

QWERTY

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# Letter from the editors

Dear Outback Reader,

Every time spring rolls around, I try to embrace the earthly changes of the seasons in my own personal life. The magazine does the same with each new issue. Antônio Carlos Jobim's song "Águas de Março" (Waters of March) is a signifier that I have come back to over the past four years. The content of the song represents the very nature of life's cycles of change, giving us the chance to look through a new perspective and see the light at the end of the tunnel. Between the daily warnings from my iPhone of extreme heat and constant notifications I receive from Gmail to Canvas, it is getting harder and harder to distinguish a stick from a stone.

For me, this will be the second to last Outback that I am lucky enough to be a part of publishing. I feel so grateful for this club. It has been a space of pure creativity, expression, and learning. The very nature of collaborating with people in the pursuit of creating a magazine—the chance to have ideas turn into physical media—is an extremely special opportunity that I may never get again.

Local news forums that can be held in one's hands are precious like a stump; they are grounding and can grow. This time of the renewal of spring can also feel like an uphill battle against a new beginning. It is similar to the unknown of coming to the end of a road. There's a bright spot, a sliver of glass shining to prove that this is in fact life, it is night, it's the sun. I was just up the mountain at the stream and I overheard the riverbank talk of the waters of March. I asked what the mountain meant and she told me, "It's the end of all strain, it's the joy in your heart." That same experience has been true for me and this magazine throughout my entire time at Pitzer. By fostering and embracing the unknown, my most meaningful growth has occurred.

I could not be prouder of the folks who have been so excited to shape the way Outback looks and functions. Get ready, it's going to get funky. Finally, I wanted to express my gratitude to everyone who I got to know and work with because of this magazine. You all made every issue possible. Thank you Outback for allowing the waters of March to flow through the process of creation in every issue I worked on.

Rhyus

Check us out online at  
[theoutback.news](http://theoutback.news)



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*(No generative A.I. was used to create any of our art)*

# In Claremont, You Can Read All About It!

Words by Vivian Simon SC '28

Graphic by Xanthe McGrath SC '29

For most of my life, I loved newspapers and journalism. My parents had subscriptions to The New York Times, The New Yorker, and The Economist, which I picked through once they were done reading. Debates at school or with friends were settled by finding articles from trusted news sources. CNN, NBC, or ABC was always playing in the background.

Then, as I got older, my relationship with journalism grew strained. I was more cautious following the 2016 election, which marked my awakening to the fallibility of news. I got the impression, like many Americans, that news sources were more invested in selling their point than they were in fair reporting.

Some look at the mess that is the American media and simply declare it dead. In a sense, they're right. Job opportunities in journalism are falling. Print media is slowly becoming extinct. This Pew Research Center statistic is frightening: As of 2021, U.S. newsroom employment had fallen 26% since 2008. But giving up on journalism is not a solution.

On the campuses of the Claremont Colleges, journalism is anything but dead, as is seen in the numerous publications across the schools. The oldest and best known is The Student Life (TSL), which hosts writers from all five colleges and publishes weekly. Other publications that are open to writers across the consortium include Claremont Undercurrents, an online newspaper documenting 5C organizing; the Agave Review, a literary magazine; The Golden Antlers, the satirical online news; and my very own, The Outback Newsprint Magazine, which publishes articles ranging from opinion to creative pieces, in magazine form, monthly.

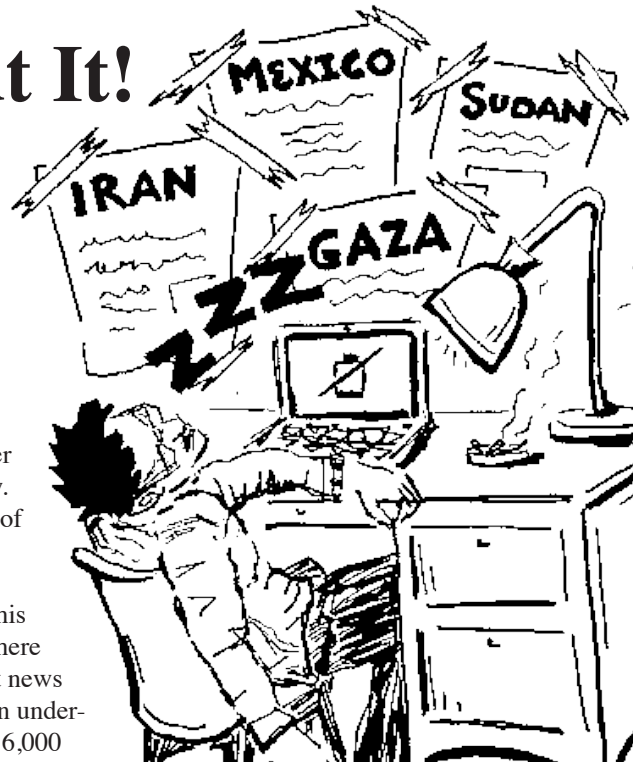
Then there are newspapers more local-

ized to specific schools, which include The Scripps Voice and Scripps College Journal, The Claremont Independent and The Forum (both Claremont McKenna), and The Muddraker (Harvey Mudd), to name a few. Clearly, there is an abundance of publications.

From an outside perspective, this may seem crazy. Why would there need to be at least ten different news sources at a consortium with an undergraduate population of around 6,000 people? And yet, this very question underscores the importance of each print's uniqueness; the papers serve as microcosms of the politically diverse cohorts on campus. As a student, I have multiple sources to which I can turn. The campuses are a mecca of the increasingly rare print media.

The important conclusion from Claremont's concentration of publications is the degree of student interest. The dedication to and involvement with journalism at the Claremont Colleges is immensely inspiring. These papers are not hobby projects, which I discovered for myself since joining The Outback in the fall of 2024. Each Monday, at 8:30 pm, approximately 25 Outback veterans from across the consortium arrive at the Grove House, with fresh faces appearing each time.

Since joining The Outback, Willa Umansky has been one of the Editors-In-Chief. Then, before going abroad this spring, she asked me to fill her shoes (along with my lovely Co-Editors, Ben Connolly and Rhyus Goldman). I felt immediately honored (Umansky is one of my journalism heroes) and daunted by the prospect. I'd only ever been the Creative Writing Editor, but I happily accepted the job.



Now, having been Co-Editor-In-Chief for a couple months, I am so glad I took the leap. I don't typically write news pieces, but the opportunity to edit and work on them so closely has been a real gift. The first meeting in January was just a brainstorm; a month later, we had our February edition, complete with a range of articles, spanning from Claremont news to nearby photo reviews to intricate graphics. As people around the world become increasingly pessimistic about the future of journalism, it is the job of those who care to prove them wrong.

