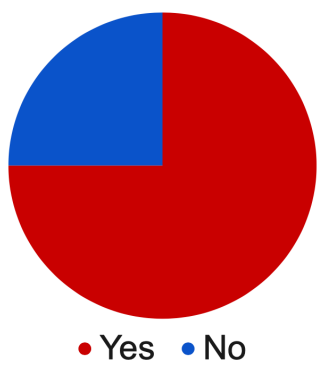


What's Your Opinion?

Do you think the "American Dream" is dead?

Out of 40 responses:
Yes -- 30
No -- 10



Next Poll:

Daylight Savings
Should we get rid of Daylight Savings time?

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, @astateherald. Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on astatetheherald.com. Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to heraldopinion1921@gmail.com.

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website.

The American commercialization of Day of the Dead

LAILA CASIANO
STAFF WRITER



Laila Casiano is a junior multimedia journalism major from Paragould.

Día de los Muertos: a Mexican celebration or an American commodity? Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a primarily Mexican holiday that's celebrated on Nov. 1-2, where you memorialize the souls of the deceased. This joyful celebration often includes ofrendas (altars) with marigold flowers and incense, and displays offerings such as the deceased's favorite dishes and their beloved material items, etc. In the United States, this holiday is exploited as a commodity, something that is dwindled down to its aesthetic. Disney portrayed Día de los Muertos through their 2017 movie,

"Coco." This movie showed aspects of the holiday including the decorating of the altar, displaying family photos and memorabilia.

The audience saw the raw connection between the Mexican culture and its people to celebrate Día de los Muertos through the colors, architecture, customs, speech and attire in "Coco." Understanding the meaning and promise to remember those who came before you is a wonderful message, one that made a mark on people.

As someone who grew up with Mexican parents who did not really celebrate the holiday, I enjoyed the attention it got after the release of "Coco." However, I think the issue is that people focus more on the aesthetic rather than the traditional aspects of the holiday.

I remember once on Halloween, I dressed up as Miguel from "Coco." I had the sugar skull face painted on, a red jacket with blue jeans and carried around a guitar outside my home giving away candy to children. I remember a stranger looking at me in my costume and saying, "Oh! You're dressed up like Day of the Dead."

I remember feeling really confused, because how can you dress up like Day

of the Dead? I corrected them, saying I was a character, and he shrugged as if there was no difference.

It would be like dressing up as a Leprechaun for Halloween and someone saying you dressed up as St. Patricks Day.

How can you dress up like a holiday? Ever since then, I noticed the differences between how Americans celebrate this holiday and how Mexicans/Mexican Americans celebrate Day of the Dead.

You want a festive Halloween party? Day of the Dead theme!

You want something easy and pretty? Paint a sugar skull on your face.

So many companies profit off this holiday through costumes, decorations and events. This commodification has led to Día de los Muertos becoming an aesthetic and romanticized by outsiders that have no relationship to its traditional and cultural ties.

There's an obvious distinction between appropriation and appreciation. I believe that through intent and transformative methods, celebrating alongside the Mexican people to honor and pay tribute to your ancestors is alright.

No one can tell you how to embrace

life and death, but if you decorate for a party with stereotypical Day of the Dead ornaments, it's silly and insensitive. Especially if you throw it all away the next day.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RECORDS-JOURNAL

Day of the Dead decorations on display in American department store.

The "American Dream" is dead

ELIJAH TEMPLETON
OPINION EDITOR



Elijah Templeton is a junior multimedia journalism major from Jonesboro.

The American dream is dead. Gone. Buried beneath the ashes of a once hopeful nation.

Using Thomas Jefferson's belief that every citizen is entitled to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness as our basis for the promise of the American Dream, I believe that such a promise no longer exists.

There once was a time when young hopefuls had a future they looked forward to. They imagined buying a home, raising a family, having a stable income and retiring at an appropriate age to enjoy their twilight years.

Now, you would be lucky to find someone under thirty who is including

savings for home ownership and retirement in their monthly budget.

There are a number of reasons for this. One being that everything has gradually gotten more expensive. People are forced to spend more and more of their paychecks on necessities just to keep food on the table and a roof above their head.

More spending leads to less saving. Less saving means that future financial goals slip away. Goals like owning a house or investing in your retirement have to take a back seat to your immediate needs.

Early in the 20th century, immigrants flocked to America with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Lady Liberty stood as a beacon of hope on the horizon that drew those in search of a better life.

This hope was the American Dream. The promise that this country was one where if you worked hard and played by the rules, you could forge a comfortable life for yourself.

The death of the American dream is a relatively new phenomenon. Many members of the baby boomer generation (1946-1964) were able to attend college, get a job, buy a house and raise a family, in many cases on only one income.

The idea of a single income being able to get you a house and car all while

raising a family is unheard of in our current economy for the vast majority of the working class.

One could argue that the promise of the American dream was never a guarantee of success at all, but simply the freedom to pursue the dream free of obstructions.

I would agree, but now, the obstacles in the way of this pursuit make it futile and eliminate almost all hopes of success in the chase.

Today, a good high school is not guaranteed access to college, a college degree is not a guarantee of a good job and a good job is not a pathway to owning a home and a timely retirement.

Decades ago, this was the common formula for financial stability and upward class mobility in America.

It is more likely today that the average American will saddle themselves with massive debt to attend college and then have it weigh them down for the

next forty years of their lives, with no hopeful outcomes on their horizon.

For a nation built on the promise of freedom, it seems that the working class is restricted more and more in what they are free to do.

We have desperately clung to the remnants of the American Dream for so long, it has blinded us to reality. Now that we have let go, we can see it for what it is; just a dream.

In the words of George Carlin, "It's called the American Dream because you have to be asleep to believe it".

But of course, that's just one man's opinion.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Cartoonist depiction of the reality of the American dream.

THE HERALD

RACHEL RUDD: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
rachel.rudd@smail.astate.edu

REBECCA ROBINSON: NEWS EDITOR
heraldnews1921@gmail.com

REBECCA ROBINSON: SPORTS EDITOR
heraldsports1921@gmail.com

ELIJAH TEMPLETON: OPINION EDITOR
heraldopinion1921@gmail.com

CAROLINE AVERITT: LIFE EDITOR
heraldlife1921@gmail.com

REBECCA WORTHINGTON: PHOTO EDITOR
heraldphoto1921@gmail.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN EDITOR
heraldonline1921@gmail.com

SANDRA L. COMBS: ADVISER; ADVERTISEMENT SALES
scombs@astate.edu
astateherald@gmail.com

THE HERALD OFFICE IS IN ROOM 224 OF THE COMMUNICATIONS/EDUCATION BUILDING.

NEWSROOM: 870-972-3076

AD OFFICE: 870-972-2961

FAX: 870-972-3339

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Story ideas or news tips may be emailed to heraldnews1921@gmail.com. The Herald welcomes comments, criticisms or ideas that its readership may have. We encourage you to send a Letter to the Editor to rachel.rudd@smail.astate.edu.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Herald is printed every Wednesday during the semester, except during finals and holidays. Copies of The Herald are free.

CORRECTIONS GUIDELINES

The Herald wants its news reports to be fair and accurate. We correct all errors of fact. If you know of an error, please contact us.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Opinions expressed in personal columns are those of the writers and may not reflect the opinions of the staff as a whole.

These opinions are not necessarily reflective of the students, faculty or administration at A-State.

Columns, letters to the editor, cartoons and other content on the opinion page are the views of the author. Content does not necessarily represent the opinion of The Herald.