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Dear WORD Readers,

For what felt like the first time ever, Isla Vista experienced a semblance of what winter is supposed to be like. To our right, sprinklings of snow powdered the mountain peaks and to our left rough surf tumbled toward us. That mangled umbrella you kept tucked away in your closet came out of retirement—and those funky rain boots you snagged at the thrift store became a new wardrobe staple. We soldiered intrepidly through winter downpour, dodged chunks of crumbling cliff sides, and played hopscotch across bottomless puddles, all before our 9 a.m. class.

But those rainy days, sodden jeans, and bad hair days exist now only within the fuzzy peripheries of our memory. The storm has passed and we’ve made it out. Hopefully now dry, rested, and ready to do it all over again—this time in the sun.

As spring’s warmth stretches her arms and kisses our pale skin, we will likely forget about all that we’ve weathered. Balmy days will shorten nippy nights, budding blossoms will decorate plots of mud, and dormant critters will serenade us at dawn. Out of sight and out of mind, winter will slip away from us like a bad dream. But who’s to say that we should let it? Honoring our journey—not forgetting it—is how we grow.

WORDies have forged this issue through a lens of growth and resilience. Over 10 short weeks, writers and artists huddled together, away from the storm, to create an issue we are proud of. These bound pages you hold in your hands have come a long way—from the privacy of our minds to the digital blank page and now onto you in its full, physical glory. As we reflect on this journey, we hope you feel inspired to look back at your own and celebrate all that you’ve overcome.

After all, without the rain, we can’t appreciate the sun.

WORD Editors-in-Chief,

Makenna Gaeta and Isabel Cruz
DOING TIME AT

JAILHOUSE

A Brief History of Devereux’s Enigmatic Structure

WORDS // EMMET TOWEY
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // SAM PLASCENCIA
AT SOME POINT during your time in Isla Vista, it’s more than likely that you’ll find yourself walking along the scenic shoreline of Devereux Beach. Imagine it’s a warm, sunny day. Perhaps you even decide to take a brief dip in our cold little strip of Pacific Ocean. The water is thick with lazy tendrils of kelp but its clarity is more inviting than usual—it seems like there aren’t any gobs of tar in it today. While air-drying in the midday heat, you stroll towards the point of the beach, where surfers so frequently gather to compete for the best waves, and where students often point fingers and cameras in admiration of a setting sun.

There is something about this scene that sticks out, and yet is generally accepted without question by the local population. Near the point there stands a bare, somewhat brutalist structure. It has cement walls, a chimney composed of rocks, and a small room closed off to the public by a few old iron bars. The bars lend themselves to the name of the building: Jailhouse. The structure looks like an unfinished (or perhaps partially destroyed) house—or for the imaginative, an entrance to a dungeon that will provide archeological treasures to those willing to dare its booby traps. Unfortunately, the reality has nothing to do with Indiana Jones. All you will actually find is some aging trash and layer upon layer of graffiti on every inch of the building. Oftentimes,
this graffiti is beautiful. Many artists have come to Jailhouse to anonymously use the building as a gallery in which to depict their craft. Their shows are fleeting, for it is not uncommon for the walls of Jailhouse to look entirely new every few weeks.

Jailhouse plays a passive and enigmatic role in Isla Vista’s culture. Few students know why it is here. They might ask a friend, “Do you know what this place was?” and said friend may answer, “I dunno,” and that is where the conversation ends. But despite the little that is known about the structure, Jailhouse has been a constant of the area for as long as anyone can remember. “My guess is that it was like a weather station or something back in the day, but I’ve always kind of wondered,” said Adrienne Bruch, a fourth-year Biology student. On the other hand, surfers can tend to have a more personal relationship with Jailhouse. Aidan Kockler is one student who often frequents the section of waves directly in front of Jailhouse—the section also called Jailhouse due to its location in relation to the building. “I usually refer to it as a surf break...I don’t think it was actually a jail though, it was probably like a research facility or something for when the army used to be here,” Kockler said. Given the current state of the building, you can’t blame someone for mistaking it for a jail of sorts. In addition to Bruch and Kockler’s theories, Jailhouse has been rumored to have been a place for storing smuggled spirits during prohibition.

Local lore can only take you so far, so the question remains unanswered: Why is Jailhouse here? What is its role in our local history? I found that the answers are far more wholesome than superstitions may suggest.
A BRIEF HISTORY

Jailhouse’s roots likely go back further than almost any building in Isla Vista. In fact, Jailhouse is actually older than the campus of UC Santa Barbara itself. In 1920, Nancy Leiter and her husband Colonel Colin Campbell purchased 265 acres of land—now known as Coal Oil Point—after they had inherited a portion of the Leiter family fortune. While many others of good fortune were settling in Montecito, the Campbells sought the peace and space of ranch life away from the hurly burly of high society. At the time, Isla Vista was not full of thousands of loud, rambunctious students. The area was spacious and quiet and the vast acreage of Coal Oil Point was not developed at the time. The Campbells spent large sums of their fortune in order to develop the land with paths, various vegetation, buildings, and even our very own Storke Road. One of the many buildings that the Campbells erected was Jailhouse, likely constructed around 1923. The Campbell family used it as a beach house and leisure area, the open-air section designated for outdoor barbecues and fires. After Nancy and Colonel Campbell had passed away, their children grew older and eventually no longer had a need for the family ranch. Their son, Colin, sold the estate to a woman named Helena Devereux in 1945, who owned the land for about 20 years before the majority of it was purchased by UC Santa Barbara in the late 60’s. Thus, the remaining traces of the ranch now stand as a tribute to a largely forgotten history. But Jailhouse or (perhaps more accurately) Beach House, is far from forgotten. Jailhouse continues to stand strong a century later in order to serve its new purpose: capturing local art and serving as a landmark for those seeking good waves.

If you’ve made it this far, congratulations! History can be boring, but what can we do with this information now? Maybe next time you stroll along the beach and a friend wonders aloud about the mysterious origins of Jailhouse, you can enlighten them about the family that developed so much of the land that we hold dear, or maybe you can just say, “I dunno,” and let the conversation end, let the enigma continue, and let local lore reign. 🏖️
ON THESE BLUFFS

A BREATHE OF FRESH AIR, A MOMENT OUTSIDE
TO ENJOY THE SMALL THINGS.

WHEN I'M STRESSED, I GO ON WALKS

A FEW MINUTES ON THE BLUFFS AND IT'S HARD NOT TO FEEL OVERWHELMED
WITH AWE TO BE SO LUCKY AS TO BE HERE, NOW

ISLA VISTA IS REFUGE TO OVER 200 SPECIES OF BIRDS

THESE CLIFFS WERE ENGRAVED FROM PLEISTOCENE COASTAL TERRACE 45,000 YEARS AGO. EONS OF GEOLOGICAL PROCESSES, HEAT AND PRESSURE, WIND AND SURF, CREATED THIS ROCK WHICH CATCHES MY FEET WITH EACH STEP.

EACH BLADE OF GRASS IS A GIFTS & A MIRACLE.

SOMETIMES THE SMALL THINGS...

AREN'T SO SMALL AFTER ALL.
ECO VISTA—THE FORTHCOMING ecovillage of Isla Vista—is a revolutionary movement towards revamping the student ghetto of IV into an ecologically sustainable community. With nearly 16,000 university students jam-packed into just a 1.86 sq mile neighborhood, IV is bursting with eager, creative minds who want to participate in positive change. This unparalleled population has the potential and energy to radically reconstruct new values associated with living in IV. Values that reciprocate respect for the land, ocean, and critters that also call Isla Vista home.

An ecovillage is an alternative community—a living and learning laboratory—designed by the people according to local visions, issues, and interests. These villages pioneer innovative solutions and regenerative alternatives to preserve the social and natural environment of the community. The villages’ members seek to minimize their negative impact on the environment through changed behaviors and relationships as a collective.

Principally a community of university students, a student ghetto refers also to the management of the primarily rented housing neighborhood. The reality of the local student population’s low income, lifestyle, and continuous demand for housing provides landlords with little incentive to maintain property and participate in municipal decisions. Sound like IV?