As the percentage of students majoring in humanities subjects plummets, the desire to write for newspapers only increases. It is curious why most colleges have such an abundance of (print) papers, magazines, journals, and more, as they're dying in the real world. There are several reasons — the aforementioned struggling market, the turn towards online media, and, recently, artificial intelligence. Evidently, though, lack of interest isn't a primary one. While there is real cause for concern about job insecurity, the consistent (and growing) interest in journalism at the consortium represents the final glowing ember in a fire that many claim is going out.

# Housing Selection

Words by Emmy Knapp PZ '27

Graphic by Margaret Kaneb SC '29

“Make the coyote feel uncomfortable:” This is the first tip recommended by the City of Claremont when encountering one, as if he feels right at home amidst the hot pavement and flattened lawns of Californian suburbia. Although just yesterday I saw Mr. Coyote prancing down Foothill on his way back from Trader Joe’s, with Takis and a kombucha in one paw and a bouquet of peonies in the other.

Such wanderings of a striking sleek hound rarely go unnoticed. Later that day, in my Classical Sociology seminar, the professor droned on about Veblen’s theory of conspicuous consumption while I scrolled through Instagram ads on my computer. Between tropical spring break trips and American airstrikes, a new 5C Missed Connections post surfaced: To the coyote walking down College on Tuesday wearing a “RIP Franz Kafka” shirt, bark at me anytime.

After class, I head to my friend Rabbit’s dorm on Pritzlaff Field. She’s hosting a pregame for the party at the Pomona farm tonight. The theme: Earth Day of the Dead. “Oh, I know Mr. Coyote!” she says. “He’s in my Neuropharmacology class at Pomona.”

Though Rabbit didn’t know it, Mr. Coyote (Pitzer ‘27) was also enrolled in Advanced German, Intro to Meditation, and Histories of 2nd Wave Feminism. So to make Mr. Coyote uncomfortable, one would only have to tell him, “You shouldn’t say ‘Namaste’ at the end of your yoga class. It’s cultural appropriation,” and Mr. Coyote would tuck his tail between his legs and saunter back to his dorm, The Pit. Except The Pit is undergoing major renovations. CMC bought The Pit last year and is in the process of turning the once maze of California sagebrush and car exhaust into athletic fields for the very much always victorious CMS football team. Rabbit and her friends are slated to live at the fields next year, which are named for Robin

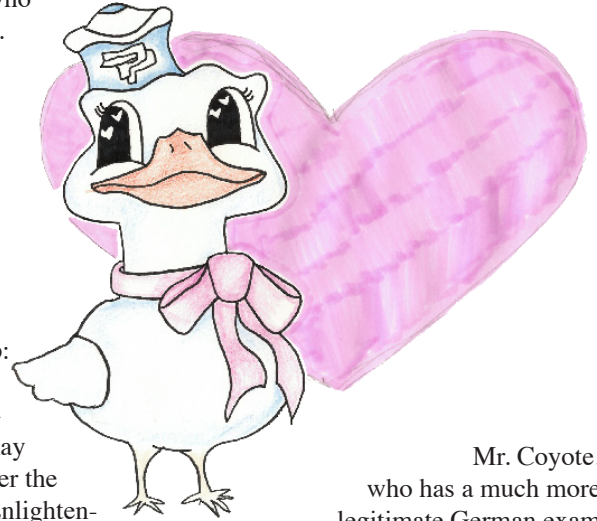
Williams (now ancestor), who totally graduated from CMC.

“Trim hedges 6”-12” off the ground” is not some Homeowner Association’s arbitrary gardening recommendation, but another brilliant idea by the City of Claremont to secure your home from the likes of Mr. Coyote. Tip: Hedges in fun shapes like smiley faces and 18th-century Baroque architecture may prompt the coyotes to consider the significance of the Age of Enlightenment on the biodeterminist construction of race, and also, “Why don’t those pesky sexually liberated rabbits use birth control?”

“If they did,” Mr. Coyote muses wistfully, observing a very nice rose bush, “we wouldn’t have to build more dorms for them, and then I wouldn’t have to sleep under Steele Hall.” Mr. Coyote has been sleeping at Steele Hall ever since construction at The Pit began, but beneath the broken ceramic bongos and nauseating perfume clouds of the Studio Art majors is no place to bring anyone home to.

So after the party at the Pomona Farm, where Mr. Coyote laid down some sweet moves on Cheryl, his on-again-off-again situationship, he brought her back to The Pit. Cheryl, who claims she doesn’t want a relationship but stays over at least three nights a week, is from Manhattan and lives in a three-story brownstone fit with a housekeeper and an avoidant mother. Sheltered by suede upholstery and private gardens, Cheryl has heard not a whisper of construction in her life. She never could conceptualize the absolute racket of a skillsaw cutting a duct or a jackhammer crushing concrete, until now.

Back at The Pit, the jackhammers don’t care that Cheryl has Intermediate Acting at 1:15 tomorrow, and neither does



Mr. Coyote, who has a much more legitimate German exam at 8 a.m. Either way, the two are destined to have a sleepless night of love/hate-making as they ask each other, “Who was that I saw you with at brunch?” and comment, “I thought you were going to stop smoking weed on week nights.”

“Make loud noises by shaking a can of pennies or marbles to scare the coyote away” is another recommendation by the ever-insightful City of Claremont. But don’t worry, in case you left your can of pennies at home and/or lost all your marbles, just take off your socks, fill them with gravel, and whip them around with enough momentum so that when you let go they fly all the way to Pomona. Hopefully, the coyote will return to its domesticated roots and chase your five-minute craft smack between the five freeways that surround the city.

In my opinion, this is the better long-term strategy that the city should adopt as an official recommendation, especially since Mr. Coyote and his friends are all slowly going deaf to the song “Screeching Metal” by Robert Day off his 2016 album Natural Phenomenon. In fact, this song has become so popular that KSPC had to deprogram it because it no longer is true to the station’s mission of playing weird shit.

# Debates, Bikes, and Cortisol Spikes

Words by Oliver Schoening PZ '27

Graphic by Rhyus Goldman PZ '26

On February 26, students gathered at The Hub to attend a tabling event for Turning Point USA's Claremont McKenna chapter. The event, the club's first of the semester, was advertised by president and founder Gabe Khuly CM '28 as an opportunity for open political discourse. In an announcement, Khuly wrote that "We look forward to [the event] and hope to have productive and thoughtful conversations with the students that come by."

