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-Joseph Pulitzer

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VIEWPOINTS

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RCCD cancels spring break

Classes roll through spring break to avoid longer semester

ERIK GALICIA

NEWS EDITOR

Spring break will be absorbed into the spring semester to make up for the week lost as Riverside Community College District faculty prepared for the March 23 switch to remote learning caused by COVID-19.

“This way, we will be able to complete our 16-week compressed calendar and fulfill our state’s requirement for weekly student contact hours,” a district email sent April 2 said.

Dariush Haghighat, vice

president of the RCC Faculty Association, assured that the decision resulted from weeks of intensive review and negotiations between the district and the union.

“We expected there would be panic,” he said. “But this was not a decision made lightly. It was a very labor intensive, emotional process for us.”

Jorge Zavala, the RCCD student trustee, urged students to consider the reasons for the decision.

“It’s definitely a tricky situation with the pandemic,” Zavala said. “It’s unfair

but students need to be understanding.”

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted California Community College Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley to issue an executive order March 20, granting colleges the authority to amend their calendars.

But according to Rhonda Taube, RCCD Faculty Association president, the district is not asking faculty to assign work during the week spring break was scheduled if they had originally intended to give their students that week off.

Haghighat explained that

canceling spring break was the most viable option when considering the economic fallout expected from the pandemic. Many districts are already looking at protective measures, according to Haghighat.

“Some districts are saying they can’t guarantee faculty salary after June 30,” Haghighat said. “These are the realities we have to deal with.”

Taube echoed the need to prepare for a financial crisis and pointed to the district’s success at minimizing harm during the 2008

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ANGEL PEÑA | VIEWPOINTS

A lock was placed on the gates of Riverside City College’s quad after the campus was shut down on March 16 because of public health concerns due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Classes have been canceled until the end of the semester.

Online instruction issues identified

District to refine remote learning, seeks student feedback

ERIK GALICIA

NEWS EDITOR

Reports during the Riverside Community College District Academic Senate meeting March 30 identified needed improvements regarding the transition to online instruction forced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Going to the online platform has its own challenges,” Chancellor Wolde-Ab Isaac said. “We want to make sure that the issue of equity is not eclipsed by the fact that we are in a very difficult situation.”

According to Isaac, over 40,000 surveys were sent out

March 26 regarding students’ experiences with the transition. Susan Mills, vice chancellor of Educational Services and Strategic Planning, said the district had only received about 2,500 responses as of March 30.

“This is a survey that we would like to have (students) complete so that we could get feedback,” said Mark Sellick, District Academic Senate president. “It’s beneficial for us to be able to serve students more effectively.”

Sheila Pisa, interim dean of Distance Education, said several faculty have raised concerns over integrity during online testing.

Pisa explained that a “lockdown” feature during online

testing will prevent students from accessing other browsers and a camera “monitor” feature will highlight a student’s screen if suspicious behavior, such as getting up during a test, is detected.

But Stacie Eldridge, an RCC chemistry instructor, questioned the accessibility of the features.

“With the ‘lockdown’ browser, we had a couple faculty mention that the Chromebooks are not compatible with that,” Eldridge said. “Some don’t have cameras. If it’s not accessible to one or two, then you really can’t use that platform.”

According to Eldridge, an RCC Chemistry Department student survey conducted during

the first week of the Spring 2020 semester found that up to 30% of one class did not have access to a printer at home.

“When you’re trying to give an organic chemistry exam where (students) are writing out mechanisms and they can’t necessarily do it in multiple choice fashion, they need to be able to print out things,” Eldridge said. “It’s really creating a lot of obstacles.”

Another RCC chemistry instructor, Paul Richardson, said that up to a dozen of his students have experienced connection issues during online quizzes.

According to Vivian Harris, a Norco College library services

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NEWS BRIEFS

Face Covering Ordered

Riverside County Public Health Officer Cameron Kaiser ordered everyone to stay home unless absolutely necessary and to cover their faces when outside, effective April 5. The public gatherings ban does not apply to essential businesses. The face covering order does apply to essential workers.

Appropriate face coverings include bandanas, scarves or any other closed clothing, according to the Riverside city website. Because the healthcare industry is experiencing a shortage of masks, residents are being told to refrain from purchasing medical-grade masks.