The Eco Vista project is thus a movement to bring the voices and actions of the locals to the forefront of developmental and ecological perseverance. The project addresses issues such as housing, food, transportation, safety, and sustainability in IV.

Eco Vista is “a dream for a community that is regenerative rather than extractive, collaborative rather than competitive, and active in co-creating the conditions the residents can thrive in together,” according to the Eco Vista catalog.
“Eco Vista arose organically in the spring of 2017. Two undergraduates came into my office during my last office hours of winter quarter and pitched the idea,” said John Foran, UCSB Sociology professor and former advisor and founder of the Eco Vista project.

“They had to do a project in their ‘Building Sustainable Communities’ class with David Pellow, and they had a vision of a future IV: an alternative ecological community with self-governance and participation from a vibrant culture in IV,” Foran explained.

In 2019, students in his Sociology 134 EC: Earth in Crisis class spent two weeks studying various Green New Deals in efforts to create their own proposal. They then convened in the inaugural Eco Vista Popular Assembly to draft the Eco Vista Green New Deal. This document pinpoints ten localized issues that should be addressed towards building a resilient and healthy community. Some of these ideas include co-ops on every street, expanding community gardens, disaster preparation, effective transportation routes, and most importantly, spreading intergenerational awareness to students about how important this project is for IV’s future.

What began as a dream in the minds of a few has evolved into a growing collective of people forming a new, green foundation for our community.

From Eco Vista’s mission, IV Food Forest was born. UCSB students took note of an empty dirt patch in front of Estero Park’s community garden and transformed the space into a lively ecosystem. In the place of the forgotten dirt patch, students planted fruit trees and native flora to bring life back to the area.

“The long-term vision is to create free access to fresh food in a public space and raise a forest in the city. With this, we aim to contribute to food security and to
ecological regeneration in the community,” said Noa Cykman, Co-Organizer of Isla Vista Food Forest.

“To me, it feels especially meaningful to see biodiverse life coming back to that small land,” Cykman went on. “Last summer we spotted Monarch butterflies visiting the food forest every day, which is the most flattering feedback I could expect from our work.”

The Eco Vista project is just one of several student-led organizations based in Isla Vista that are redesigning an eco-friendly and vibrant community. IV Trading Post (IVTP), Isla Vista Compost Collective (IVCC), and IV Recreation and Parks District (IVRPD) are three other popular platforms in the community that also share similar dreams and course of actions with the residents of IV.

IV Trading Post currently showcases how IV residents are adapting to a circular economy. This model of consumption involves sharing, reusing, recycling and repairing for the longevity of products. By combatting fast fashion industry trends, IVTP has recirculated hundreds of articles of clothing in the IV area since its inception.

At their thrifting events they market a “3 for free” deal of clothing donated and collected from IV closets. IVTP offers to pick up clothes donations from residents’ doorsteps every Sunday so that those who want to give back encounter no obstacles in doing so.

Similarly, IV Compost Collective works closely with the current residents in the community by doing a weekly compost pickup at your door. By composting IVs organic waste, IVCC redirects hundreds of thousands of pounds of organic waste from going to the landfill nearly 20 miles up the coast.

Both of these programs are beautiful examples of what an ecovillage in Isla Vista can look like. By reducing the amount of waste IV residents create, community members are slowly acclimating towards an alternative community—and ditching harmful consumerist habits.

“Ultimately, I would love to see a cultural shift towards a community in which people feel connected to the land, and live in a reciprocal relationship with it,” Cykman said.

“Eco Vista includes any resident of IV. Past, present, and future, all are welcome to be a part of the community,” added Foran, a former UCSB student himself.

The decade of decision is upon us to make the necessary changes in our society’s structure and our generation cannot tackle the forthcoming chaos as individuals. Whether residents volunteer directly with the IV programs, donate, compost, or take these lessons with them into their next stage of life, Eco Vista will have a long-lasting impact that transcends the confines of IV.
SHE LETS HER HAIR DOWN, and it smells like cherries. Rare ones, that only grow at certain times for certain farmers, whose mothers taught them to take good care of themselves and those around them.

It is September, and professors have barely begun to realize they will stretch their students’ minds like Play-Doh. The silvery streets are filled with scooters, and the neon green lawns are filled with volleyball games and hammocks. The traffic is at its most intense as people step out of their cars during gridlock and chat about their summers with old friends.

From her glorious passenger seat, she is covered in sunlight, basking in it. Some local band has made it onto the local radio, and everything feels so self-contained that no other language, lifestyle, or lipstick could possibly exist outside of the belongings of those who live in the secret world. Who are the secret world, guarding the gates inside and outside of the college campus.

Cherry-scented shampoo has left her hair softer than a baby’s silk christening gown. It cascades over her tank top and has more volume than the staticky TV cartoons she would sit in front of for hours when she was a child.

Back then, she didn’t care about her hair and let it grow clumpy and neglected. She hated her hair like she hated eating brussel sprouts during dinner; both represented necessary processes of her life.

Now, in the September of her freshman year, the only things she thought were out of her control were the songs the radio played, the traffic, and how much time she spent in the sunlight. Especially the sunlight—she thought she would dance in it forever.

It is January now. She walks into a convenience store with a worn wallet
containing 87 pennies and a Visa card with only five dollars on it. She hasn’t slept for more than five hours a night for days now, and the rest of her time is spent studying. She’s had no time to shower, so her cherry hair has gone kid-clumpy and rests at the nape of her neck in a tied knot.

Sweet and addictive double shot coffee thunks hard on the counter. The price has gone up recently, so a greater portion of her budget goes to these bottles every day. “Just this, thanks,” she assures the cashier.

Though the young woman behind the counter has been trained to always encourage customers to consume more, she knows this customer requires a different advertisement.

“It’s on the house,” the cashier says suddenly. She’s a little older and the wisdom in her eyes shows it. She works hard too, but she knows her limits now. She’s seen many girls like the one who spends half her budget on caffeine. She used to be just like her.

The cashier’s hair, damp from the shower she took before her night shift, smells of strawberry, the star-crossed lover of cherry shampoo.

The girl on the other side of the counter is stunned. Despite the lack of coffee, she feels as though she has properly woken up for the first time in days. This is the first favor anyone has offered her in a long time. “Oh. Okay. Thank you. Then... I’ll go get something else, and pay for that. How does that sound?” The kind cashier nods in approval.

She sets her coffee on the counter and hurries to find something else to spend her last paycheck on.

Band-Aids? She only shuttled back and forth from classes to exams, and didn’t do any sports. Capri Suns? She was tired of using them as an alternative when she ran out of coffee and energy drinks. Trash bags? She barely ate enough to fill the bin next to her desk.

Then she spots it. She smiles for the first time in days, and confidently plants it on the counter. She informs the cashier, “Actually, I don’t think I need the coffee. Just this would be great.” A pink bottle of cherry-scented shampoo stands between the two young women.
Big Girl Blues
// KELLY MALONE

End of a shift – I take the bus at night.
On a good day, I’ll get a window seat
Not to look out, but in —
I’m people watching in the reflection,
Where my fellow passengers float like ghosts
Along the streets, that nightlife glow
Haunting the city. Each one keeper of
Their own world, a hurt like any other. Hands
Texting a friend or playing minesweeper
Or writing a grocery list or getting directions
Home. I close my eyes and try to predict
The stops along the route, that fabled rhythm
In other people’s lives. Turn left, right, left, right.
I wish for the simplicity of childhood,
The certainty of being. I close my eyes.
Tilt my head against the glass.
Mom, come pick me up.
I wanna go home.