The club's tables were adorned with pins and stickers from TPUSA's activism kits as well as wristbands reading "We Are Charlie Kirk," an homage to the group's late founder. While the tablers at the event clarified that they were unable to provide comment on behalf of TPUSA, they agreed to speak with The Outback as individuals. Alex Fraser PO '26 said that he saw the event as an opportunity to put real faces behind conservative voices on campus, stating "I think there's a kind of caricaturization of people with differing opinions." "People don't realize there's more to the student body than just one view," Grace Rutherford PO '28, one of the other tablers at the event, emphasized the organizers' desire for discourse. "We want to hear people's opinions and get at why they disagree," she said.

However, observing students had mixed opinions regarding the event. While passing by the event, David Yusten CM '29 said "What they're saying specifically is up to the individual to decide the righteousness of. But for them to have a place to speak, that is important. However, just as they have the agency to assert their opinion, you have the agency to refute it."

Many students that chose to engage in debates with the organizers of the event saw things differently. Quinn DeFillippes PZ '29 said "I don't think [the event] is very productive" as he attached various pins to his shirt. "I mean, look what I'm doing, I'm just putting the punchy

bullshit on here."

Sam Parupuei CM '29 came across the event on her way to dinner at Scripps, saying she and her friends were drawn to the commotion.

"One thing that CMC is touted for is probably number one on free speech rankings. Usually free speech is measured by how loud the conservative voice is, not necessarily how much dialogue is going on," she said. "I appreciate that they are willing to come out here and talk through their ideas."

As the event continued, more students began to congregate behind others who were engaged in conversation, but the attention shifted around halfway through the event when a group of partially nude cyclists assembled on the path by the Bauer Center to participate in the Green Bike Program's "Bike Porn." Students who had been waiting at tables outside The Hub stood and cheered as the participants made their way silently past the event and circled around The Cube.

Though the cyclists momentarily drew attention away from the event, discussion continued. Many students who spoke to The Outback emphasized the divisive reputation of TPUSA, including Kai Baudendistel PZ '26.

"I think there's an Overton window for which many views can be deemed unacceptable and abhorrent," he said. "I think that many of the views of people who support TPUSA would fall into that category for me."

Outside of my window of acceptable discourse. I don't want to advocate for censorship, so I think it's a tough inner going."

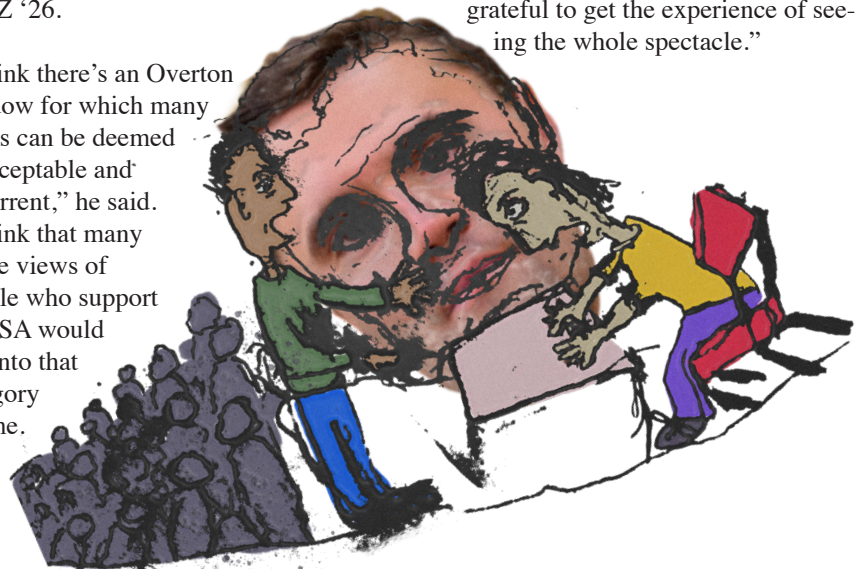
Diego Fuentebella PZ '26 called attention to what he described as an "especially contentious moment in American politics."

"Discussion doesn't really seem as calm as it used to be decades ago," he said. "It's interesting to see a contemporary version of seated political discussion, especially on a very liberal campus."

As the event wound down, some students seemed disappointed by the outcome. John Chisholm PZ '26 lamented what he saw as a lack of productive engagement from participants. "I can tell [Khuly] was extremely flustered," he said. "His cortisol certainly spiked."

"We have a lot of smart kids at the Claremont Colleges, and it generally does hurt me a little bit when I see the lack of good faith involved in discussions like this," Chisholm continued.

"It was a lot more rage baiting than a good faith debate. Nobody grows and nobody changes their minds or develops solid opinions. I wish it had been more fruitful for both sides, but I was very grateful to get the experience of seeing the whole spectacle."



# Bike Porn: MAGA Comes Face-to-Face with the Violent Left

Words by Elias Schendler PZ '29

Graphic by Penny Messenger PZ '29



Before 6:00 pm on February 26th, I had never considered biking half-naked past a Turning Point USA (TPUSA) event at the Claremont Colleges, let alone with a group of over 150 other partially nude students. But boy did it feel good. That's the magic of Bike Porn.

Bike Porn is a once-a-semester, anonymously-organized, and not-so-underground Pitzer event. During Bike Porn, 5C students who discovered the event details through word-of-mouth, student talk, or a sneaky Instagram story, meet outside of the beloved Green Bike Program (GBP). Students arrive practically undressed (Pitzer proper). Some wear whimsical hats or silly accessories. Bike Porners then leisurely bike around all five Claremont Colleges, blasting music, hootin' and hollerin', as the sun sets over the Pomona Valley.

This past February, Bike Porn happened to coincide with Claremont McKenna College's TPUSA chapter's tabling event. Coincidence or not, this semester's Bike Porn was democracy themed. I, for one, wrapped my pale chest in red, white, and blue ribbon.

As participants filed in, a giant speaker

blasted songs that I would categorize as anti-fascist anthems: "Bella Ciao," "Fuck Tha Police," and "Talkin' Bout a Revolution." Right before the pedaling began, Isaiah Curtis PZ '26 announced that as we passed the TPUSA event, the hollering would stop and we would bike silently. We were to completely disregard it. This was met with some confusion. Why not blast a song like "Fight the Power" or yell out anti-Trump sentiments? I was skeptical. I wanted to show the people supporting an organization built on lies and bigotry how I felt. As it turns out, Mr. Curtis was onto something.

We rode up to Mudd and down through Scripps. It was my first Bike Porn and I was jolly as could be. We quickly made it to the border of Pitzer and CMC, getting dangerously close to TPUSA. Those in the front came to a stop. Once again, Mr. Curtis requested a collective silence. As we turned the corner onto CMC's campus, the N.W.A song playing was paused. All I could hear was a subtle gear shift and the creaking of some rusty chains that the GBP has yet to fix. The three TPUSA tents were in sight. The narrow CMC quad funneled bikers into a crowd that looked quite large.