“Now we change from saying that you should to saying that you must,” Kaiser stated on the city website.

Police Seek Public Cooperation

Local police have been given the authority to enforce COVID-19 orders as necessary, but Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco asked for voluntary public compliance.

“We will not be setting up any type of police state and this is not a declaration of martial law in Riverside County,” Bianco said on the agency’s Facebook page.

Bianco said responding to violations would interfere with emergency services and urged residents not to call 911 for potential violations. He assured that deputies will not be stopping vehicles or pedestrians for enforcement but urged the use of common sense for the sake of public health.

Mental Health Services

Riverside City College Student Health and Psychological Services have set up TeleMental health counseling through Zoom.

To schedule an appointment, send your full name, student ID and phone number to kevin.wurtz@rcc.edu. Wurtz, the RCC mental health supervisor, will respond with digital consent forms and available appointment times.

Additional information is available on RCC’s website.

All campus events and many local events have been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have news or information about events still happening that you want featured in Viewpoints, contact viewpoints.news@gmail.com.



SAIDA MAALIN | VIEWPOINTS

The Riverside Community College District transitioned to online instruction March 23 to combat the spread of the Novel Coronavirus. Spring break is canceled to make up for the time lost when faculty prepared to launch their online courses, according to the district.

Semester absorbs spring break

District aims to reduce financial burden expected from coronavirus

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economic downturn.

“In the long run it will be a great economic decision for our college,” Taube said.

According to the district email, breaking the state agreement on required days of instruction could hurt the district’s financial standing. Haghighat said that a budget shortfall could result in classes being canceled and education being delayed.

“All of the available options were reviewed,” Haghighat said. “But our calendar cannot be compared to districts that don’t have compressed calendars.”

The lack of comparable districts limited alternatives to allowing spring break and not altering the calendar or allowing spring break and extending the semester, Haghighat explained. He said the latter was not popular among most faculty.

Some courses, such as STEM and CTE classes, have proven to be difficult to host online.

Accommodating for the lost time these courses have suffered would require up to two weeks to be added to the semester, leaving little time to prepare for the summer session. According to Taube, those courses will be allowed to add days of instruction at the end of the semester.

“What we were trying to avoid is adding a week at the end of the semester for all students,” she said.

Some suggested that individual faculty could readjust instruction to meet the state’s

required days even if spring break was allowed to remain. Haghighat argued that that plan held too much uncertainty.

“Both the district and faculty would have to do a juggling act,” he said. “Personally, I’m not convinced the state would accept it.”

The district expressed deep appreciation for all who have worked to ensure a smooth transition in the past weeks and expects to make it through the crisis successfully.

Community remembers Caludia Lucrey

RCC LGBTQ+ advocate died March 10 in a motorcycle accident at age 29

SAIDA MAALIN

LIFE EDITOR

Claudia Cloud Lucrey, a beloved leader, friend and all around inspiration for many at Riverside City College passed away in a motorcycle collision March 10. She was 29 years old.

Lucrey was the vice president of the Sexuality and Gender Acceptance Club for two semesters.

Her partner of two years, Gabriella Mena, who is also a SAGA member and someone Lucrey considered family, remembered Claudia’s uplifting nature.

“Claudia would encourage people that no matter how others see you, whether it’s family, closest friends or partner, that you shouldn’t stop being yourself because one day one person will come along who does accept you for you,” Mena said.

An email was sent out March 12 by RCC President Gregory Anderson addressing the news of Lucrey’s passing.

“A powerful advocate for LGBTQIA rights and equality, Claudia was a valuable member of the RCC community,” Anderson said in the email. “She touched the lives of many around her.”

The crash was reported at 9:25 p.m on Northbound Interstate 215 north of Cactus Avenue in Riverside.

According to the Riverside County Coroner’s press release, Lucrey passed away at 9:40 p.m. The crash is still under investigation.

Friends and family gathered at Pierce Brothers Crestlawn Chapel in Riverside for the memorial service March 23. Due to COVID-19, many close friends were unable to attend the funeral service. Group size was limited to 10 people per room.

“If I had to define unity at school, Claudia and her friends brought it within her group and campus,” said Angel Contreras, president of the Associated Students of Riverside City College.