Tangerine Sunset
// ELLIE LIM

I’ll section off a piece for you, torn along ribbons of white
We’ll marvel at the clever design,
Peel away the fragrance and pull it apart
Nine perfect pieces and you will always have the extra
Because I was loved like that,
In bites of sweetness and pulp
In a sky we split off to share
Wordlessly, beneath a tangerine sunset
the sand pancake which arlo found me
// MARGARET GRAY

blindly groping in the dark
my fingers find their way
into a little wooden box, which
contains something delicate
that i slip my fingertips along
i feel the object crumble into fine dust
and realize
with a start
it is the little beach thing you found for me
a sand pancake you kept intact
through will power,
since you are magical
and make your own rules for the seaside
my silly clumsy heavy hands
are letting nature in through the back door
and, angry,
she is going to break all the fragile objects
you collected

ode to a lost bike path
// STEPHANIE ANUJARERAT

2am is not for the lovers, asleep in each other’s arms.
It is for the red-eyed the hungry the cold —
turning left in the library roundabout
to take the short
cut back.

For the wind through your sweater,

laughter to pierce
the dark (freeze!)
streetlights
green.

For the dew on your lashes [[budget stars]] your stretch
of dirty sidewalk the clatter
of dishes as your roommate
wishes // fishes you home.

the sand pancake which arlo found me
// MARGARET GRAY

blindly groping in the dark
my fingers find their way
into a little wooden box, which
contains something delicate
that i slip my fingertips along
i feel the object crumble into fine dust
and realize
with a start
it is the little beach thing you found for me
a sand pancake you kept intact
through will power,
since you are magical
and make your own rules for the seaside
my silly clumsy heavy hands
are letting nature in through the back door
and, angry,
she is going to break all the fragile objects
you collected
COLLEGE NIGHT QUEST
reclusive student ventures downtown on Bill’s Bus
I truly thought, in my heart of hearts, that I could avoid this forever. College night, where you take a cramped bus downtown to drink and go to clubs, surrounded by your peers. It’s iconic—the quintessential UCSB college experience—and it’s my worst nightmare.

I’m an introvert living in Isla Vista. I get upset when I hear a party across the street—how would I survive EOS? My friends always say, “It’s my birthday you have to come downtown,” and to that I respond, “Time is a construct. I’m not getting on that bus.” And yet, here I am on a Thursday night searching for someone to go downtown with me. When I pitched this story I wasn’t prepared for the outcome that it would be chosen. Emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, I’m shaken. But I must carry on in the name of journalism. All three of my friends either can’t go or don’t want to, and I’m beginning to feel my spirits lift. Just to say that I tried, I text an invitation to my house group chat, hoping, praying, and pleading, that the cell phone towers have all fallen down. Anna responds by saying that she wants to go. I’m deeply upset but I’m thankful; I fear the chaos of Bill’s Bus but I fear the wrath of my editors more. I’m going.

8:00 p.m.
I know I said earlier that time is a construct but I feel like I’m on a doomsday clock and I mean that with complete sincerity. I’ve been called dramatic but I prefer sensitive. I tell Anna that I’m going to “try very hard to have an open mind” and curl my hair for the first time since 2013 to get in the “spirit of things.” I have no idea what I think curling my hair will do but in moments like these one must forgo rhyme or reason. I’m wearing a velvet blazer and I have sparkles on my eyes. Don’t tell me I didn’t try.

9:30 p.m.
We’ve found ourselves at the knock-off Pizza My Heart, (which is really exactly the same if you were wondering) after Bill’s Bus told us they weren’t leaving yet. Anna
and I each drink a comically large beer and someone is dancing on the table next to us, which provokes a small dog to rabidly bark. “Kiss Me Through The Phone” is playing on the speakers and this feels like a small relief.

10:30 p.m.

Walking towards the Co-op we see a man tear a large branch off of a tree and walk away wielding it. This feels like an omen but I’m not sure of what. All of a sudden the bus is leaving and I’m running across Embarcadero Del Mar caring for neither vehicle nor bicycle—only the story. After Venmoing an entirely nondescript man twenty dollars, I’m given a wristband by a boy that looks suspiciously young. Bill’s Bus isn’t the clean-cut operation I was expecting and I can only blame my naiveté. We hop on and sit in the front which Anna says is the wrong move but now we’re here and I’m too nervous to move. Everyone and their mother is vaping. We keep turning around to look at people dancing and singing which I imagine looks weird. Little do they know, I’m a reporter.

11:00 p.m.

First stop: WildCat. In my extremely preliminary information-gathering Wildcat was mentioned more than once, leading me to believe that it must be a cool and hip place to go. It was all lies—the place is basically empty. We go outside to
drown our sorrows in American Spirits when we’re approached by two guys who know Anna: Chris and Joshua. They’re delightfully bubbly and fun—exactly what we need. We all go back inside, and it’s now wall-to-wall packed. Thankfully, Joshua is so soaked with sweat that it causes people to disperse from us. Still, I only last five minutes. Chris takes me to the outdoor hookah bar which feels like a fever dream. At one point I get stuck in line for the bathroom where a middle-aged real estate agent tells me I should focus on financials rather than passions. I ask, “Why not both?” Nothing is real.

12:00 a.m.

It’s time to move on. I tell them I have to go to EOS—the final boss of the night. Joshua says his friend is sleeping with the manager so when we get there we proceed to yell this information (names included) to no avail. Against all odds, we are let inside and go straight past the photo booth to the smaller room because Chris and Joshua (our spiritual guides) say so. Apparently, this is where they play 90s R&B, which really sells me. No, they’re playing house music. We live in hope. Good news—it’s way less crowded here and the four of us have room to dance our hearts away. We’re taking up the whole area flinging ourselves around and I find this very pleasing.

1:00 a.m.

In a truly tragic turn of events, we are separated from Chris and Joshua. I cannot explain how or why. Anna and I decide to end the night at Elsie’s because it’s only right—the place of misfits (Anna) and alternatives (me, still trying). Peering through the windows, we see that it’s definitely closed but this doesn’t deter us. Going around the back, we knock on the gate until a nice lady lets us in for a quick drink. Quiet and slow, it feels like home. We’re hardly through our beer when I check the time and realize we have to skedaddle. I know we’re not going to make it on the last bus unless I run ahead, so I tell Anna to meet me there. This was my mistake.
2:00 a.m.

I find the bus but Anna is nowhere to be found, and soon they drive away with an apology. Anna is calling to say, “I will find you,” to which I say, “No you won’t. Just type WildCat into your maps. Please.” It’s a lost cause. Chris and Joshua appear out of thin air (spirit guides) and come with me to find Anna. She has traveled in the complete opposite direction, and eventually we find her in the middle of the street conversing with an elderly man. They are sharing songs with each other and Anna casually says “Hi” when she sees us. Her new friend turns out to be a sweet angel and makes us hold hands and promise to protect each other. He even recited an Edgar Allen Poe poem. When the Uber comes, I’m sad to see him go.

3:00 a.m.

Anna does attempt to light a cigarette in the Uber, but we quickly shut it down. Thankfully, our driver turns a blind eye and we make it to Isla Vista safe and sound. Saying our goodbyes to Chris and Joshua, Anna and I make the seemingly never-ending journey home from the 67 to 68 block.

I did it. I even had a good time! Am I a club rat now? Maybe. Would I do it again? Absolutely not. But I’m glad that I did because even though it was scary, it turned out okay; It feels good to know that I can. I think this might be what my therapist calls “exposure therapy.”
WHY MY FRIENDS SCREAM-SING TO TAYLOR SWIFT
Exploring Swift’s Everlasting Magnetism

ON A TYPICAL TUESDAY NIGHT, my housemates plus two of our girlfriends were over for taco night, chatting freely while we heated up tortillas and lined up toppings. As we gossiped about our recent life happenings, “Karma” by Taylor Swift randomly played on the speaker. Within a few seconds, the girls exchanged cheeky glances across the kitchen and began to hum the words lightly. Casual head bopping and singing soon elevated into full-blown screaming, with special emphasis on lyrics that spoke to some of our own relationship/situationship narratives.

The thing with Swiftie sing-alongs is that they’re not all fun and games—the passion seriously comes from the heart. It’s raw and guttural.