As we approached, there was an uproar of clapping and screaming. But it wasn't coming from us cyclists. Instead, it was familiar faces from Pitzer cheering us on, eclipsing the tiny TPUSA tables promoting a government that would rather help fund war than healthcare. I caught a glimpse of a student wearing a bright red MAGA hat looking at us in utter disbelief and confusion. The horde of Bike Porners quickly passed by. Once we were at CMC's cube, the hootin' and hollerin' started up again. The music began to play, and that was that. I instantly understood why Isaiah told us to be quiet. In times of turmoil, the strangeness

of protest is everywhere.

This past fall, after the National Guard was deployed in Portland, activist Seth "Toad" Todd went to protests dressed in an inflatable frog costume. The "Portland Frog" became a symbol of resistance as more and more frogs appeared at protests. Days later, thousands of nude bike racers rode through Portland to demonstrate against federal troops.

The Jolly Roger flag from popular anime One Piece, featuring a smiling skull wearing a straw hat, was the symbol of freedom during the successful protest movement in Nepal last September. Anime isn't typically discussed during a revolution. Last spring, during the demonstrations against the corrupt government of Turkey, a protester in an inflatable Pikachu costume fled police among animated crowds in a terrifying yet hilarious video.

Just like Bike Porn, these goofy moments reflect the human instinct to favor fun and joy over anger and sadness. Moments like these are how we get through times of loss. They give us outlets of happiness despite being well aware of the chapter in history we're in. At the same time, this pokes fun at and undermines the opposition.

Maybe Bike Porn isn't your cup of tea. Maybe you think it isn't a practical way to protest, or that it doesn't lead to real change and is childish. Maybe you're right, but I don't see how a group of nude hippie cyclists is the "radical left terrorists ruining our country." Satire is an effective form of protest.

As I biked away from Turning Point, my tire exploded, and suddenly I was riding on the rim. I walked my bike back to Pitzer, barefoot, the patriotic ribbon slipping below my nipples, with a big grin. Depressing times demand weird and amusing moments.

# Gnosis on The Dancefloor

Words by Soren van Loben Sels PZ '28

Graphic by Ben Connolly PZ '26

Sometime in the third or fourth century AD, an Egyptian monk stole out under the cover of darkness to bury religious scrolls forbidden by the emperor in the desert sands. These texts, rediscovered in 1945 by a farmer, were my first introduction to gnosticism. That buried library was the context I knew it in. So imagine my surprise when, in Anno Domini two thousand and twenty six I saw a student talk post of a “Gnostic Throwdown” to occur a couple days hence.

It was dusk when I arrived at the Greek Theater, a comfortable 30 minutes late. The crowd, numbering a couple dozen, filled the lower levels of seating, listening to organizers give a spiel that

wrapped up before I was in earshot. People were splitting into pairs and I was brought up to speed using a handy pamphlet that had been distributed minutes before. On its left hand side, it explained that gnosticism is a loose category of “religious, philosophical, and esoteric movements associated w/ Judaism, Christianity, & Greek thought in the 1st to 5th centuries AD.” On the right, it listed the following questions:

1. Where do you feel you come from?
2. Do you feel at home in the world?
3. What have you forgotten about yourself?
4. What do you suspect you already know?

5. What are you wary of?
6. What is the ultimate nature of reality?
7. Where does your hunger point towards?
8. How will you get there?

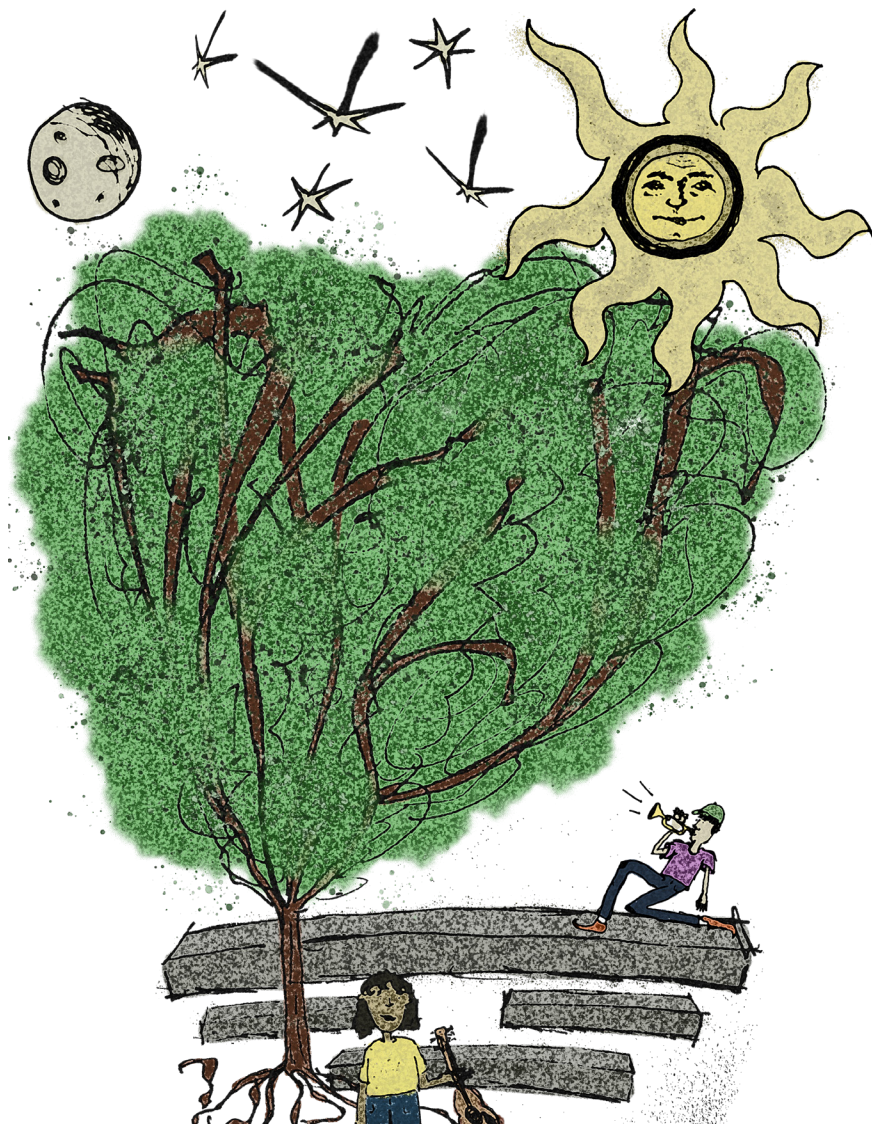
We perambulated around the metal grate in the center of the theater discussing these questions. Two people started running around the grate while everyone else held their conversations. The movement stopped it from feeling like when a professor, tired of waiting for responses from a blank faced seminar class, begs you to talk to whoever sits next to you, instead producing a feeling of the community all doing something as one. At least for me, the social situation set the stage for a feeling of togetherness that I find 5C events lack too often.

