Vaccines versus variants

Santa Clara County public health officials warn of a possible surge in cases of COVID-19 variants

By Bryanna Bartlett
Assistant Editor

An increase in cases of coronavirus variants in Santa Clara County might outpace the county’s vaccine supply, health officials said in a Thursday news conference. “The number of COVID-19 variant cases are beginning to pick up and now we’re in a race between the variants and the vaccine,” said Dr. Sara Cody, Santa Clara County health officer and public health director.

As of March 27, there have been three confirmed cases of the variant first identified in South Africa, one case of the variant first identified in Japan and Brazil, and more than 1,000 cases of the variant first identified in Los Angeles County, according to a Thursday Santa Clara County Public Health Department news release.

Cody said while every variant circulating is concerning, another variant first identified in the United Kingdom is much more infectious. There have been 92 confirmed cases in the county as of March 27.

“We’ve back in a bit of a quandary now, as far as our collective ability to curb this pandemic,” she said during the conference. Jonathan Rosas, a San Jose State business administration and entrepreneurship junior, said the rise in cases of COVID-19 variants in the county is scary.

“It shows clear evidence that the virus will not and cannot go away. “It is a text. “It will always be around and we need to be safe and cautious still.”

Vaccine updates

Dr. Martin Fenstersheib, the county’s COVID-19 testing officer, said about 30% of residents that are vaccine eligible and 16 and older have been vaccinated with at least one dose while 20% have completed the vaccine series.

“Protect yourself because we do not want the variants to cause a problem with people that have not yet been vaccinated or even develop variants,” Fenstersheib said during the news conference. “The more that the virus is allowed to replicate, the more chance there is for additional mutations in other variants. The California expanded vaccine eligibility Thursday, allowing anyone over the age of 16 to receive the vaccine.

Forensic science freshman, Megan Ross said the county needs to work to make the vaccine more accessible which includes creating more vaccination sites and opening vaccine eligibility.

“It just shows clear evidence that the virus will not and has not gone away. It will always be around and we need to be safe and cautious still.”

Jonathan Rosas, business administration and entrepreneurship junior, Santa Clara County might outpace coronavirus variants in Santa Clara County.

Cases of COVID-19 variants first identified in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Los Angeles County, and Japan and Brazil are increasing in Santa Clara County.

The county will receive 71,900 vaccination doses this week, which is 13,900 more than last week.

Public health officials urge safety protocols even if certain activities are allowed under state tier guidelines.

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Sexism continues among gamers

By Giorgina Laurel

There has been a sharp rise in video game popularity and streaming, but sexism toward women in the gaming community is not addressed enough among students.

“Personally, I like it more when female characters have more armor,” said Crystal Doan, a San Jose State kinesiology junior in a Zoom interview. “Because I think it looks really cool. Dudes look cool in armor, so why can’t girls also look cool in armor.”

This tends to be hypersexualization of female characters within video games themselves, whether it’s the character’s revealing clothing or their exaggerated physiques. For example, a character such as Chun-Li from the combat game Street Fighter.

Not only is her clothing noticeably tight, but even her body proportions contribute noticeably to the sexualization of her character. She has extremely large breasts and very thick thighs, features that are often unrealistic and serve no purpose to the game. However Chun-Li isn’t the only character with this issue. Similar to Street Fighter, the game Mortal Kombat has seen its fair share of female characters. Mortal Kombat 11, previous iterations in the newest version, Mortal Kombat, are often found online listing their attractiveness similar to one created by Lerklechk, a website created by gamers to share information and in-depth content. The website has a list showcasing 50 of the “hottest female video game characters.”

Not only are female video game characters sexualized, they’re usually pushed into supporting roles, such as a healer, whose special ability is to heal the player’s health. It’s very uncommon to see the most powerful character in the game be female.

“While she’s wearing clothing that covers more of her body in the newest version, Mortal Kombat 11, previous iterations show her in a bikini and thigh-high boots that expose her cleavage and thighs that don’t contribute to protecting her in battle. Both Kitana and Chun-Li are often seen as supporting characters, whose special ability helps regenerate a player’s health. It’s very uncommon to see the most powerful character in the game be female.”

“I think that’s pretty dreary from the combat game, I would like to see the female characters more involved in the combat aspects,” said Crystal Doan.

“I think it looks really cool. Dudes look cool in armor, so why can’t girls also look cool in armor.”

What I’ve seen is the man is the protagonist and they have a female sidekick. I’ve seen that a lot, it kind of plays on to the trope of the woman having to be the support, just supporting that strong male lead.

Melody Shepard, a pictorial art junior and SJSU Esports Club member, said she feels female characters and female gamers are expected to play a secondary role.

“Sometimes there’s the sarcasmically [nice person] who is just like, ‘oh, oh, you’re playing with me? Oh, I bet she wants support, right? Because you’re a girl.’”