Sometimes I’m in the mood for this type of zealous karaoke but that night my social battery was low and I found myself stealthily crawling upstairs to get some homework done (as if the music wasn’t blasting through my papery walls). What I thought might be a 30-minute ordeal turned into a 2-hour marathon. I sat thinking to myself, “What the hell does Taylor Swift lace her songs with to seduce us like this?” and “Damn, who hurt you?”

In retrospect, I recognize that this is not an isolated phenomenon among my friends; there have been many nights that I’ve heard people drunkenly trek through the streets of IV singing Taylor Swift, blast songs in their homes, or jump on elevated surfaces at parties when “You Belong With Me” comes on. That being said, I’ve been wondering what it is about Taylor Swift’s music that liberates so many people, especially of our generation, to pour their hearts out. How can her 10-minute re-released song “All Too Well” maintain #1 on the charts?

Based on observation, personal experience, and input from friends, I have resolved that Swift’s strength lies in her intimate and immersive storytelling technique, nostalgic appeal, and melodramatic execution. The singer’s massive music collection nurtures an intoxicating balance between pain and love, cathetically guiding us through
the ups and downs of modern life. Her worldwide success shows how silly love songs can actually go far in making peace with heartbreak, embarrassment, and shame. In a world where we are pressured to refrain from appearing too sensitive or passionate, her songs feel like a glass of wine after a hard day.

But what separates her love songs from the billions of others? To be fair, the catchiness of her tunes plays a sizable role. Sometimes it’s nice to have heartbreak encapsulated in a pop song rather than a tear-jerking ballad. Regardless, her genius also lies in her business strategies. Pointing to the name of her upcoming tour, her albums all feel like different eras and personality archetypes that grow with her. It seems as if Swifties, like her, have grown from naive teenagers to wiser—perhaps slightly jaded—young adults. Because each album has a distinct tone and overall sentiment, it’s common for fans to define the stage of life they’re in via whatever album aligns most with what they’re experiencing, saying things like “I’m in my Reputation era” after a breakup or scandalous life event. Still, throughout every era lies the diary-like poetics of a hopeless romantic.

To enrich my perspective, I hit up one of the most devoted Swifties I know—my dear friend Megan whose 2022 listening stats resulted in a whopping 7,000 minutes of exclusively Taylor Swift. “Having a pop hit written about a similar personal experience is a good feeling and it doesn’t matter if others think it’s stupid,” she reveals. She adds that even though many call Swift “cringe” and “annoying”, there’s a level of humorous self-awareness in her work that is endearing and speaks to the feminine experience. Meg loves to indulge in her music when she’s alone, but “listening with friends becomes a shared experience and turns feelings that suck into a fun moment.”

Last year in 2021, Meg and I lived together when the extended version of Swift’s 2012 song “All Too Well” was released. And to be honest, it gripped us both. I was in a weird spot trying to move on from my ex-boyfriend while simultaneously wanting him back, and even though the memories in the song aren’t my own, they somehow resurfaced complex emotions I hadn’t fully grappled with. “All Too Well” is known for being a vulnerable, stormy song about Swift’s failed relationship with Jake Gyllenhaal who she dated at 20 while he was 29. The song carries us through a narrative that begins with nostalgic, fond memories that transform into gut-wrenching recollections of the downfall of the relationship, making it impossible to stop listening.

With an accompanying short film, Swift shares intimate memories of their time together, admitting that he didn’t show up to her birthday and was embarrassed by their age gap. “You kept me like a secret but I kept you like an oath.” She cleverly selects moments that encapsulate the distinct feelings of giddiness that accompany falling in love, recalling “You almost ran the red ‘cause you were lookin’ over at me.” Throughout her entire discography, Swift uses this technique of evocative imagery and clever poetics to transport us to our own formative moments. We all know that hearing about someone’s similar experiences makes us feel less alone and resentful, and music is no exception.

Maybe Swift really is one of the voices of our generation, or maybe she’s just the comfort blanket girls brought to college with them. Regardless, whether you’re the neighbor trying to get some peace or the one singing into the karaoke microphone, we can all see that no one’s growing out of Taylor Swift anytime soon.
IT’S 9 P.M. ON A SATURDAY in Isla Vista and the sound of live music is amplified through the streets. The noise gathers the vagabonds on their moonlit walks as they search for mischief like moths allured to a flame. As techno music rises in popularity, live band performances remain a symbolic component of Isla Vista student culture. The atmosphere live music creates is grounding—you sense that you’re among genuine, passionate people coming together, all a part of a shared musical experience.

Each show fulfills a specific niche in the live music scene. The music of heavy metal shows herd groups of people into a backyard, where they violently mosh until there are just a few left standing. I find that I must distance myself from the crowd if I want to remain unharmed. Observing the scene from a balcony, I see people being trampled, thrashing around, and rolling to the ground like untamed animals. Some leave to collect themselves and others stand right back up to continue this cyclical mayhem. Though metal is not the typical genre of music I listen to, I’ve become fond of these shows where everyone seems to forget their sense of humanity. It’s a bonding experience for all your friends and the ultimate test of their loyalty—will they pick you up when you fall in the mosh or will you have to fend for yourself? The chaos of it all eventually comes together, emanating a passionate yet helter-skelter-like energy.

Other crowds tend to be a bit more graceful, with people frolicking around in their maxi skirts and crochet tops, like they were plucked straight out of Woodstock or the film Midsommar. Though people still mosh, it’s a much more forgiving environment. I enter into a crowded backyard where the band Field Daze begins to play, heads of hair starting to dance. Deadset, a Grateful Dead cover band, follows shortly after and calls upon an audience of Grateful Dead enthusiasts and people who are there purely for amusement, no matter what 1960s counterculture track plays. I’m standing at a distance while “Fire
on the Mountain” plays and overhear one of the girls in a white ruffled maxi skirt mentioning, “I honestly don’t know the Grateful Dead that well. I’m just here to see Justin Memenas play.” It seems that some come for the music and others to proclaim their attraction.

UCSB alumni Chris Goldsmith mentions how “back then, the emphasis was original music. It wasn’t ‘cool’ to be a cover band.” As a result, a new wave of punk rock and reggae shaped the 1980s in California. This information left me to think about how classic rock cover bands like Deadset and The Doors Experience have evolved to become a popular form of live music entertainment in modern-day Isla Vista. I presume that a newfound appreciation for our parents’ music has something to do with it.

In a different vein, jazz shows generate syncopated rhythms and radiate a gentle energy where people can appreciate casual conversation alongside the music. I begin my migration to the 67 block of Trigo Road and arrive at the backyard where the jazz-infused classic rock band, Halfway to Texas, is playing. A visiting student from San Diego is amazed by the dynamics of Isla Vista community culture. “There’s just a nonchalant energy. You don’t get to experience this everywhere, going from street to street packed with students and this kind of music,” he says.

Once 12 a.m. comes around and the cops are waiting outside the house to ticket that one student who walks out with an open container, I walk back home still faintly hearing the tunes echoing the streets. I notice people stumbling around, searching for the next house with loud music. Weekend nights in Isla Vista are a playground of talented individuals and bonafide carousers. It’s supply and demand; without one or the other, the system simply wouldn’t exist. By the time the shows and conversations outside come to an end, I’m struck with the thought that once I graduate, this unique atmosphere of live music will become another one of my core memories in Isla Vista. For now, I choose to embrace it and fall asleep with "Shakedown Street" stuck in my head until the next weekend.
Going Up

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // SOPHIA CHUN
IN AN EMERGENCY PRESS THE BUTTON HELP WILL ARRIVE

CAR CALL
SNUGGLED ON THE QUIET CORNER of East Cota Street, amidst the lemony scent of newly bloomed magnolia flowers, resides Art From Scrap Creative ReUse Store. An epicenter of possibility, the store provides a space in which things that would otherwise be thrown away are given the opportunity for a second life. Old magazines from the dentist’s office waiting room are cut up and transformed into individualistic collages, and wine bottle corks, collected from nights both tearful and terrific, are amassed together to form door wreaths. Meanwhile, crooning
siren songs, boxes of toilet paper roll centers and crates of shiny buttons enchant and attract hordes of clever crafters.