The music was good. Each band had more energy than the last. The crowd went from sitting at the floor and building a phallic tower out of electric candles to whirling and shaking by the end. Projections lit up the trees as heat suit clad figures walked around the edges of a lava flow. People’s spirits stayed high even through technical delays.

Yeah, yeah, good party and all that, but where's the gnosticism?

According to the idea’s originator, Jason Alperin PO '28, it started as a name. “I think I came out with the phrase first, Gnostic Throwdown. It just sounded so freaking cool. I had been trying to think of party ideas, 'cause my friend Lena McRoberts PO '27, who helped organize the event, had this group list of strange party ideas,” Alperin said.

“So I think I was just trying to think of what would be a cool event to contribute to this over a period of a few weeks, and it kind of came to me that how cool would it be if there was a punk show that was themed around Gnosticism? We should have something that can both serve as a journey for self discovery, and also be a punk show.”



That theming (in the directly aesthetic sense) was limited to the poster, the explainer on the left hand of the pamphlet, a few cryptic phrases of gnostic theology that came across as understandably tongue and cheek, and the general contemplative vibe created by circling, questions, and electric candles. Now this is certainly enough theming to give the party a fun flair, but I think the theming cut deeper, drawing from the actual philosophy of Gnosticism.

Gnosticism (also as explained by that helpful little pamphlet) focuses on the “personal cultivation of spiritual knowledge (gnosis).” While the Gnostic Throw-down may not have pursued gnosis in a manner recognizable to mr monk of the fourth century, it was, in a way, part of the same seeking of enlightenment. The attendee pursued gnosis in the questionable, including a very gnostic element of doubting one’s place as at home in the

world. But, more importantly, the attendee could find gnosis on the dance floor.

“I’ve always felt going to punk shows when I was in high school, especially, like it was very spiritual for me. I feel like there was something very real that I would come in contact with in a mosh pit,” Alperin said.

“I could literally come in contact with other people, with bodies, but I always felt there was something very ecstatic in the full sense of the word. I mean, not the full sense, but in most of the sense of that word, about music and about live rock and punk specifically.

So I think that it kinda just made sense to me that this spiritual, religious framework, more of a spiritual framework, actually. The spiritual framework of gnosticism could work together with a show.”

I’ve felt this with dance throughout my life. At its best, one gets that contact with something else. Every action of one’s body gets subsumed into the crowd, the music, the dance itself. You can lose track of it, consciousness falling away.

With the body unable to interfere, the mind turns elsewhere: to the person one is dancing with, to one’s soul, to one’s creative imagination, to a gnostic monad/god hiding behind an evil physical reality. Dervishes whirl. Punks mosh. Dance can produce the same mystic religious experiences as meditation but with more dehydration and fun music.

As much as gnosticism was primarily an aesthetic theme, I still appreciate a nod to just how meaningful collective dance and music can be. Also it was just a straight up good music event spotlighting fun local bands and good vibes. I look forward to whatever next emerges from the list that gave this Gnostic Throw-down birth.

## Lavender Wedding

Words and Graphic by Wynne Chase PZ '26

On a road trip back to Pitzer College, seniors Anabel Cull, Rose Schupack-Dias, Jack Paradis, and Veronica Britton were searching high and low for conversation topics. Rose even dimmed the brightness on her phone and searched “top 10 best questions to get to know close-ish acquaintances”. With no other conversational avenues to turn to, their last option was to talk about the most famous hypothetical: what would we do if we hosted an exclusive 12-hour party called the “Giant Funny Party” (henceforth referred to as the GFP) with 2 dozen of our closest friends. Luckily, each passenger in the car is brilliantly creative and possesses both the ability to imagine the hypothetical and make it a reality.

In November of 2025, the date was set in stone: our 12 hour party would commence on February 21st. Before that date, a 25-page document was created, consent forms were signed, and shirts were screen-printed.

Only the fourth and fifth of the twelve hours were open to people outside of the 24 invitees. Hour four was dedicated to Sam and Lindsay coming out



as surprisingly straight to their greater community and tying the knot, and the other 22 attendees had specific roles in the procession. Word had clearly spread about the open-invite wedding, and our group nearly tripled in size for this hour. All those outside of the GFPers were wedding guests. Before we began, we chose the best man and maid of honor at random from the non-GFPers present, and handed the two unsuspecting guests the speeches that they would give for their dearest friend within the next hour. Both accepted their public speaking fate with grace.

When the time for holy matrimony finally arrived (5pm), we got into our wedding attire and assembled for the procession. First to lead the parade to the altar was the nondenominational minister,



next the ring bearer and the flower girl, then the bridesmen and groomsmen, penultimately the groom and his parents, and lastly the bride and her parents.

The minister led the ceremony with a jaw-dropping, eye-opening, heart-warming speech, of which I think Outback guidelines may only accept an excerpt:

“people have said that attending Pitzer college makes you straighter, and I admit there's no better way to finish out our four years here than by witnessing the union of these former queers. I can't wait for you both to populate the world with little Sam and Lindsays like Cecil intended. [...] May February 21st be from now on remembered as the day the rainbow flag lowered and the flag of GFP was hoisted in its place. In all seriousness, it's been an absolute honor to be



your friend for four years, and I can't imagine a couple better suited to walk towards eternity hand and hand. I'll now open the floor to the happy couple to exchange vows”

And exchange vows they did! Lindsay and Sam delivered promises to each other that walked the line of comedy and genuine adoration which had guests crying from laughter and from love...

Blurbs from Lindsay's vows:  
“Iterative is a word that Sam didn't know when he first arrived at Pitzer. This was unbeknownst to me for multiple years of our friendship, until my 21st birthday, when at Anabel's request, Sam recorded a heartfelt birthday message revealing that in one of our very first conversations in the first few weeks of college, when I had used the word iterative in conversation, Sam had no idea what it meant. He didn't recall the word or care to look it up until that fateful day, July 2024, two years later, when finally he did. He learned that iterative meant repetitive, pointed to the camera, and said Lindsay, you are not iterative”.

“Today I'm here to iterate on Sam's misguided notion of the word iterative. The word iterative does not mean repetitive, but involving iteration, meaning new versions or incarnates. Every time something iterates it presents itself as a new version, and Sam, on this day, on our wedding day, I want you to know that our relationship is most certainly iterative.”