Contreras quoted novelist Richard Bach because it reminded him of Claudia.

“The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other’s life,” Contreras said, “Claudia was joy in people’s lives, she respected everyone and was the sunflower that everyone loved.”

Family history never stopped Lucrey from being a good person to people she met. She was loved by all her peers and offered her assistance in any way as a SAGA club leader.

“She was always kind even if people took her for granted,” Mena said. “She helped a lot of people in our club with things they wouldn’t trust in telling



PHOTO COURTESY OF GABRIELLA MENA

Claudia Lucrey, right, and her partner of two years Gabriella Mena, left. Lucrey was president of RCC’s SAGA Club for two semesters.

someone else.”

Mena said members of the RCC community will hold a memorial in Lucrey’s honor when campus reopens.

A gofundme account was created to help with memorial costs and is still open for donations.

City approves controversial housing

City Council authorizes construction of St. Michael’s Project, some residents disapprove



JONATHAN RAMIREZ | VIEWPOINTS

Riverside resident Errol Koschewitz makes a passionate plea to Riverside City Council members to reject the St. Michael’s Project, a 50 unit apartment complex for low income families and homeless individuals, set to be built off Jackson Street. Koschewitz, who lives near the location, says the project would attract too much unwanted activity.

JONATHAN RAMIREZ
STAFF REPORTER

Construction of the controversial St. Michael’s Project, a 50 unit permanent supportive housing complex, was approved March 31 by the Riverside City Council despite heavy opposition.

The 6-1 vote is set to provide aid to the homelessness population in Riverside. Chuck Conder of Ward 4 voted against the project.

The apartment complex will be built on St. Michael’s Episcopal Church property in Ward 5. Twenty-four units will be set aside for homeless people with provided mental health services and 25 units for low income residents. One unit will be given to the complex manager, according to the Community Building Partners.

Those in favor of the project believe it to be a step toward solving the large scale problem of homelessness in Riverside.

“Empty lots, like we have at St. Michael’s, (are) worth

developing for accessible housing and (are) so much needed here in Riverside,” said Norma Rede, a church volunteer. “This project will help families live better lives.”

The concern to provide a second chance to those living in the dark corners of Riverside has become the main language used to advocate for the project.

“When people are living on the edges of our society (and) need help, need stability, need safety, and are earnestly wanting to be productive members of our community, we have an obligation to provide a safe place where they can do that,” said Kelli Grace Kurtz, rector of Riverside’s All Saints Episcopal Church. “It excites me that people can find their way out of the edges of society and back to being productive members of our community. We have to do this.”

Although Kurtz said the project is well-vetted, neighbors who have opposed it since the project’s inception are concerned with its proximity and the lack of requirements needed to keep homeless individuals off the

streets and in the workforce.

Rich Gardner, who ran for mayor of Riverside earlier this year, said that although housing homeless residents is a great idea, he is concerned that the project itself would not require those same individuals to seek employment or submit to a drug test in order to obtain permanent housing.

“My problem with a housing project that doesn’t require any kind of drug test or looking for employment is that it is right in front of a neighborhood and it is right across the street from a public park,” Gardner said. “Putting it into a neighborhood creates a lot of risk that doesn’t need to take place.”

Another resident, Errol Koschewitz, spoke strongly against the project’s proximity and the potential lack of supervision over its funding.

“I live off of Jackson (Street) by St. Michael’s Church,” Koschewitz said. “I do not agree with the homeless shelter being built there because there will be no accountability and no oversight on the funding there.