Posted behind a wooden desk of stickers, glass jars, and various other trinkets, Nicole Roehrig, Art From Scrap’s leading manager, commands the shop’s creatively-charged chaos with both poise and passion. Her days are filled with sorting and organizing donated craft supplies, which are then later sold at affordable costs to the Santa Barbara community.

Roehrig, the self-proclaimed “queen of the scrap pile” has been working at the store since 2020. When COVID-19 struck, she, along with many other millennials, found themselves in a position of having to move back to their childhood homes. Although leaving the colorful city of San Francisco, where she had been living for over nine years, was a difficult decision for her, Roehrig’s role at Santa Barbara’s Art From Scrap has allowed her to create a life even more vibrant.

While Roehrig has helped Art From Scrap rapidly grow these past three years, the store has been a staple to the city of Santa Barbara for over three decades. Its concept started out of the garages of Bari Romoy, Irene Falzone, and Lynn Seigel-Boettner, three moms who wanted to create a sustainable way for the children in their community to have access to school art supplies. As Roehrig puts it, these women “started the movement of turning what is considered garbage to some into art material.” As community donations and contributions increased, their little garage hobby gained a physical shop location. Through the rigorous efforts of passionate volunteers, the store eventually expanded into Explore Ecology, an even larger nonprofit dedicated to stewarding environmental and artistic exploration within Santa Barbara’s youth. Their impact can be seen through a variety of events and programs such as monthly beach cleanups, school community gardens, and most notable, the Art From Scrap flagship store.

Although kids are the primary reason behind the nonprofit’s creation, Roehrig emphasizes that the shop is for everybody. This collective nature is especially evident at Art From Scrap’s “crafternoons” every Thursday from 3:30 to 5:00pm, when children and adults alike gather together for various activities such as dying fabric with indigo or making cardboard box cars. These Thursdays promote human connection through creativity, something Roehrig considers as being the best part of her job. She loves the unique interactions she experiences with crafters and watching the varied ways they choose to utilize the scraps.

Lynn Maxwell, an art teacher living in Lompoc, is one of the many eccentric faces that frequents the store. Adorned
in her hand welded jewelry and colorful tie-dyed, thrifted frocks, Maxwell, who has been a customer at Art From Scrap since 2011, has made it a point to center her life around art and creativity. Since 1985, Maxwell has taught elementary and high school art, gaining a deep satisfaction in watching her students develop confidence through their creations. While making art is timeless, it is especially important to do so during developmental years, as it stimulates cognitive and social-emotional skills. Unfortunately, because school-budget cuts have left teachers in a position of having to pay out of pocket for their supplies, the ability for kids to create is becoming increasingly harder. Maxwell explains how places like Art From Scrap allow teachers “to augment their miniscule budgets.” By providing low-cost art supplies, Art From Scrap helps teachers create a more enriching and engaging curriculum, which in turn creates a brighter generation of future leaders.

The shop’s affordability is especially beneficial to UCSB students. While making art can significantly help reduce stress, supplies at commercial craft stores is often expensive. Art From Scrap provides students with a college budget the ability to economically make beautiful things. For instance, fourth year, Lena Kellermann, sources yarn, leather, and other sewing materials from the store. With a passion for sustainable fashion, Kellermann uses this material to make and embellish her clothing. She believes that dressing well does not have to hurt the environment or one’s wallet. Likewise, as one of the co-presidents of IV Trading Post, an organization dedicated to repurposing and recirculating clothing in Isla Vista, Kellermann often uses materials from the store at her club events. For instance, at IVTP’s past Valentine’s Day Clothing Recirculation, Kellermann sourced heart shaped stamps and stickers from Art From Scrap so that rather than contributing to wasteful consumerism by purchasing pre-made cards, those attending could instead make homemade ones out of recycled materials.

While the thrifty aspect of Art From Scrap benefits the environment, it also helps enhance the creative process of art making. Unlike regular craft stores that have boxed crafts with directions explaining how something should be made, Art From Scrap Creative ReUse encourages shoppers to use their imagination as they shop and seek inspiration through whatever materials are present. Kellermann explains how the store “fosters creativity by not telling you a certain way to create,” and since the shop’s inventory is based on donation, you never know what you are going to find. Rather than entering with a specific intention of an exact item, customers walk in open-minded and eager to alchemize the trash into something they treasure.
WORD MAGAZINE
INT 185ST, THE CREATION OF THIS MAGAZINE
This issue of WORD: Isla Vista Arts & Culture Magazine is brought to you by the student artists and writers in INT 185ST and its partner SEAL campus organization. We welcome new writers, designers, photographers, and artists from all majors.

[Not Necessarily]
SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
THEATER 194A, GROUP STUDIES IN ACTING AND DIRECTING
Spring Quarter only
Experience theater by acting and producing it. Students rehearse, act, create costumes, sets, and finally perform their work during the final week of classes. All majors welcome.

MAGIC LANTERN FILMS
FILM/MEDIA 119ML, ISLA VISTA FILM EVENTS
Magic Lantern Films teaches the ins and outs of film programming using the IV Theater as a lab. Students gain experience in budgeting, publicizing, researching, theater management, and curating, culminating in the execution of screening that come out of students’ own pitches.

IV LIVE!
THEATER 42/142, PR AND ONSITE EVENT MANAGEMENT
Experience promoting and producing weekly Improvability comedy shows along with additional live performances in Isla Vista. Learn Backstage and front-of-the-house skills. Explore public relations, advertising, and production management in this real-world setting.

For more information, go to our website: https://ivarts.ihc.ucsb.edu/ or email: ihc-ivarts@ucsb.edu
SO MUCH OF UCSB'S MAGIC is rooted in Isla Vista's unique beach culture. There's nowhere else in the country where blocks of million-dollar beachfront homes are entirely occupied by students. These houses give students the opportunity to experience the beach in a way that few people will ever get to enjoy. Every week, students can be found doing homework on sunny decks with an ocean view or reading a book while listening to the waves crash. Students even get to enjoy the luxury of surfing fifty-feet away from their backyard. And on weekends, hundreds of people flock to the houses along Del Playa to relax with friends and celebrate a week's worth of hard work.

Yet the iconic row of houses that makes Del Playa so special is endangered. Erosion has caused the cliffside to become unstable, and residents are noticing the changes as their backyards have slowly diminished over time.
In recent years, IV has fallen victim to multiple instances of bluff collapse due to cliff erosion. In 2014, several students were forced to evacuate their homes due to a collapse near their apartments. In 2018, parts of the cliff collapsed after a weekend of heavy surf, injuring several people. And in April of 2021, part of the bluff collapsed near Camino Pescadero without any warning. Luckily nobody was hurt in April, but the incident was a reminder of the precarious conditions of oceanside homes.

Jacob Green, a fourth-year Data Science major at UCSB, lived just five houses down from where the bluff collapsed in 2021. That afternoon, he was doing homework on his balcony when he heard a loud crash from a few houses down. At first, he wasn’t sure what caused the noise, but a large cloud of dust dissipated as rubble tumbled down—and he quickly realized what happened. “I didn’t know what to think at first,” he told me. “I was kind of in shock, and then I realized someone’s backyard might have collapsed and people could be in danger.”

It’s common to see fences and patios hanging precariously over the edge of the bluff, only supported by a few poles and a dash of luck. Thankfully, no homes were damaged and nobody on the beach was injured by falling debris. However, this served as a warning and reminder to residents to keep their distance from the unstable cliffside.

Bluff collapse in IV is a direct result of the perpetual environmental stressors placed on the coastline. The cliffs in IV are made up of sedimentary rock, making the cliffside especially susceptible to erosion and instability. The combination of heavy rain, wind, and waves battering the cliffside causes the soil and rock to become so unstable that the bluff eventually gives way.

