for the team's season. Head coach, Cindy Fisher, described what it meant for the team to topple the Aztecs.

"It was a big win, that's a big rival," Fisher said. "I think especially for our super seniors, who are back and wanted to go out with a big win against San Diego State, I think it was really special to them."

Coming out of a tough preseason with a 5-2 record in their first seven games of the season puts the Toreros in a good place going forward. Fisher discussed the team's mentality and focus for these first few



The USD bench celebrates a big win over crosstown rivals San Diego State University on Dec. 1.

Photo courtesy of usdtoreros.com

games.

"I've been really, really pleased with the effort, we're a big defensive team. [The team] really [believes] in that and they know that's what makes us successful," Fisher said. "It's something we work on every day and continue to get better at."

There were some losses in these first few weeks, however, the team figured out how to overcome them. Fisher notes that players stepped up when asked to perform new roles for the good of the team.

"Losing [redshirt senior guard] Myah Pace, who is obviously one of our key players and has been for four years, in the first game against Hawaii to a torn Achilles, you know, it was a little shocking for us," Fisher

admitted. "But the team has really rallied together and other people have stepped up big in her absence."

The Toreros were also without graduate-student point guard, Jordyn Edwards, for the SDSU game as well as the matchup against the University of Nebraska, which has affected the team as well.

"Having those two people not on the floor has been an adjustment for everybody," Fisher said. "We'll be really excited to get Jordyn back and back on the floor for us."

Pace and Edwards were both picked as part of the All-West Coast Conference (WCC) Preseason Team, voted on by the coaches in the league.

Even without the two

experienced guards, though, the Torero women's basketball team is still finding ways to win games, which is the best way to achieve the goals they have set for the end of the season.

"Our goals are to win the WCC championship and also be regular season champions outright and then also to be a postseason team," Fisher explained. "Having a 20-win season and putting ourselves on the top of the WCC going into the tournament is very important to us."

The Toreros are already more than a quarter of the way to that 20-win season, with 29 games in the season, but there is still a lot more work to be done, something Fisher emphasizes to her players.

"With that goal comes a lot of games and a lot of practices and we just have to continue to grow and grow as a unit," Fisher said.

That growth will come in the team's focus on their defensive tactics, which Fisher said is something she "preaches every day."

"Getting our younger players, freshman and even sophomores from last year up to speed with what our defensive system is and what our philosophy is and really understanding how to execute that," is key to the Torero's continued success, Fisher said. "Our defense produces the offense for us. Defensive rebounding, for us to be successful, we're going to have to continue to do that well."

The Toreros played California State University, Northridge (CSUN) away on Sunday, Dec. 11. USD ground out yet another win, beating CSUN 83-70 in overtime. Gorman led the team again with 22 points, while Hunter had six of the team's 37 total rebounds. The win was Fisher's 300th with the USD program.

USD's WCC season will kick off on Dec. 30 against Brigham Young University (BYU), who was picked to win the WCC championship in the preseason poll. The Toreros were picked to finish third.

The women's basketball team will look to capitalize on their early success by continuing to win games. USD will be back at the Jenny Craig Pavilion on Dec. 18 against Arizona State University.

Volleyball makes 12th consecutive tournament appearance

Seven Toreros honored with end-of-season awards

MARI OLSON
SPORTS EDITOR

University of San Diego volleyball headed to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament for the 12th consecutive year, which began on Dec. 2.

This is the 25th appearance for the Toreros in the national tournament, and coach Jennifer Petrie's 21st time leading the team to the biggest stage in collegiate volleyball.

USD faced the Rice University Owls in the first round of the tournament. The Toreros could not keep up with Rice's team,

however, and fell to the Owls in straight sets; although junior opposite, Grace Frohling, led the team with a match-high 15 kills.

In addition to the tournament appearance, seven Torero volleyball players earned All-West Coast Conference (WCC) honors at the conclusion of the regular season.

Senior libero, Annie Benbow, sophomore middle blocker, Leyla Blackwell, Frohling, and senior outside hitter, Katie Lukes, were all named to the All-WCC First Team.

Sophomore outside hitter, Kylie Pries, was an honorable mention to the All-WCC team, and middle blocker, Haylee

Stoner, and outside hitter, Emily Wilson, were both named to the All-WCC Freshman Team.

A special season for USD volleyball culminated in the tournament appearance and the WCC honors, with the team winning 20 out of 28 games total. Big wins over opponents like nationally-ranked Pepperdine University (who also went out in the first round of the tournament) and gritty WCC opponent Loyola Marymount University showcased the toughness of this team.

Tune back in Fall 2022 as Torero volleyball will look to make its 13th-straight NCAA tournament appearance.