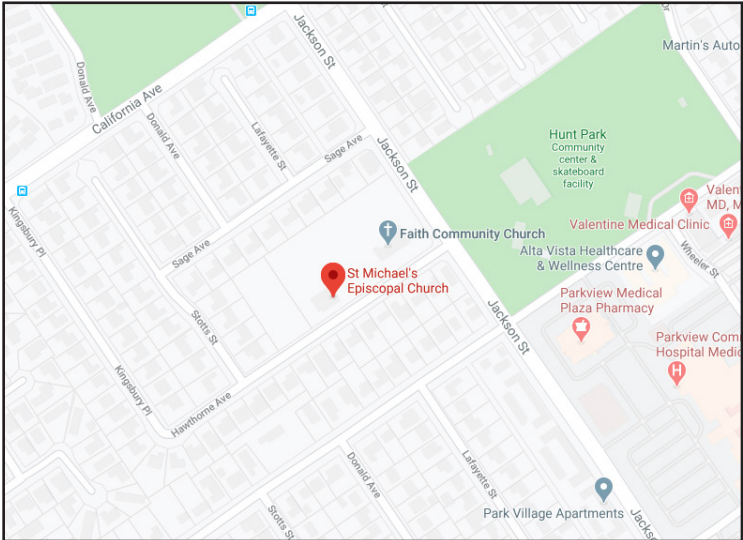


IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE MAPS

The project will be built on St. Michael’s Episcopal Church property in Ward 5. Behavioral health services will be offered to residents.

It’s not going to be big enough for the facility they want to put on the parking lot. It’s gonna attract too much riff raff there. They’re just gonna get tons of money to do whatever they want with it.”

To maintain social distancing due to COVID-19, a “drive up public comment” system was set up for residents to either support or oppose the project. Residents were told to stay in their cars,

drive up to the camera, turn off the engine and speak for three minutes. Comments were also submitted online.

Approved and going forward, the project is set to be built across from Hunt Park on the corner of Jackson Street and Hawthorne Avenue. It is meant to be permanent housing for those living there.

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FILE PHOTO GIOVANNI GUZMAN | VIEWPOINTS

Graduates participate in Riverside City College’s 100th commencement ceremony in June 2017. Due to the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, health officials have decided that traditional graduation ceremonies are unsafe. In order to abide by COVID-19 safety orders, RCC may have to hold a virtual commencement this year.

2020 graduation ceremony uncertain

District undecided, considering virtual commencement

JENNIFER ROSALES
STAFF REPORTER

The rite of passage of any graduating student is to have their name called out, their hand shook and to walk across that stage in front of their peers and families. But due to COVID-19, a traditional commencement is not safe, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, since large gatherings and community events help contribute to the spread of the coronavirus. Riverside City College’s commencement was to be held June 12 but Riverside County

Public Health Officer Cameron Kaiser has extended closures for county schools and colleges through June 19. RCC President Gregory Anderson said that no decisions have been made about commencement. The committee responsible for planning the event will make suggestions to the college’s senior leadership and they will come to a decision at a later date and inform students via RCCD student email. “It is also likely that the chancellor and Board will have a role in any decision as well,” Anderson said. Norco College President Monica Green said Norco is

exploring options for an alternative, nontraditional commencement for graduates. “We are not looking to postpone or cancel commencement as it is the biggest event we plan every year to honor our student graduates,” Green said. “Before making a decision, we will seek feedback from our students on what would be most meaningful for them.” Norco College Academic Senate President Quinton Bemiller also confirmed that the colleges are looking at nontraditional alternatives for commencement rather than canceling or postponing it. There are many concerns when

it comes to virtual graduation and how it will work. “Points about stable connection, family members and personalization are all good ones,” Anderson said. “The committee will definitely be including those factors in their decision.” Bemiller said that if the colleges have a virtual commencement they would still have all the speakers as normal, and that student’s names would still be read. There are companies that specialize in facilitating virtual graduations, and the colleges might use one of

those companies if they cannot facilitate it in-house. Families will also be able to view the virtual graduation. RCC Puente Club member Madeline Lopez expressed both disappointment and understanding for a possible virtual graduation. “I feel like I’ve worked very hard to transfer and earn my degree and that privilege is being taken from me,” Lopez said. “But ultimately everyone’s safety is more important. It is what it is.” More information will follow.

Academic Senate addresses online learning accessibility

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instructor, student emails indicate that a number of laptops rented out for use during the campus closures are programmed with a Deep Freeze reboot, which in effect erases new files upon a shut down. Pisa urged that students should contact their instructors and Canvas technical support in case of a malfunction but admitted that resources are stretched thin. “We have a very small staff that’s working very hard to get faculty what they need right now,” Pisa said. “I don’t know that we could support online stuff for

students as well.” Moving forward, the district will work to identify the best possible technical support service provider for students, according to Isaac. Pisa reported that dozens of courses at RCC had received an accessibility score of less than 50% as of March 30. An Ally Institutional Report run March 27 found Canvas issues such as images with no descriptions, documents without headings and videos without captions, which can create accessibility issues for disabled students. “The (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance is

really an accreditation issue,” said Rhonda Taube, RCCD Faculty Association president. “Right now we’re just asking that you don’t lose your disabled students.” According to Taube, ADA compliance requires an accessibility score of at least 80%. Already at an average score of 73%, the district’s goal is to have all courses ADA compliant by April 13. Faculty mentors are being identified and trained to help their peers reach this target in time. The chancellor maintained that, for the most part, the district is doing well at transitioning in a timely manner.