There have already been several instances of coastal damage due to the heavy storms we saw earlier this year. On January 20th, a huge section of the bluff at Blacks Beach in La Jolla collapsed, just barely missing impact on multiple beachgoers. The storms in early January created ocean conditions severe enough to damage multiple piers in Ventura, Avila, and Capitola. All three piers are still closed to the public two months later. In Santa
Cruz, many people were endangered by street floods and storm waves that pushed driftwood and bits of reef beyond thirty-foot cliffs and into public areas. On February 16th part of the bluff near the world-famous surf spot—Steamer Lane—collapsed just fifteen feet away from surfers in the water.

Evan Forman, a grad student at UCSB, is another long-time resident of Del Playa—living in IV for the past six years. About five years ago, his landlord saw how bluff erosion was impacting the stability of oceanside houses. Some properties, such as 6595 and 6769 Del Playa, are currently uninhabited because of safety issues. Seeing houses sustain damage and subsequently lose their value, Forman’s current landlord took initiative about eight years ago to move the entire foundation of his properties 25 feet closer to the street. Today, beachgoers can see how much further the backyard used to gape over the cliff. The old fence is still there and hangs about seven feet over the edge of the cliff. The cliff beneath the house has gradually been dug out by the combination of high tides and heavy surf in the past years, so now it is possible to actually walk underneath the new fenceline of the backyard. This landlord’s preemptive action has enabled another generation of UCSB students to continue to enjoy life by the beach.

The Del Playa bluffs weren’t always in the precarious state they’re in now. Katherine Walker graduated from UCSB in 1989. Her son, Lucas Walker, is currently a student at UCSB. Walker regularly visits her son for parents weekends and enjoys reminiscing on her own fun experiences in IV.

When I asked Walker about how IV has changed since she went here, she expressed shock over the unprecedented danger of partying on the bluffs today. “Back in the eighties, if a party-goer got too drunk and fell over the fence, they’d just tumble a couple of feet down and climb back over with a couple of scrapes. Nowadays if you fall over, you’d be lucky to walk out of the hospital.” Being familiar with the number of people regularly crammed into these backyards, nerves run high thinking about her son at these parties “Be careful and watch out for your friends,” she warns. “I would hate to see you or one of your friends in the headlines.”

Thankfully, no IV residents have been injured due to bluff collapse this year. This is partially thanks to the efforts of the Coastal Erosion Working Group, created by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to combat the issue of bluff collapse throughout the county. Seawalls and riprap are barriers placed along beaches to protect the coastline from the constant battery it endures from the ocean. Beach nourishment is the addition of sand and sediment along the coastline to create a bigger beach that will protect the bluffs from the ocean and storms. Methods such as these are being implemented across the county to help prevent the erosion of our bluffs and protect the well-being of beachgoers. However, these measures are expensive and the simplest, most effective action the county can take is alert landlords and residents to the imminent danger of cliff erosion.

Despite the amusing UCSB stories we got from previous decades, Walker’s warnings ring true. The years of environmental strain exerted on IV’s bluffs have forged new dangers. No one can say for sure how long oceanside Del Playa houses will remain safely habitable. But if anything is certain, we shouldn’t take this beautiful place for granted. Residents and landlords can work in unison with county officials to preserve the community we’ve all grown to love.
CUT THESE POSTCARDS OUT AND MAIL TO A FRIEND TO SHARE IV'S NATIVE FLOWERS!

PLACE STAMP HERE

PLACE STAMP HERE

PLACE STAMP HERE
**Ditch the DoorDash**

**A Cooking Resource Guide for the Budget-Conscious Student**

WORDS // JULIAN OELSNER
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // YUJIE (JAMIE) FAN

**IV’S SALTY OCEAN BREEZE** carries the tantalizing aroma of sizzling spices and searing meat, mingling with the vibrant scents of fresh produce and aromatic herbs. Listening to the waves crash and the seagulls squawk, a fresh home-cooked meal is prepared by UCSB students—a beautiful environment in which to explore what the kitchen has to offer. Navigating the daily hustle and bustle of college, it is easy to neglect the joy of cooking.

Why expend an hour of precious time and energy following an intricate recipe when we could pop some pizza bagels in the microwave? By taking advantage of the wonderful resources that are accessible within the IV community—EBT, UCSB’s Food Pantry, and Hello Fresh—cooking quality meals with fresh ingredients can be easy and affordable. The cathartic experience of cooking coupled with quality time with roommates are two central benefits of cooking at home and exploring the beauty of creation in the kitchen. Cooking should be less of a daunting task for the budget and time-constrained college student.

As college students, some of us are discouraged from cooking due to the high price of groceries or the general lack of knowledge we might have surrounding basic cooking maneuvers. Time can also be a huge factor; people are busy and can’t often commit an hour or more to spend time in the kitchen. Cooking spaces—along with quality ingredients—are costly when you live in a town like IV where there are cramped, shared kitchens and limited grocery store options—especially on a college student’s budget.

This is where food delivery apps like DoorDash enter, targeting swamped college students who just want to grab a bite in between classes without having to take a break from work. It provides an easy
cop out, which is often incredibly enticing but doesn’t provide the same benefits that creating a meal from scratch does.

Fortunately, there are several resources for students to take advantage of in order to experience the wonderful benefits of cooking tasty cuisines in the comfort of their home and in the presence of their friends.

Students who aren’t as financially independent still have a plethora of resources available when they want to satisfy their kitchen cravings. According to Madison Rio, a fourth-year communications major, EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) grants her a small amount of money based on her income each month to grocery shop without the financial burden. EBT is a government-led food assistance program that allots financially-constrained students a sum of money to buy groceries. EBT allows Rio to “expand her pantry without being as concerned with the cost of the groceries that [she] usually would be.” While the benefits of EBT are not available to everyone, it allows those who qualify more financial freedom to explore the realm of cooking.

Financially constrained students can also utilize access to the Isla Vista Youth Community Pantry which currently operates at St. George Youth Center on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This self-sustaining community pantry grants students free, communal access to donated food, fruits, and vegetables. The pantry is a practical resource for all IV residents, especially those who may not qualify for EBT benefits but who still need extra financial support in buying fresh ingredients. Creating home-cooked meals is a pleasure everyone should be able to experience, even those who may not have the financial means to indulge in the beauty of it.

Timing is another cardinal issue constraining the average college student’s
ability to cook. Grocery shopping is time-consuming and for those that don’t do it on a regular basis, it can often be difficult to locate which ingredients create a well-balanced meal. There are several food subscription box services out there created to solve this exact issue within the college cooking community. For starters, Hello Fresh provides ready-to-cook meals with easy-to-follow recipes. The boxes come with fresh produce, and users can choose from a variety of meals on the Hello Fresh app to have the ingredients sent to them.

Jonny Conway, a fourth-year Communication major, has been using the subscription for years now. “The subscription box service gives students free promotions all the time which gives me tons of free boxes with no cost, along with easy ready-to-cook meals weekly that are better than you would imagine,” he said. While they can be costly, ranging from 30 to 40 dollars a week, they come with two to three meals that often are enough to feed two people with leftovers.

Experiencing the benefits of cooking at home is one of the many joys in life. Cooking in college can be a struggle as financial and timing constraints often push students away from experiencing the satisfaction of creating something delicious with their own two hands. But the UCSB and IV community provides a plethora of resources to students who either need the ingredients or the inspiration to produce delicious food in the comfort of their own homes with the company of their closest friends.
IT SEEMS RIDICULOUS to take your dog on a walk around the block or to grab a coffee at Caje here in Isla Vista with nothing on your feet. That is, unless you’re ready to introduce them to the small bugs that live nearby. Located along the oast, where water plunges onto the shore and surfers ride the waves at sunset, IV’s free-spirited, beach-town atmosphere encourages feelings of youthfulness across its community. When we were kids, we played in backyards and in the street with our friends, never caring about the lack of shoes on our soles. But now, even by the ocean, some of us are still hesitant to embrace the freedom we are granted and ditch the shoes. As someone who always feels inclined to put on a pair before walking down the block to the beach, I consulted some of Isla Vista’s barefoot walkers to understand the appeal to bypass the boots and slip off the sandals.