Junior opposite, Grace Frohling, goes up for a kill at the JCP earlier this season.

Photo courtesy of usdtoreros.com

The shining stars of Torero Athletics: 2021 best moments

Some of the most exciting plays, records, and wins this season

JAREK MORGAN
ASST. SPORTS EDITOR

Shining Stars from Page 1

Golf

Team wins are just as important to the university as individuals. And that is what the men’s golf team did this year when they achieved their first team overall win since October of 2020.

Redshirt junior, Charlie Reiter, put together three rounds of 70, 69, and 69 strokes for a total of 208, finishing with a tournament-best eight strokes under par for the win at the Hoakalei Country Club on Oct. 26.

The Toreros also finished first as a team, scoring 857 over three rounds to top the standings. The dominant performance in Hawaii was very much indicative of how the team has persevered this year.

Redshirt junior, Harrison Kingsley, won his first collegiate tournament at the Mark Simpson Invitational in September, hosted by the University of Colorado Boulder at the Colorado National Golf Course. Kingsley shot a tournament record 15-under with scores of 67, 68, and 66.

Men’s Tennis

Through various great team performances this year by our fellow Toreros, possibly one of the most impressive individual efforts seen was completed by outstanding redshirt senior, August Holmgren.

Holmgren, of the USD men’s tennis team, became the first Torero in program history to advance to the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) All-American championship match in October. The Dane won five-straight matches en route to the championship, eventually falling to Florida’s Ben Shelton, 6-3, 6-4.

Holmgren took that loss, and turned it into a learning opportunity. He finished the year by becoming only the second Torero to win the ITA Fall National Championship when he defeated Stanford’s no.1 ranked sophomore, Arthur Fery, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5.

Volleyball

Yet another incredible achievement came from the Torero volleyball team. Led by seven 2021 All-West Coast Conference (WCC) honorees, this year’s team competed from start to finish with a tenacity that will be remembered for years to come.



USD cross country competes in the West Regional Championship for their final race of the season.
Photo courtesy of usdtoreros.com



Torero football’s graduating players had a major impact on another PFL Championship and a winning season.
Photo courtesy of usdtorero.com



Redshirt senior, August Holmgren, won the ITA Fall National Championship.
Photo courtesy of usdtoreros.com

One of the most anticipated games this year was when the women traveled to no. 24 ranked Pepperdine for a matchup that could have championship implications at the end of the season.

Before conference play even kicked off, sophomore Isa Terçariol talked about some goals for herself and her

teammates this season.

“I know for me something I think is a huge goal of mine is when we go to Pepperdine and beat them on their home court,” Terçariol said. “To beat them would be sweet revenge since we lost to them last year.”

In early October, the team got their chance to make good on that promise when they went

they finished the season on a seven game winning streak.

As the Fall semester closes, there have been incredible achievements made by all sports programs. This list is just a fraction of those accomplishments so here is a brief list of other honorable mentions to outstanding performances by USD athletics.

The team finished with a stellar six game winning streak. In addition to that, this is now the program’s 11th straight season with a winning record, something that takes maximum effort from every player and coach.

Women’s rowing

The Toreros traveled to Boston this season and competed in the prestigious Head of The Charles Regatta. With a great team effort the team of four finished 10th out of 54 teams and the team of eight finished 11th out of 31 teams. To be selected for this invite a team must compete at the highest level, and while on the other side of the country USD represented themselves proudly.

Men’s soccer

The soccer team’s record does not indicate how hard they played this season. That is why the WCC recognized four athletes for their outstanding performance.

Sophomore forward, Nicklas Clausen, was named to the All-WCC Second Team. Sophomore midfielder, Ross Johnstone, and junior midfielder, Mason Tunbridge, were named All-WCC Honorable mention, and forward Luke Pardoe earned All-WCC Freshman Team honors.

Women’s soccer

Senior defender, Michaela Foster, was named to the All-WCC Second Team. At the beginning of the season, Foster helped lead the team to a 3-0 start. Foster scored goals in the first three games of the season.

This university has some of the nation’s best athletes. The USD community was fortunate to witness so many high quality moments this fall season. The coaches, the players, and staff have so much to be grateful for this year and have put in a lot of hard work to make these moments possible. As we look forward to spring sports, the only real questions are what championship will be won, and what records will be broken next? Stay tuned for much more to come this spring as baseball, rowing, and tennis start up.

WINTER BREAK SCHEDULE

USD WBB @ BYU
Thursday, Dec. 30
7 p.m.
Provo, UT

USD MBB vs. Gonzaga
Thursday, Dec. 30
7 p.m.
Jenny Craig Pavilion

USD S&D vs. UNM
Saturday, Jan. 8
10 a.m.
Sports Center
Mari Olson/The USD Vista