Cai said in a Zoom call. “And she’s like, ‘no, I play another position.’ I don’t want to play support. I don’t have to play support.”

To automatically assume just because someone is female, they’d want to play a supporting character is sexist and misogynistic.

There are also common derogatory phrases that gamers use toward female gamers during play including the term “dishwasher,” telling them to “go back to the kitchen” or even simply assuming just because they’re women they aren’t as skilled.

This type of toxicity is often expressed, or just part of the game, but the gaming community, whether it’s text chat or voice chat, is intended to enhance gameplay and not encourage sexism. However, it seems like women gamers aren’t expected to receive a lot of this misogyny.

Although representation has improved within video games, the community still has a lot of work to do in furthering respect for women gamers.
I was too obsessed with the glitz and glam to realize I was getting scammed.

Jacqueline Vela
STAFF WRITER

Exploring spirituality advances a higher sense of self

Jovanna Olivares
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The coronavirus pandemic has allowed some to explore their faith outside of routine practice or processes of attending religious institutions for worship.

Religious institutions shouldn’t how spiritual practices, whether or not the person feels like they are experiencing spirituality outside of a place of worship. Students don’t need to become a member of an organized religion to have a spiritual and meaningful spiritual life.

With that in mind, it’s difficult learning to balance my spirituality with my religion without feeling conflicted.

Religious often discuss followers for questioning their faith, but spirituality encourages understanding ability to explore not only people’s personal religious but their significance in the universe.

It’s possible to be spiritual in your daily life, whether that means self-reflection or meditating doing activities including watering plants, watching the sunset or even drinking a cup of coffee.

“Practicing mindfulness and meditating has been really helpful, it’s really helped me with the stress of the pandemic,” said Jovanna Olivares, an applied nutrition and food sciences junior in a phone interview. “Sometimes I just play music and drift off to analyze.”

My younger years consisted of sitting on a chair at most 1-2 hours, but when the pandemic began the significant shift threw a wrench in my routine. A year later, I have come to better understand the essence of my personal belief system balanced between religion and spirituality.

Andrea Chavez, a justice studies junior, has done tarot cards and even FaceTime for my multiple household random.

“I started getting into it because all that kind of stuff and I thought it was really interesting,” she said at the beginning of middle school,” Chavez said. “I have a history of curanderos, but because of the church, it was kind of shut down.”

Curanderos are healers who use remedies that blend religious beliefs, faith and prayer with the use of herbs, massage and other methods of healing, according to Encyclopedia.com.

“Curanderos, or the practice used by curanderos, was also used to be the result of Spanish colonisation and the imposition of Catholic orthodoxy, combined with native spiritual practices. The healing properties are oils, herbs [and] natural remedies used over the course of the treatment of diseases and oils, according to the American Bar Association.”

“The healing properties are oils, herbs [and] natural remedies that blend religious beliefs, faith and prayer with the use of herbs, massage and other methods of healing, according to Encyclopedia.com.”

I launched Dec. 10, the Hundred Dollar Puzzle promises that anyone who purchases it will win the Hundred Thousand Dollar Puzzle. “Launched Dec. 10, the Hundred Dollar Puzzle was announced on Dobrik’s social media and was sold online, which quickly gained traction because of how exclusive and high-quality merchandise it was.

According to a Dec. 10, 2020 Insider article, “only 1,000 of the prizes available would be claimed, and winners could either get the $100 or $300 and doesn’t have a reference photo to help users put it together.

With the likelihood of you looking for information on the puzzle, and purchasing and accounting for the amount of time spent on the puzzle, the saying “you can either win or lose” found on the official Hundred Dollar Puzzle website in the face. I would know because I’d studied about one of the people who fell for the gig.

My family and I spent a whole month working on the puzzle, which only buy the Dollar and mom and dad spend hours trying to put it together, but we also recruited family members to help us.

It was a monumental moment when we finally completed the puzzle, but we found we only won 23 units. When we all saw our prize, it was a laughable moment because we realized how ridiculous it was.

The amount of time and money we lost because of the puzzle did not feel like it was worth it. However, this wasn’t the first time I fell for a celebrity marketing scam.

During my time as a “Harrimoner”, I committed hard to the Fifth Harmony fanbase. It got to the point where I dedicated time to memorize choreography and even dropped hundreds of dollars on merchandise.

In 2015 I spent $140 on a Fifth Harmony bundle that included personalized letters and merchandise from each of the group members, as seen in a fan’s souvenir from a 2015 Twitter post.

Yes, I know it was ridiculous, but I was 14 at the time and it just made sense. I waited months for the bundle to arrive, but it was filled with unanswerable placement of exactly what it finally did.

The quality of the merchandise was terrible. The “personalized” letters were photos copier distributed to everyone who purchased the bundle. I ended up throwing half of it away as I don’t care.

Looking back at my scam experiences, I can now see how celebrities take advantage of fans’ fear.