One day I was walking to the Co-op when I saw a pair of bare feet crossing the hot asphalt of Trigo Road. They were peeking through a pair of denim overalls which belonged to third-year UCSB student, Angela Gelfand. As an Environmental Studies major, she loves to feel the different textures of Earth and is often doing so on her sporadic sunset walks to Devs.

The Co-op seems to attract people who embrace this whimsical way of life, one of them being Gelfand who occasionally promenades barefoot down her street to pick up some parsley. “Something about the ever-present threat of stepping on broken glass kind of adds a little bit of
thrill and excitement to my life that I’d be missing otherwise,” Gelfand says. That long-awaited thrill rushed through her one day when an excruciating pain followed by a small, bloody cut appeared on her foot. A shard of glass that had been hiding under a bush at the dog park left her big toe with a lovely reminder. Angela didn’t notice the cut until she saw drops of blood trailing behind her on the walk home. It clearly didn’t stop her because I saw her bare feet wandering around the 68 block just last week. “It didn’t stop me because I’m not a wimp!” Gelfand explains.

As a transfer student who is still adjusting to the eccentric culture in IV, I was perplexed when I first saw exposed feet on the ground—a friend of mine had been barefoot the entire time we were out running errands. I thought to myself, “is she not thinking about the generations of shoes that have touched this floor?” It makes sense that we feel comfortable walking barefoot in our own homes since we know who comes in and who cleans, but we don’t know how often a place like Trader Joe’s is mopping their floors. And for the streets of IV, they are objectively unsanitary considering the crowds that flood the roads on the weekends, leaving beer bottles and vomit behind. I was sitting in Little Acorn Park searching for more answers when I saw a tall, puzzled boy wearing nothing from the knees down standing across the street.

Matt Rodo is an SBCC student and IV resident who would lose all ten of his toes before putting on shoes. While for most, walking barefoot from time to time can be liberating, for Rodo, it is absolutely necessary in order to complete his mundane, day-to-day tasks. “I don’t get driving with shoes on. I can’t feel the gas pedal as much,” he claims. Raised in Newport Beach, Rodo was already coming home with grains of sand falling off his feet by the age of seven. However, it wasn’t until he moved to IV that Rodo found himself walking barefoot almost everywhere. The possibility of cutting his foot on a small piece of metal or stepping into mush was pushed to the back of his mind. Unfortunately for Rodo, the rest of the world is not ready to see people walk inside an establishment without shoes, and Chipotle is no exception. They kicked Rodo out, giving him what I imagine was their “you-know-better-than-that” face after noticing his fashion faux pas.
Lately the streets have been exceptionally wet and muddy—so naturally, I decided to take my research to the next level and see what the buzz is all about. I was staring out of the window when I impulsively decided to step into the middle of Trigo Road with my shoes in my hands. The concrete was smooth—it didn’t hurt at all, but it was cold. It felt as if I shoved the tile of my apartment floor into the refrigerator then took it out and walked across.

To my surprise, the worst part was going back inside. First of all, I was home alone and desperately needed something to wipe my feet with. Second of all, I needed to find a way to get to the bathtub from the front door without stepping down on my feet. I tiptoed into the kitchen, wiped my feet with a paper towel, then ran into the bathroom to wash my feet. Unfortunately I didn’t wash my feet right away because there was a spider inside of the tub and I needed to get it out before I could even begin to watch the outside world slowly swirl into the drain.

It’s safe to say that IV is home to a youthful and creative community that allows people to forge beyond the norms that our society creates. By my own exploration, I have decided that barefoot walking is not for me. Although the experience was invigorating, the inconvenience of cleaning my feet afterward made me never want to do it again. I’ll stick to the sand and leave it to people like Gelfand and Rodo to be the trailblazers for connecting us with our inner child once again.
I am still learning to love myself.
OLIVIA LILLY HAS ALWAYS DREAMED of traveling the world. It was without question that the minute she graduated, she would finally be free to explore all the ecosystems the country has to offer. She had heard of people living in their vans, and there was something exciting to her about being able to connect with all of these places and stay there for as long as she needed. However, when she was struck with the conundrum of having nowhere to live for her third year of college, she realized that her dream couldn’t wait until graduation. Unable to find an affordable home in Isla Vista, Olivia found herself scouring Facebook Marketplace and Craigslist for a place to live. After months of indecision and dead ends, she finally found Baloo—a completely gutted, faded teal school bus from Portland, Oregon. It was owned by a lovely couple who had cherished it but were ultimately unable to fulfill their dream of living in it themselves. When she got behind the driver’s seat for the first time, she cried, and the couple cried too. “There was an overwhelming sea of emotions coming from me and from the original owners as well, for I was driving away with their hopes and dreams and bringing mine to life.”
I’ve really haven’t written since I was sitting on the massive cliffside of Santa Cruz Island and what a delightful time that was! Since then I have spent time getting to know Baloo & some manley housemates here at the coop. I’ve been going barefoot & jumping in the ocean everyday. The last couple of days was lovely. I haven’t gotten this week because I will get me Baloo & I am all in. I have a kitchen, a stove, a couch, a bed, a sink, a toilet & a fridge. This is my first night in my new place. I’ve done so many things this time. I feel like I’m on top of mountains.

How to express it? The simplest. We’ve been working so hard. The last 24 days. Everyday morning through night. 12 hours a day. It’s hard work, long hours. She also contributed to this. I just learned from this lady who gave me vision posts that I made a gorgeous ceiling. Not the word came from some campers childhood that it is to have a piece memory in the bus.
Olivia says, reflecting on the experience. “They were really excited for me but also heartbroken.” On her 700 mile drive from Portland to her home in Arnold, California, Olivia had no company and no radio, only Baloo and her thoughts. Buzzing with excitement, she slept under the pine trees, juggled, and sang “The Bare Necessities” from *The Jungle Book* all the way home.

Now, when Olivia looks around Baloo, she sees all of the people who have shown her kindness. From the couple who sold her the bus, to the people in her community who have helped her install a sink, countertop, and ceiling, she has received immense support from strangers and loved ones alike. She hopes that her story can inspire people to be vulnerable—to escape their comfort zone and pursue what truly makes them happy.

She knew her bus was going to be named Baloo before she even met it. If you’ve ever seen *The Jungle Book*, you know that Baloo is a bear that lives the good life. He sings a lot. He dances a lot. He doesn’t need much to get by, have a good time, and enjoy what’s around him. This is how Olivia Lilly strives to look at life. People often ask her what she’s going to do when she graduates, but the truth is that she has no idea. She doesn’t know what’s going to happen or where she’s going to go, but she knows she will always have a companion and home in Baloo.

“Look for the bare necessities. Forget about your worries and your strife... wherever I wander, wherever I roam, I couldn’t be fonder of my big home.”

-Baloo the Bear
AS THE OCEANSIDE STREET begins to fill with wanderers—advancing in short strides, arms crossed to preserve warmth, checking addresses that float past—a group of about 20 prepare for their night’s events in tandem. Inside, they stand in a circle, heads bowed, preparing to host “one of the biggest parties on the street.” The residents of Jesus Burgers will soon welcome partygoers with free food, becoming an unavoidable presence on the busiest street in town, presenting pedestrians with a “JESUS BURGERS: Taste & See” sign on their right and a “FREE BLESSINGS” sign on their left as they journey forth for the night.

I walked into the house alone, with no points of reference, looking for someone to introduce myself to. In the kitchen stood Courtney Dugan and Elijah Benton,
two residents of the house cooking up veggie burgers as a girl in a hoodie stood patiently to the side, ready to get her burger and reconvene with her friends out front. Dugan danced in subtle movements to the music projecting from the adjacent room while remaining attentive to the stove. Lindsey Jacobsson, a classmate of mine and a member of Isla Vista Church, recognized me. We talked by the fridge as people filtered in and out of the kitchen. One girl, two burgers in hand, danced while her friend pointed her phone at her, placing me and Jacobsson awkwardly in the frame.