“When we kiss, Sam, I see lavender. the azure sky turns lavender. The green house turns lavender. The blue of your eyes turns lavender. All I see, today and for our eternal future, is lavender. [...] i love you Sam”

Blurbs from Sam's wedding vows:  
“A lot of people doubted us. They said it could never be. They said “Huh?” They said “Sam? The gay one? And Lindsay? The also gay one?” They tried. To smear our names. But, fuck the haters. When a man and a woman love each other very much, nothing—nothing—can get in their way.”

“I can't tell you how much it means to me to have a friend who I can always call, and who I can spend hours on the phone with, dying laughing about nothing in particular, to the point where we are unable to get a word out for minutes on end. Someone who believes in their friends so much to call them out in the most loving way, and yet to insistently check in on them and to fight so hard for your friendships, with me and so many people here today.”

“I always trust that I can count on you to be a fearless friend, silly about being serious, serious about being silly, dance party buddy, book rec goddess, and a completely and utterly non-iterative friend.”

The love that Sam and Lindsay share regardless of the fictitious nature of their wedding is very, very real and that fact was unignorable from their vows. Watching two people who clearly cherish one another tell each other just that is special, and the wedding guests got to appreciate that sweet moment all together.

When the minister asked the crowd for objections, world renowned actor Harold Fuson PZ '26 rose and professed his persisting love for sweet Sammy. His monologue—NOT borrowed from Louisa May Alcott's Laurie—brought an emotional complexity to the situation; we had been rooting for recently-hetero Sam & Lindsay, but then Harold compelled us by revealing that he gave up billiards for Sam. The crowd collectively gasped. Luckily, Harold's objection made room for one special bridesman, Jamie Miller PZ '26, to reveal his own previously clandestine feelings. Miller came forward with a counter-objection, citing the 5-feet of distance between his

and Harold's bed that has been there since freshman year, and his desire to finally close that gap. Jamie and Harold began the first chapter of their happily

ever after with a passionate snog, which meant Sam was to be the unobjectionable husband to Lindsay.

After the drama, the ring bearer beared the rings and Sam dipped a giggling

Lindsay and they totally kissed! In front of everybody!

Following the wedding PDA, Anabel Cull (GFP conceiver) passed out slices of her homemade lavender wedding cake as

an amuse-bouche for the Malott reception dinner the guests were to indulge in for the fifth hour of the party...

# I am a Chimera

Words by Isabelle Young PZ '28

Graphic by Ben Connolly PZ '26

This is a small town. It is in the middle of nowhere, no-particular-where, and it is a small town that is only accessible by driving off a busy highway, on a path-not-taken. It is an exit situated at the very cusps of a dense, incredibly green forest.

Here is the town hall, the post office, the grocery store, the gas station, the lower-middle-and highschool where the children of the town go until they are old enough. The first town was established nearly one hundred and fifteen years ago, but this one was built only eighty years ago, and all the towns, as you can see, are modeled after one another. The Pilgrims built the first town and they drove all the Indians out to faraway places like

Oklahoma or Kentucky, and although this is the fifteenth town, that feeling—the same flustering new-worldness that feeds off of the difference between a

white picket house and deep, gravely divine, dense forest—remains the same now, in modern towns.

It is simple to drive to work, simple to make breakfast, and it is simple to argue about simple things during simple late night town hall meetings. Nothing is contested. Everything remains standstill, eerily calm, choked of all bad, rushed, and smelly. This town is simple and quaint and all of its inhabitants, this town of men, women, and children, are utterly happy, and incredibly stupid. There was once a time I was also very stupid. Now I am incredibly smart and addicted to drugs such as forgiveness.

This is my home. A large flat, in the middle of downtown New York, on the cross streets of Prince and Houston. My mother and father purchased this home maybe four or five years before I was born. They often claim it was a ratty New York, a different New York. A neighbor-

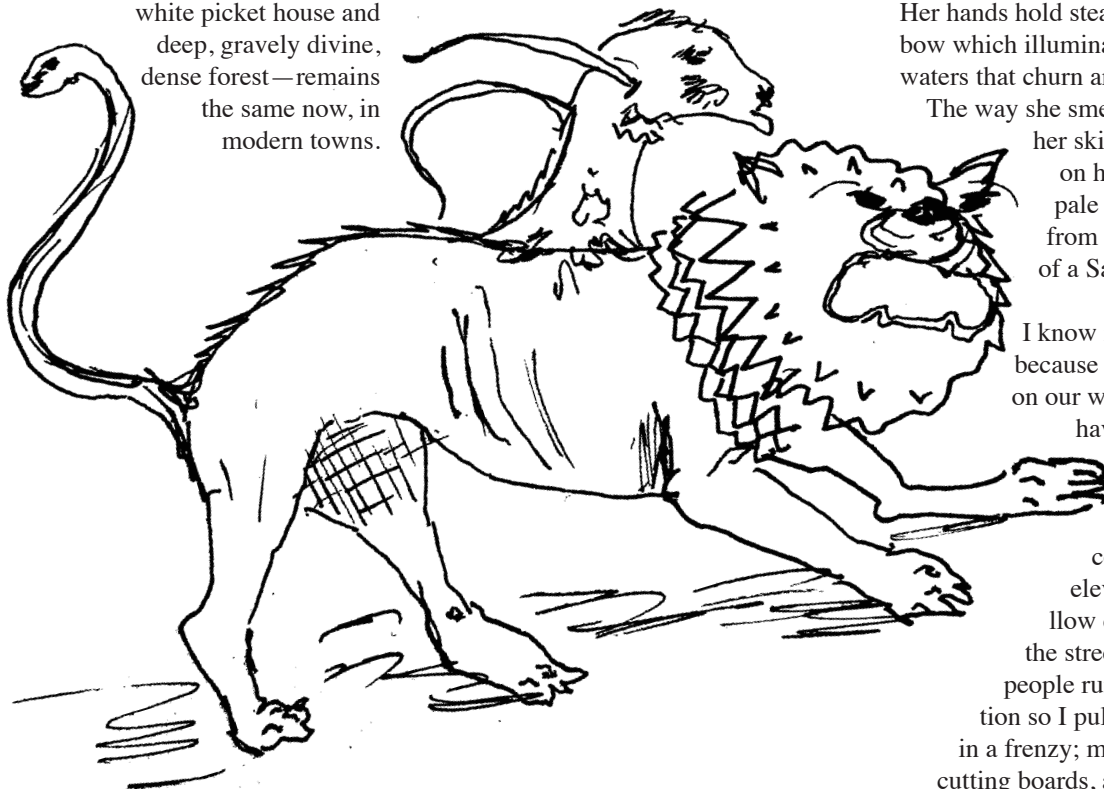
hood peppered with either warehouses or small galleries, affordable, nice, convenient. The old owner was a piano player and had built a makeshift stage.