Next time, I wouldn’t think twice before deciding to drop money on products polished by famous people to make a quick buck.

Follow Jacqueline on Twitter @Jacqueline_v20
Athletics continues no-fans policy

By Christina Casillas Staff writer

During a typical season, collegiate athletes could look at the stands and see the faces of their fellow students, friends and family cheering them on as they compete. Bleachers that teemed with crowd-roaring pandemonium now remain occupied by cardboard cutouts of student athletes.

San Jose State athletics officials continue a no-fans policy for the remainder of the season to prevent spreading the novel coronavirus.

Men’s soccer midfielder Evan House and senior forward Bella Bowers said it’s difficult without spectators, but an audience isn’t crucial for the team to play.

“I think as a team, [spectators are] not something we absolutely rely on,” Wood said. “I think it’s just the benefit of having that energy in the stands, having the people lining the stands. I didn’t expect anything to be the same at all [at soccer matches].”

With everything going on, of course there’s a lot more seriousness going on than the decisions as to whether to be at sports games or not is made on.

Women’s water polo driver Sierra Painter said it’s more difficult without spectators, but an audience isn’t crucial for the team to play. “Playing with no spectators makes me feel more like practices, but the cardboard cutouts offer a sense of familiarity.”

Men’s soccer midfielder Evan House said cards give a bit of the same energy that people are watching you and supporting you without them actually being there so I liked it. “Also, it was just weird because they were silent, but it was nice to have the familiar faces in the audience.”

While the water polo team was accustomed to fewer spectators at home meets, because the team played at West Valley College in Saratoga, the support from cardboard cutouts was greatly missed.

“Our meals team comes to our games and they bring great, great energy and it really helps us gain momentum,” Painter said.

Because of the circumstances, many student-athletes said the support they need comes from their teammates and coaches.

“Personally, I don’t really focus on anything else other than the game when I’m playing,” Wood said. “The only encouragement and support I need verbally, like I really need, is from my teammates and from our coaches throughout the game.”

While the possibility of hosting fans at home sporting events next season remains uncertain, Maryy said she and her teammates have grown from the experience of playing without them.

“Not every girl has been with me this whole journey, but still being able to feel that love and appreciation has been the game’s my motivation,” Bowers said.

Sunday’s win was part of a two-game weekend for the team that continued its victorious streak after winning the previous match against Boise State 1-0 on Friday.

The match was an excellent representation of the Spartans’ commendable defense, before two of the Wolf Pack’s attempted shots.

Junior goalie Zoe Agustine was at ease for a considerable portion of the game because of the consistent defensive play of the team.

A large portion of the first half consisted of a back-and-forth period of fouls, with 6 against the Wolf Pack and 9 against the Spartans before the first point of the match.

Both teams experienced a goal, with 5 shots on goal attempted on both sides.

The winning goal was dynamically scored by freshman Evan House and senior forward Bella Bowers.

SJSU’s performance as a collective was a reflection of the Spartan’s team motto for the season, which has consistently had a positive effect.

Throughout the game, numerous substitutions from the bench were key components to the team’s victory.

“Personally, I don’t really focus on anything else other than the game when I’m playing.”

Bowers said the team has consistently had a deep bench throughout the season, which has made a huge impact on the team’s performance as a collective.

She added that the team had at least seven people come off the bench at one time.

When referring to the Substitutes in the interview, Bowers said, “the level of playing with 10 subs instead of 9 or 10 is about the same level of playing never went down, Bowers said, ‘the level of playing never went down, the level of playing never went down.’”

Not every girl has been with me this whole journey, but still being able to feel that love and appreciation has been the game’s my motivation,” Bowers said.

You’ve seen it in sports, but it’s starting to come together even more so throughout the season.”

Although the match’s second period didn’t consist of any scores, both teams continued to play conscientiously.

Agustine notably made an attempt shot by Reno’s Luz Arregui in minute 74, saving SJSU from a red goal.

Freshmen players House and Bowers were standout athletes in Sunday’s game, leading several shots and demonstrating extreme potential for the new team’s future.

The triumphant event of hosting fans at home sporting events next season remains uncertain, Maryy said she and her teammates have grown from the experience of playing without them.

Photo courtesy of SJSU Athletics

Californian Cynthia Flores (middle) scored the Spartans’ only goal Sunday on an assist by forward Evan House (right).

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Cynthia Flores in a graceful attack.

It was Flores’ first goal in her collegiate career.

As a post-game interview posed on the Twitter account for SJSU women’s soccer, head coach Lauren Hanson said Flores’ goal was a reflection of the success the team has been building.

“This is just a preview of what we can do in the attack,” Hanson said in the interview. “It’s part of developing a rhythm and it’s been a process of trying to develop that.”

Spartans seniors celebrate victory in final home match

The San Jose State women’s soccer team nailed an Easter Sunday 1-0 victory against the Wolf Pack during a typical season.

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