It had been a while since I last hung out at a DP house on a Friday night. The scene from the outside was familiar—loud music playing, people crowded in animated conversation—but unlike their neighbors fueled by alcohol, the members of Jesus Burgers are fueled by their desire to share the love of God with the people of Isla Vista through the power of food. “Jason, the pastor, says that you feed the stomach and the heart opens,” says Dugan. Dugan and I are tucked away upstairs, where it is quiet enough to hear each other without shouting, and where the seven girls of the house live. “There’s something special about when someone feels nourished. It opens conversation.”

Jason Lomelino, the pastor of Isla Vista Church, started Jesus Burgers back in 2001 when he was in his early 20s. Lomelino came to IV in hopes of partying, but one night, after spontaneously attending a friend’s church event, Lomelino says that God spoke to him, thus changing the trajectory of his life. Inspired by the environment that fostered his encounter with god, Lomelino organized a public barbeque, serving burgers to the IV community. It was this that later transformed into Jesus Burgers, the name of the church’s weekly barbeque and the name of the DP house itself. “I think if Jesus was here he would be living on Del Playa just serving water, talking to people, loving people,” says Lomelino. “Keeping it real simple, not over the top religious.”

Jacobsson, a third-year UCSB student from Santa Clarita says that it is the “simplicity” of Jesus Burgers and Isla Vista Church that drew her to this church community. In fact, her interest in the church was what made her decide to come to UCSB in the first place. Jacobsson grew up surrounded by megachurches that used flashy lights and fog machines in their services—a way of Christianity that did not reflect her values. The “down to Earth” appearance of Isla Vista Church piqued her interest and was exactly what she was searching for. She discovered the church through Isla Vista Worship—a group of artists who create music with over 300,000 monthly listeners on Spotify—and Mark Barlow, the church’s worship pastor and singer/songwriter.

Right as Jacobsson mentions Barlow, Barlow coincidentally appears before us as Jacobsson and I sit on Jesus Burger’s concrete fence, introducing himself to me and promoting his upcoming concert at a church downtown before he heads
into the house to drop off his guitar. “I’ll be there,” Jacobsson says. “My Portion changed my life.”

It is easy to see how Jacobsson formed such a vivid impression of the church before moving to IV from Los Angeles County. The website for Mission Isla Vista—the “umbrella for Jesus Burgers, Isla Vista Worship, Isla Vista House of Prayer, community homes, missionaries, and more”—is full of links that send you to different websites, each one dedicated to a different branch of Mission Isla Vista, each usually with an Instagram and Facebook page to match. There is no shortage of photos and videos to reference when creating an image of what Isla Vista’s church is like. The online web of connections that make up Mission Isla Vista may be confusing to most but is clearly effective for those who are interested.

Jesus Burgers itself is a household name within IV, from our own trips down DP or from stories shared by our friends, but it also is pinned as a “religious destination” on Google Maps if one zooms in close enough—the house even has its own Instagram page with over 4,000 followers. The Jesus Burgers website offers a several-week-long internship welcoming Christians from around the world to “live among our culture” in Isla Vista. “Our goal is to bring people in and out of Isla Vista,” says Lomelino. This internship opportunity and the overall widespread impression the church has created within the Christian community is how 14 people like Benton and Dugan—respectively from England and Chicago—are now in IV, living at the Jesus Burgers house, hosting hoards of people weekly.

A few years ago, while Dugan was at school in Wisconsin, a friend of hers had a dream where Dugan and some friends were on their school’s party street on a Friday night, handing out grilled cheese sandwiches. Inspired by the dream, they made it happen. “I knew people were searching for something, and I just wanted them to encounter like, pure love, without anything in return,” Dugan says about handing out food to her peers. Shortly after, Dugan met Barlow out in the Midwest at a
local worship night. From there, clicking on website links, she followed the digital trail toward Jesus Burgers. Eerily similar to what Dugan started in her college town, she felt called to Isla Vista to continue her work. “It was so crazy, but it was so the Lord,” Dugan admits.

Another one of the residents in the house is Alyson Parker, originally from Michigan. Similar to Jacobsson and Dugan, she heard about Isla Vista Church through the online presence of Isla Vista Worship and Barlow. “I followed breadcrumbs and felt the Lord say ‘come to Isla Vista,’” Parker shares. Coming from a conservative Bible college in Colorado, Parker was initially apprehensive to come to IV. At 31, she has “been there, done that” when it comes to searching for satisfaction in partying, but it is her experience that has given her the patience to put up with the regulars of DP.

Earlier in the night, I spoke to Benton while he watched over the downstairs restroom, making sure the group of drunk students in line didn’t wander into any of the bedrooms—a typical concern for the host of a house party. “There’s a huge grace to live in this home. The Lord gives us grace to be here, to do the late nights, to open up our home,” Dugan explains. It takes a certain person to submit themselves to an open house, weekend after weekend, and feed all who enter. “I love all these people so much. If only they knew how much I love them because my heart is exploding,” Dugan says as churchgoers and partiers crowd in the front yard.

I prepare to leave for the night, saying goodbye and thanks to Dugan, but not before she sends me off with a prayer, as muffled voices and laughter from downstairs rise to compliment her words.
ONCE UPON A TIME, in the small college town of Isla Vista, there was an iconic sandwich shop that had been a staple of the community since 1981. The shop was originally started by a local businessman who had an eye for quality and a passion for sandwich-making. He set up shop in the heart of Isla Vista, and it quickly became a favorite of students, faculty, and locals alike.

42 years ago Mehrdad Homayouni opened the doors to Sam’s to Go, he states that he never could have imagined the relationships he would later build with the people of Isla Vista. Back then, this town was wild and a nonstop party, but Homayouni always believed it had potential. As the years have gone by, some of the wildness has died down, but this town is still the same vibrant place it was when he first opened up shop. Mehrdad and his son Frankie took the opportunity to reflect on all the memories they have made over the years and all the lives they
“We’ve been here to provide the community with quality sandwiches, good conversation, and plenty of laughs”

have touched and enlightened. Although Isla Vista has changed over time, the sandwich shop has remained a constant.

Sam’s To Go seems to have a dream of providing college students with the perfect morning or afternoon remedy: beer and sandwiches. Mehrdad stocks his shop with various beers and crafted a menu of sandwiches that were seemingly designed to help cure hangovers. Although the original sandwich shop of IV is marketed as a "to-go" business, many students chose to eat at this establishment primarily for the service and to share a laugh with the owner. It is nearly impossible to stumble into Sam’s without getting heckled. Night and day, Homayouni and Frankie are waiting for the opportunity to use one of their perfectly formulated jokes while you contemplate what sandwich to choose. Through all of their constant work to feed and engage with the community of Isla Vista, it is a true joy to see them able to find so much pleasure in cracking jokes with all of their customers. Every chirp from them disrupts the customer’s concentration and only gives them more time to fire shots. Of course, it is all fun and games when talking with these hard-working individuals. Some would say their humor is almost as good as their sandwiches.

Homayouni and Frankie have seen generations of college students come and go, and they’ve watched them grow up and move on to start their own lives. Through it all, Sam’s To Go has continued to be here for the students, providing them with a place to spend some quality time with friends. “Isla Vista will always have a special place in my heart and I’m thankful for the opportunity to serve the students who have become like family to me.” He is proud to have been part of this community for so many years and he looks forward to many more.

Every morning, Mehrdad wakes up at the crack of dawn to prepare the day’s sandwiches. His signature item is the Gaucho sandwich—a mixture of chicken, avocado, bacon, ranch, BBQ sauce, hot sauce, and onion rings. It is still a favorite among students and locals alike. Every morning, students line up down the street waiting to order a sandwich of their choice and a cold beer. The shop also became a popular spot for social gatherings and special events. Whether it was a birthday party or a sorority meeting, people flocked to Sam’s To Go for the atmosphere and the delicious sandwiches. Day in and Day out Mehrdad and Frankie continue to serve up mouthwatering sandwiches and hearty laughs to the students of Isla Vista. This shop is a place that will never go out of style, and will always be remembered. Even if Del Playa is consumed by the ocean I’m positive Sam’s will still be there, ready to serve sandwiches to the remaining Gauchos.”

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