FILE PHOTO DIEGO D. GARCIA | VIEWPOINTS

Riverside Community College District Academic Senate President Mark Sellick addresses the Board of Trustees in Oct. 2016. Sellick asks that students provide feedback about online instruction.



JONATHAN RAMIREZ | VIEWPOINTS

Field hospital set up in Riverside

Indio fairgrounds converts into 125 bed medical encampment

JONATHAN RAMIREZ
STAFF REPORTER

A 125 bed field hospital has been set up at the Riverside County Fairgrounds in Indio to help ease the strain of local hospitals anticipating a hike of COVID-19 cases.

The California National Guard did the initial set up for the field hospital over the course of 10 days.

“(The National Guard) did all the wraparound services like air conditioning, heating and all the stuff they need to make the buildings comfortable for anybody that’s staying in them,” said Shane Reichardt, the senior public information specialist for the Emergency Management Department.

This includes backup generators in case of an

earthquake or electrical interference to ensure the medical equipment has the power necessary to stay operational.

The medical center on the fairgrounds is vetted by 25 individuals from the California Medical Assistance Team coordinated by the Emergency Medical Services Administration. The team is mostly composed of emergency medical technicians and paramedics, but does include a doctor, nurse practitioner, registered nurses and some administrative staff.

A strike team of medical personnel from the National Guard composed of one doctor, two nurses and seven EMTs will also be added, making up a medical staff of 35.

No one will be allowed

“(The National Gaurd) did all the wraparound services like air conditioning, heating and all the stuff they need to make the buildings comfortable for anybody that’s staying in them.

-- Shane Reichardt, senior public information specialist for the Emergency Management Department

”

into the facilities besides medical workers, county personnel and t h o s e suffering from COVID-19. Those infected with the virus and brought here will be coordinated by their hospital or their doctor’s office, but not by ambulances.

Reichardt expressed concern over the lack of personal protective

equipment as the number of COVID-19 cases is expected to rise exponentially.

“As the surge develops and as we get more and more patients there is going to be some concerns over that supply chain,” Reichardt said. “And I know we have a staff of people working our county’s emergency operations center to source

everything we need for continued operations and to keep our personnel and our community safe.”

The location has two buildings that will be filled with beds, patients and professional medical staff. One building will have 100 beds for general cases of COVID-19 and the other will have 25 beds for the critically infected cases. A drive up test site will also be near the location.

Residents can call 1(800) 945-6171 to schedule a drive up test. The nose swab testing process will take a few minutes per car with contact minimized to the maximum extent.

The location for the second field hospital in western Riverside county will be revealed at a later date.

Nursing, other programs to resume instruction soon

County grants nursing program exeption from closure
ROSSANA MARTINEZ
STAFF REPORTER

As Riverside City College moves online due to coronavirus, the Nursing Program is especially feeling these changes. Tensions are running high as students worry about the impacts on their semester.

“COVID-19 has affected the program as a whole,” said Eddy Pantoja, a fourth semester nursing student. “We cannot complete our patient care hours according to the (Board of Registered Nurses.) The worst news is the final semester students are unable to fulfill their hours so their semester may be extended.”

Education and health care systems are under an immense upsurge of pressure in dealing with this pandemic and the

multitude of changes it has brought. RCC is exploring all routes to minimize the negative effects of the pandemic on students and to provide accessible practices and labs.

“We submitted a special application to the public health officer to consider our students in the Nursing (Program), the emergency medical technicians, the paramedics and the firefighters as essential personnel in this period of pandemic,” said Wolde-Ab Isaac, chancellor of the Riverside Community College District. “Therefore their training should also be considered as essential infrastructure to help us get them up already. We asked for a waiver for an exemption from the closure so they can go back to do their clinical education. That request was granted.”