They ripped it out in renovations. I felt haunted by this as a child, and had a lot of time to think because our house had fantastic air conditioning, and my mother preferred to be inside during the summer. And there she is, with fine, practically white, blonde hair, sitting at the kitchen counter typing away. I always believed they were inseparable beings, my mother and her computer, like it was her foot. You need your foot.

Sometimes, in the middle of the night, there is a grave storm, and she stands now; a giant. The wind combs her white hair, foam atop an enormous wave, and she looks beautiful. Her hands hold steady a large golden bow which illuminates all the great waters that churn and gather beneath her.

The way she smells, the way in which her skin clings to the veins on her hands, and how pale she is, she is different from the yellowing warmth of a Saturday afternoon.

I know it is now 4 o'clock because the sun is gathering on our wooden floors, and I have been laying on the couch near the window watching my mother, and counting, yes, ten, eleven, twelve, the yellow cabs that pass by on the street below, and all the people running in every direction so I pulled out many things in a frenzy; measuring spoons, cutting boards, a small mixing bowl,



a medium mixing bowl, a large mixing bowl, a colander, a can opener, not the vegetable peeler, six whisks, one lemon squeezer, five saucepans, a ladle, a meat thermometer, two tongs, a spatula, a couple sheet pans, a toaster, a blender, a stockpot, a measuring cup, a grater, and a skillet. My mother looked at me and; I hold onto this look, this face, this feeling. Here she is younger, and she has not hurt herself, and she is an angel. She belongs to me because we are the same and I know her. She is my feet and my skin. She is the window and the sun. She is no longer pale, her hair is not white, and I cannot see any veins.

She beckons me to take all my things and place them in the living room so she can walk freely in the kitchen. There is music playing now because she turned it on. I spread out in my living room, and the wood, with all its mysterious lines and cracks, turned into a great dense forest. This is a small town. The buildings are pots, skillets, bowls and pans. They line up, perpendicular on either side of the main street, as laundromats, gas stations, and grocery stores. The tongs are street lights, and they line the side walks for when it gets very dark during winter,

shining a bright, burning yellow that illuminates the post office I build a great school for me to learn in, and a great big river for me to swim in. The streets have funny little Brooklyn names, like Pineapple and Love. The town hall is, perhaps, the most beautiful, standing around two feet in stature, a blender and a toaster with various amounts of peelers and whisks poking out from them. I know nothing of rape, or suicide, or drugs. I know nothing of boys or girls. I have no breasts and have no need for them. Everything is silver and reflects the white that softly blankets the streets. This is my town, this is my mother.

# Seven Campuses, One Mic: Inside Scoop on Claremont 360

Words by Kayra Hidirlar PZ '28

Graphic by Samantha Fornaris PO '28

In a small liberal arts setting like the Claremont Colleges, students are always interacting with one another, walking between campuses, classes, and dining halls. Whether it be through friends, mutuals, or classmates, it seems like everybody knows each other. Despite this, students do not always get to hear each other's personal stories and experiences. Claremont 360, a new student-run podcast, hopes to change that.

Created by students Melaina Yender SC '28 and Avery Izzo PO '28, Claremont 360 dedicates each episode to spotlighting a student or professor across the 7C community. Each episode involves a conversation where the guest can share any personal story and/or talk about their experiences and ideas. "The episode is the guest," Izzo said.

Ultimately, the development of the podcast stemmed from a simple observation: every member of the 7C community has a story and unique experience that does not get shared beyond small social circles. Avery expressed that there are "so many cool things that students are doing" across the 7Cs and believes that providing a platform for them can amplify those voices. Yender added that when

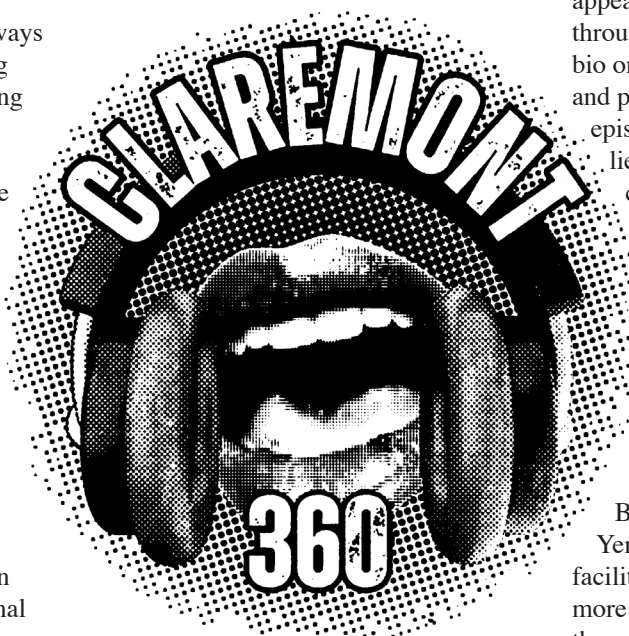
students and professors are "able to hear a similar experience from someone that they didn't even know existed on one of the campuses," that can provide them something to relate to and help foster a more tight-knit community across the campuses.

Although Yender and Izzo are the hosts of the podcast, the guests have the ability to decide what will be talked about on the episode they would be featured in. Students and professors interested in

appearing on the podcast can sign up through an interest form linked in their bio on their Instagram, @claremont360, and propose topics to discuss on the episode. According to Yender, she believes that by letting guests lead the conversation, it allows them to "personalize their episode" and make it special. Izzo sees this as a creative choice, describing the podcast "as an art" where they give each guest "a blank canvas to be able to paint what they want on it and create something that they feel they're a part of too."

Beyond sharing stories, Izzo and Yender also hope that they can both facilitate and inspire people to engage in more authentic, raw conversation. Noting the pressure for college students to "have a good resume" and "look good on paper," Izzo wants to focus this podcast on spotlighting "students for who they are," instead of "what they can produce or what they can achieve." She believes that personal conversations can become overshadowed by a college culture that emphasizes academic accomplishments, hoping that the podcast can challenge that and shift what parts of humanity are prioritized.

The longer format of the podcast also



brings opportunities to get to know the person in ways that short form media like Instagram and TikTok cannot facilitate. Given that social media can only show so much of a person's life and their character, Izzo and Yender hope to be able to give space for students and professors to express their vulnerabilities, believing that it is how people can form deeper connections. Yender expressed concern that guests will not feel comfortable enough to "talk about their opinions," which is why both of the hosts have made a commitment to create "a safe environment in the studio" during recording sessions.

