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NEWS

October 26, 2011

Freshmen know the party is on Hathway Avenue



Victoria Billings

Every new school year, Cal Poly's [Week of Welcome](#) (WOW) introduces incoming students to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and, though it may not be on the official WOW schedule, college parties.

The epicenter of these college parties is [Hathway Avenue](#), a residential road near campus. Hathway Avenue is well-known among incoming freshman, even before classes have started, according to animal science freshman Kiah Featherstone.

This is because older students tell freshman about "Hathway," and word spreads quickly that the road is a popular party destination, Featherstone said.

"The first night ever, (older students) were like, 'Oh yeah, we're going to Hathway,'" Featherstone said. "If you didn't know about it then, you knew about it by the first night."

Following move-in day, the street is usually packed with freshman, especially during WOW, food science senior and Hathway resident Tracy Jordan said.

This year — Jordan's first time living on the street — was no different from previous years, Jordan said.

"The streets were full," Jordan said. "There was just a lot of people everywhere, freshmen everywhere."

Those freshmen arrive on Hathway Avenue because they wander the areas around campus looking for activity and "go where the noise is," Jordan said.

Hathway Avenue is less than a mile from campus. Agribusiness senior Jacob DeBoer said this is what makes the street a popular destination.

"Its proximity to campus and density of students that live there (attract party-goers)," DeBoer said.



ARTICLES

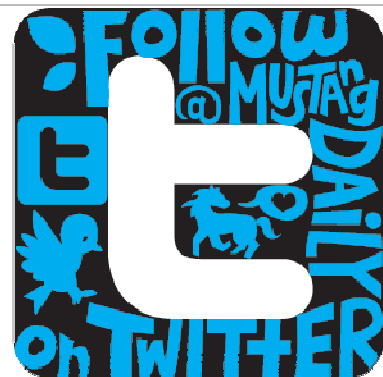
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The popularity of Hathway is also a large factor in the number of WOW freshman that show up, biomedical engineering sophomore Nik Ekman said. Ekman came to Hathway Avenue last year with his WOW group members.

The biggest draw is the sheer number of people freshmen can meet at Hathway Avenue, Ekman said.

“It helps socially a lot just to meet people because everybody’s new here,” Ekman said.

Alcohol is readily available at these parties, and it’s not unusual for freshman to drink excessively, University Police Department (UPD) Chief Bill Watton said.

“Almost every night (of WOW), there will be someone who doesn’t get to spend the night in their dorm room,” Watton said.

Each year, UPD teams up with the [San Luis Obispo Police Department](#) (SLOPD) and increases staff and patrols in areas around campus in anticipation of these WOW-related festivities, Watton said.

The idea behind this is that a strong presence prior to rowdy parties will prevent those same parties from getting out of hand, SLOPD captain Chris Staley said.

“We just really try to let people know we’re there,” Staley said.

This presence from UPD and SLOPD seems to be working. Overall, UPD has seen a decrease in alcohol-related arrests from last year’s figure, 71, to this year’s 39, Watton said.

And the bulk of these alcohol-related arrests aren’t freshmen, but out-of-town partiers.

“What we typically see are some students and the rest aren’t students at all,” Watton said. “We’re seeing more and more of that, where there’s no connection at all and they just came here to party.”

College-age people from Fresno, the California Valley and other areas of San Luis Obispo County all come to San Luis Obispo during WOW to party with students because of the week’s party reputation, Watton said.

UPD still does pick up several drunken students each WOW, but of the 39 alcohol-related arrests during 2011 WOW, only a few were students, Watton said.

“When we look at our WOWies, a lot of them go off campus to see what’s going on, but they’re not the ones drinking,” he said.

One thing that has increased during back-to-school parties is students being picked up and taken to the hospital for alcohol poisoning.

This increase is a reaction to the efforts made by on-campus groups to encourage students to look out for their friends during parties, and it’s a good thing, Watton said.

Watton said his ideal situation, though, would be if students cut back on alcohol consumption entirely.

“They just need to quit drinking quite so much,” Watton said.

TAGS: *Bill Watton, Hathway, victoria billings, Week of Welcome, week of welcome parties*

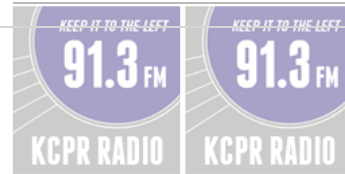
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Victoria Billings is a journalism junior, and a Mustang Daily news reporter.



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October 26, 2011

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2 RESPONSES TO “FRESHMEN KNOW THE PARTY IS ON HATHWAY AVENUE”

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Matt

October 26, 2011 at 2:09 pm #



“... in anticipation of these WOW-related festivities”

Excuse me but WOW has nothing to do with these activities. If anything the program strives to keep students busy and make friends so they do not feel the need to go to Hathaway.

Why does this article make it sound as if WOW is the reason for these parties when it is the program that is actually trying to decrease this issue?

REPLY

Nikki

October 26, 2011 at 5:47 pm #



I cannot agree more with the first response. First off, this article is written horribly. What exactly is the point of this article?

The article starts off by claiming that WOW introduces freshman to college parties, yet the evidence states that alcohol-related arrests were down significantly and that the bulk of them weren't even Cal Poly students let alone freshman.

It is then quoted by the officer used that “When we look at our WOWies, a lot of them go off campus to see what’s going on, but they’re not the ones drinking.”

I feel like the point of this article was to attack the WOW program with no evidence to support your erroneous claims. Yes, there is an increase in partying that happens the week before school starts, but as you stated in your article it is mostly older students and people from out of town. If an article is going to be written about pre-Fall quarter partying maybe more research should be done into who is actually doing the partying. The week of welcome occurs around the same time the majority of the student population is coming back to SLO, which is the main reason the increase in partying happens.

Has any research been done on how the WOW program takes action to prevent partying and increase safety of the WOWies during the week? Have you seen the Personal Choices and Struggle video that focuses on the consequences of drinking and drugs? Do you know about the interactive awareness gallery that uses many different mediums to highlight what an incoming student may face their first year at Cal Poly? All incoming students see both of these presentations and are allotted time to reflect and discuss these issues.

If the point of this article was to highlight the increased partying, then you need to say that. Connecting it to the WOW program is detrimental to the all the preventative efforts the program makes and the positive impact it makes on Cal Poly’s incoming students.

I would also like to point out how irrelevant the timing of this is. 6 weeks after WOW is over? This is just bad journalism. The topic is irrelevant, there is not a solid point made, there is little evidence to support the claims and the connection between partying on hathaway and the WOW program is just WRONG.

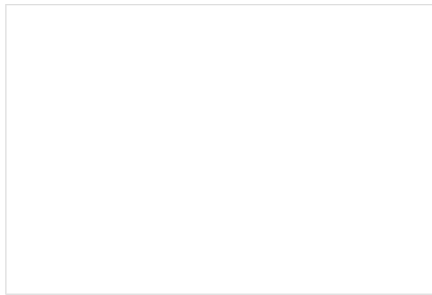
Maybe you should actually do research and get solid facts before publishing an obviously opinionated article.

REPLY

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about 3 hours ago

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