Dr. Isaac also mentioned that some allied health courses, like dental assisting and dental hygiene, are difficult to put on virtual platforms but that the district is trying to figure out how to help those students finish the year.

RCC’s deans of nursing, EMTs, paramedics, firefighters and trainers from Ben Clark Training Center are linking up with their clinical partners to get the program up and running.

As the program makes its way online, Pantoja feels well prepared for these new modifications.

“We have also adjusted to the online program,” Pantoja said. “I personally like the online experience because I can get up in the morning and just pop onto my computer.”

Although the Nursing Department is closed, they said they will stand by their students and provide the resources needed to carry out the remainder of the semester.

A Riverside City College nursing student tends to a patient at the Riverside Free Health Clinic on March 11.



ANGEL PEÑA | VIEWPOINTS

PartyNextDoor drops PARTYMOBILE

Fans speculate about Kehlani and she confirms

SAIDA MAALIN

LIFE EDITOR

Highly talented singer and songwriter PartyNextDoor released “PARTYMOBILE,” a long awaited album.

Although he blessed fans with the EP “Seven Days” in 2017, which he made in seven days, it has been four years since Party dropped a studio album.

Fans have patiently waited and highly anticipated the project to be dropped at the beginning of 2020. During this unexpected quarantine due to COVID-19, many artists have decided to release their albums to influence fans to stay home by giving them something to listen to.

Party tweeted a phone number March 22 so fans could preview the album in advance to its release on March 27.

The only difference between this album and his previous one is that he has switched up the title and it is not in sequence with PartyNextDoor 2 and PartyNextDoor3. Sonically, he still gives us the slightly autotuned yet melodic PartyNextDoor R&B vibe that he has in past projects.

The album has 15 tracks with appearances from a couple renowned artists. Drake is featured on “Loyal,” which was



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN NAVARRO

the first song released to fans before the full album. Track 15 is the remix of “Loyal,” which features Latin artist Bad Bunny.

Fans were expecting to hear Rihanna since Party confirmed while live streaming Fortnite that she may be featured on the

album. “Believe it” is the first recorded song since 2017 that Rihanna has done. The song had twitter in a frenzy. Rihanna’s navy took to the platform to curate memes in association with the singer making the song the most standout of the album with

just a few words.

The internet has a funny way of playing detective. After some began analyzing the songs, many began linking track 14, “Savage Anthem,” to R&B singer-songwriter Kehlani, who happens to be Party’s ex. Drama

between the two dates back to 2016, when Kehlani began dating NBA player Kyrie Irving.

Party took to Instagram with a cryptic post of a photo in bed with Kehlani’s noticeably tattooed hand. This led to cheating rumors that made Kehlani attempt to take her own life back in 2016 which she spoke about in an Essence magazine interview.

Lyrics suggested the song was about Kehlani because he references Oakland, the city she is from. A line from the song says, “I heard number two is your man now,” which fans say refers to Kyrie’s Cleveland Cavaliers jersey number.

Kehlani took to Twitter to post a response to a fan that was soon deleted.

“This is a true story about smelling the OTHER woman thus confirming the cheating,” Kehlani said on twitter.

Party has yet to comment, leaving fans to continue speculating on their own.

According to Hits Daily Double, “PARTYMOBILE” has brought in activity of 52,237 streams ending the week April 2 with 3,061 in album sales.

Listeners can stream “PartyMobile” and its entirety on music platforms like AppleMusic, Youtube, Spotify and Tidal.

Pearl Jam releases first album in seven years

Gigaton not necessarily a return to form but leaves fans happy

STEPHANIE ARENAS

STAFF REPORTER

Pearl Jam has finally released “Gigaton,” the band’s first studio album since 2013’s “Lightning Bolt.”

Fans all over the world have held high expectations for the new album in hopes of it sounding similar to Pearl Jam’s 1991 album “Ten.” While the new album held a completely different sound, many fans were not left disappointed.

“Gigaton” is definitely the type of album that needs to be listened to in its entirety several times before coming to a final conclusion.

The lead single, “Dance of the Clairvoyants,” was released January 22. At first listen, the song may seem like any other uninspired, generic rock song. But give it a chance. After a few listens you may find yourself singing along.