While Claremont 360 aims to foster meaningful conversations, the hosts also recognize the humor and relatable experiences at the Claremont Colleges that they want to highlight on the podcast as well. Looking back at certain 5C moments, Yender joked about the experience that many first-years encounter. "When they go to their very first party at the 5Cs" and they show up right when it starts, so "there's nobody there for the next hour and a half." The hosts also described the



different campuses through assigning them characters at a hypothetical dinner party. For example, Izzo said that "Harvey Mudd would be the friend that you have to drag out of the dorm to go to the party," while Yender assigned Scripps to "be the host." Moments like these are the kinds of canon 7C experiences that the hosts hope guests will bring to the podcast for the Claremont community to relate to.

In addition to capturing shared campus experiences, Claremont 360 also includes a "Story Time" segment where guests

can share any unexpected or hilarious moments from their time at the 7Cs. While these stories touch on the slightly more chaotic sides of campus life, the hosts remain intentional on maintaining respectful boundaries that do not cross the line from honest conversation to messy drama. Yender acknowledged that "it's more fun to listen to the gossipy stuff," but added that they also "don't want to promote any hate." Therefore, guests are asked to leave out names when sharing these stories and agree that the hosts have the right to cut out anything that is hateful or directed towards specific people on campus.

Ultimately, Izzo and Yender believe that Claremont 360 will give the space for students and professors to share their stories openly and authentically, as well as encouraging people throughout the 7C community to engage in thoughtful conversations where people can get to know one another beyond the surface. Through spotlighting students and professors, the hosts hope that people across the colleges can find stories and experiences they relate to, bringing everybody closer together.

# Cachanilla Chinese Restaurant: An Unexpected Oasis

Words by Cecily Pregerson PZ '29  
Graphic by Sonia Sidhu PZ '28

Since leaving New York City and my favorite dim sum restaurants behind for Scripps College, I have experienced a distinct lack of good Chinese food. Sure, the dining halls offer some inspired dishes, but most are unable to scratch the particular itch that a plate of orange chicken and green beans dripping in garlic oil does so well. However, I was recently brought to Cachanilla Chinese

Restaurant, an oasis only a short drive outside of the high walls of the Claremont Colleges.

From the outside, Cachanilla Chinese Restaurant does little to disclose the treasures lying within. Only their bright yellow sign, speckled with both English and Spanish advertising, points you in the right direction. We stood in the

parking lot, ruffled and expectant, like geese hungry for grain. Finally, the door swung open and in we went.

Being mid afternoon, the restaurant was practically empty; the only other diners were a pair of quiet women. The remaining tables sparkled with the sheen of a recent wash and looked unnatural in their nakedness, as if they were used to being

clothed in an interchangeable pattern of dishes. We were guided to a large round table, framed by eighteen chairs. In the center of the largest lazy Susan I have ever seen was an arrangement of pink orchids. Above, a bright, elegant light cast a spotlight on the table.

Soon, we were passing around expansive and daunting menus. Like children flipping through a storybook, we ogled the images of noodles, stir fries, and rice. Finding my way through the new terrain, I found a page advertising vegetable dishes. In my experience, the most memorable dishes are those with simple vegetables soaked or sauteed in layers of flavor. It is harder for me to wrap my mind, or more accurately tastebuds, around dishes with many components; the sides are where I can truly deduce the expertise of a restaurant.

Our servers, who were kind and unafraid even when met with an overpowering group of customers, brought us tea and icy water. The tea was mellow in flavor and did not hold my attention for long. Around our table, we buzzed and shifted in our chairs. Greater things were on the horizon. We placed our order.

The first dishes to come out were the cream cheese and crab wonton and the egg flower soup. I steer clear of seafood, but I was happy to

try the soup. Glistening like fresh olive oil with spirals of egg caught in the broth like petals in a stream, the soup absolutely glowed in its white bowl. When tasted, there wasn't much to it flavor-wise, so I added some chili oil. With that adjustment, its potential for comfort was expertly met, although it could have used more salt.

Quickly, more and more dishes littered the periphery of the lazy Susan. A server stood at one side of the table and commanded our attention: with the press of a button, invisible to us humble eaters, the food began spinning before our eyes. Hypnotized and hungry, we filled our plates. A dulcet silence settled around the room, which any observant foodie recognizes as the mark of a truly delicious meal.

I sampled the Peking duck first. My friend passed me a drumstick, which was not my preference. However, later on in the meal, a server came by and remarked that we had made the right choice; the large, boney piece symbolizes luck for the recent Chinese New Year which passed only a couple days before. Still, when the duck came around again, I selected a thin piece with sufficiently

crispy skin. This was snuggled into a velvety bao bun lined with hoisin sauce. Biting into the soft, then crunchy almost-taco, I let the flavors and textures blend together and the trials of my first year at college seemed to ease a little bit.

Before I knew it, plates were filling up and I could no longer see the bright porcelain bottom of my own. We joked that we had gone to war because our chopsticks seemed to fly through the air and eagerly puncture the unsuspecting dishes as if in combat. In a hushed daze, we continued to eat without registering anything besides the pleasing flavors of our food. Some true stand-out dishes were the salt

and pepper tofu, orange chicken, sauteed spicy string bean with dried shrimp, and ma po tofu with pork.

However, I could not write an honest review without mentioning the szechuan style eggplant. The eggplant, intermingled with peppers and onions, melted in my mouth as if it had never been there, yet I could not forget it if I tried. This dish was the very best of them all, in my opinion, and cannot be left out of an order.

With the lazy Susan still spinning languidly, we found ourselves mournfully full. The near empty plates seemed to taunt us, but we could not fit in another bite. As a sugar-oriented person, I thought back to the dessert menu, which I remembered being surprisingly short in lieu of the savory expanse. Cachanilla Chinese Restaurant offers ice cream and creme brulee. Although delicious in their own right, neither option was tempting enough following such a feast. That was when the servers brought a silver plate piled high with fortune cookies. The perfect end to such an extravagant banquet: sugar and destiny. The sounds of shattering cookie shells and rustling paper filled the air and soon we were crunching and reading and laughing at each other's fortunes. Good humor was brought back to a previously placated party.

Then sadly, we stepped away from the table, leaving behind a graveyard of crumbs and forgotten noodles. Before the meal, I had expected to feel overfull and lecherous after eating so richly following weeks of dining hall salads. However, walking away, I felt neither bloated nor uncomfortable. Perhaps that is due to the freshness of the food. There was not a single dish that lacked the flavor of good ingredients and attentive preparation. Overall, my experience at Cachanilla Chinese Restaurant was exceedingly positive, due to the food, service, and company.



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