Though not the strongest song in their discography, it is definitely the type of song to bring people to dance and sing at a party.

“Dance of the Clairvoyants” also brings a

clear vision of the theme of the album.

It questions the future of our society but in a positive light.

“Expecting perfection / Leaves a lot to ignore / When the past is the present / And the future’s no more / When every tomorrow / Is the same as before,” describes the current state of our world.

Though not in any way related to COVID-19,, fans may

find a sense of comfort in these lyrics during the pandemic.

The next single, “Superblood Wolfmoon,” released February 18, is definitely a step up from “Dance of the Clairvoyants” as it paints a picture of a relationship that has ended horribly.

Although it is an upsetting topic, this song is not melancholic in any way. It actually creates an upbeat feeling that draws in the broken-

hearted to give them hope for the future.

Out of all the songs on the album, “Superblood Wolfmoon” is the most memorable due to its catchy lyrics, groovy melody and relatable topic. While all the other songs are special in their own way, this song has the ability to touch the hearts of anyone who has a listen.

Prior to the release of the final single “Quick Escape,”

Pearl Jam’s lead singer, Eddie Vedder, voiced some strong opinions about President Donald Trump.

“I don’t think he’s crazy like a fox,” Vedder said during a concert in the Netherlands in June 2018. “I think he’s like, crazy like a narcissistic mother f---r.”

“Quick Escape” addressed the fear of an environmental apocalypse coming our way prior to the events caused by COVID-19.

The band takes shots at Trump with the lyrics, “The lengths we had to go to then / To find a place Trump hadn’t f---d up yet.”

By the end of the song, we are left with the idea of having to leave the planet due to an unstoppable environmental crisis.

Overall, although “Gigaton” may not sound anything like 1991’s “Ten,” it becomes a breath of fresh air the more you listen to it.

By my fourth or fifth listen, I had fallen in love with the album. While not as great as “Ten,” it is great on its own level.



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN NAVARRO

“Freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another.”
- Toni Morrison, ‘Beloved’



IMAGE COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Officials should close gun stores Firearms unnecessary during public health crisis



LEO CABRAL

MANAGING EDITOR

It is no surprise that America would consider gun shops essential businesses. Who loves guns more than good ol’ America?

State and local governments have laid out recommended regulations during the shelter in place order levied in mid March and, quite frankly, firearms do not quite fit the level of necessity as these other essential businesses.

While many may agree that personal protection from outside threats is important, firearms and ammunition stores simply are not necessary during a global public health crisis.

Yet, firearms and ammunition sales have surged despite COVID-19 safety orders. The FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) reported a record number of 210,308 background checks on March 20 and 1,197,788 background checks for the week of March 16 to March 22.

However, this is not an accurate representation of the number of firearms that have been sold, only the number of background checks performed.

Many first time buyers have been flocking to purchase firearms throughout the country since the government started implementing restrictions on gatherings and travel.

Leaving the house to run an errand or go to work puts many at risk to the virus. First time firearm buyers have more than COVID-19 to consider when they rush to the local gun store.

The National Rifle Association and other gun rights activist groups have sued governors and sheriffs throughout the country for closing gun retailers for apparently infringing on Americans’ Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Officials shutting down firearm businesses temporarily is not to infringe on anyone’s civil rights. It is to slow the spread of COVID-19. Public health is much more important than guns for the time being. It is up to the public officials not to bend to the will of gun activist groups and close down firearm stores temporarily until it is safe. This is an important matter of public health.

As a matter of fact, although President Donald Trump declared firearm stores essential businesses, Christopher C. Krebs, director of Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), stated in a memorandum that the list of essential businesses and workforce is “advisory in nature.”

“It is not, nor should it be considered, a federal directive or standard. Additionally, this advisory list is not intended to be the exclusive list of critical infrastructure sectors, workers, and functions that should continue during the COVID-19 response across all jurisdictions. Individual jurisdictions should add or subtract essential workforce categories based on their own requirements and discretion,” the memorandum states.

What the NRA is advocating for is counterproductive to the purpose of the quarantine. It is forcing officials to go against their better judgment. It must understand that the closures are only temporary and meant to protect everyone in the long run. Advocating to keep these businesses running is putting people at risk.

In times of crisis, anxiety builds and people tend to feel unsure of the chaos that others are capable of, so they buy a gun to instill some sense of security. It is a move made in preparation for what may come.

However, a rash decision hastily made under panic-inducing conditions may not be the best move. It is a decision that can lead to much more harm than good.

There are many factors one must weigh when buying firearms. People must consider putting the time into learning how to properly operate their weapon and practice gun safety.

According to research from the National Center for Biotechnology Information,

there is little evidence that shows that using a gun in self defense will reduce the likelihood of injury or property loss. Of over 14,000 incidents that involved a victim, 4.2% were injured and 4.1% were injured after using a firearm in self defense.

Although it is fortunate that shooting ranges are also deemed essential so first timers can practice proper gun handling, they simply add to the amount of places people can be exposed to the virus.

Additionally, firearms and ammunition must be properly stored in a safe place where children cannot easily access them. Parents and guardians must have serious conversations with their children about gun safety if they plan on introducing a weapon into the home, especially now that they are home all the time.

“Approximately 7% of US children (4.6 million) live in homes in which at least one firearm is stored loaded and unlocked, an estimate that is more than twice as high as estimates reported in 2002,” states findings in a 2015 Journal of Urban Health survey.

The same survey sourced the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 1,468 children in the US under 18 died from a fatal gunshot wound and nearly 7,000 children received non fatal injuries from a gunshot in 2015.

On top of gun safety practices, one must consider the mental health of everyone in the household. A record number of 10 million Americans filed

for unemployment benefits in March. Many are experiencing anxiety and stress due to the threat of the virus, layoffs from work and orders to remain indoors and isolate.

It is a recipe for mental illness.

The Los Angeles Times reported that one in five calls received at the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center in Century City expressed “suicidal desire.” The center received 1,800 calls in March, compared to 20 they received in February, and they expect numbers to increase in the near future.

With a national decline in mental health due to the coronavirus, surely it is not safe to add a firearm to the household.

Another important thing to take into consideration is domestic violence. People are spending more time at home, which means that victims of domestic violence are likely spending more time in isolation with their abusers.

There has already been an increase in domestic violence worldwide, according to The Guardian. Lella Palladino, a member of activist group EVA Cooperativa in Italy, told The Guardian that she expects to see an “explosive increase” in reports once restrictions ease.

With more guns in the average American household, more gun violence is to be expected during and after the pandemic.

Officials must temporarily shut down firearms and ammunition businesses in order to prevent deaths from both COVID-19 and gun violence.

EDITORIAL



IMAGE COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Health care workers at risk

Everyone must do their part during pandemic

As COVID-19 cases spike in California, health care workers have taken to social media to respond to the public not taking the stay-at-home order seriously.

In an interview with ABC 7, Heidi Flores, a Southern California nurse, said it is only a matter of time before many nurses test positive for COVID-19.

“I’ll continue as long as I can because it’s not just me,” Flores said. “There’s other nurses doing the same thing and I think they give me strength.”

According to the Los Angeles Times, there were

16,413 confirmed cases and 395 recorded deaths due to coronavirus in California as of April 7. To say that the virus is spreading quickly would be a severe understatement.

Hospital staff working on the front lines of this pandemic cannot head home for fear of possibly spreading the virus to their family members.

While health care workers work tirelessly worldwide to manage the growing number of cases, many civilians still ignore the orders to practice social distancing and stay at home.

Healthcare workers are doing everything they can to take on this workload. With a shortage in supplies and staff, it is critical that the public partake in their roles and help out by staying home.

As of April 6, nine states have yet to impose strict recommendations to stay at home and actively practice social distancing.

If we are to return to our normal daily routines we must all do our part, stay home and only go out if it is absolutely necessary. It is also important that

citizens stay up to date with the California Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 updates.

Our homes may begin to feel confining and the regulations to stay indoors may feel intolerable, but it is for the best.

The threat of the coronavirus is very real and people need to stop allowing ignorance to be the reason for not doing their part.

The sooner we start participating, the sooner we can get back to our regular lives and nurses and other medical professionals can go home to their families.

Viewpoints’ editorials represent the majority opinion of and are written by the Viewpoints’ student editorial board.

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