#FOCUSDEMOCRACY: MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HEAD TO THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY

###FEATURE

Drew Mumich | Staff Writer

As the 2020 Election Day drew to an end, Montclair State University residents rushed to vote with last-minute mail-in ballots and in-person voting. The Montclair State Votes Coalition helped with this by providing shuttle buses to and from the two different polling stations in Montclair and Little Falls. Kat Gilvey, a sophomore business administration major and Bonner Leader, explains that she volunteers her time with the Montclair State Votes Coalition by helping them in every aspect of the election. Earlier today, she took the bus to and from the Little Falls polling location.

“For today, we have mostly focused on getting students to polling places, [because] it’s the last day to vote,” Gilvey said. “I would say on the shuttle we had today, we saw about 20 students [riding] so far, never all at once, but just throughout the day.”

Between the two buses running to both polling places, the numbers were a little more than two dozen. Though student turnout was small, the students that were on the buses recognized the importance of going to the polls. Nariah McKnight, a senior family science and human development major, participated in her second presidential election today.

“Particularly because Montclair [State] allows the shuttle option, it allows it to be accessible. It allows us to practically access the right to vote because when we are not in school anymore, it is going to be on us to lead,” McKnight said. “Being able to do this in our 20s, we are young, but we are showing that we care [about] what is going on in this country.”

The shuttle buses ran from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., allowing students to catch them before or after their classes. However, not all students were able to vote in Montclair or Little Falls.

Rebecca Kobik, a freshman television and digital media major, explained that since she is registered to vote in South Jersey, she could not hand in her ballot at the North Jersey polling stations.

“You can’t put [your mail-in ballot] in a drop box in a different county than you are from; you have to put it in the actual mailbox,” Kobik said.

Kobik added that polling officials explained that people can only deliver their mail-in ballots to polling locations where they are registered.

“It has to be from your area, but I’m not driving two hours home. I’m just going to go back to Montclair [State] and take a Lyft or an Uber and then I’m going to go to the post office to drop [my ballot] off,” Kobik said.

“I come from another country, and then I had to wait for the right to vote. Then I got my citizenship [and] I was so excited to go and vote; it feels so good to go ahead and vote,” Nuazz said. “For me, to see a student go ahead and vote, it’s amazing.”

###OPINION

Drew Mumich | The Montclarion

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FLU SHOTS NOW MANDATORY
WITH SEMESTER NEAR END

With less than a month to go in the fall 2020 semester, Montclair State University is now making it mandatory for residential and commuter students to receive the flu vaccine, if they wish to spend time on campus.

An email from the university’s administration informed Montclair State students that they are now required to receive flu vaccines before the semester ends. The email was sent on Oct. 30, and it gives residents and some commuter students less than a month to get vaccinated before the Thanksgiving and winter breaks.

Per the announcement, the university is requiring that all residential students, commuters who are registered for in-person classes and students coming to campus for work or other campus activities to receive the vaccination.

Maria Hofmann, a sophomore journalism major who is currently taking a course in communication for those people.

“The communication about the flu vaccination should have been much clearer,” Hofmann said. “If the university had this idea in mind, they should have communicated this idea earlier in the semester, so as commuters, we could have planned the semester differently.”

Paige Dougherty, a sophomore fashion studies major who is currently taking classes virtually from home, is in favor of Montclair State’s new policy. She receives a flu vaccine every year, citing the belief that if she does not receive the flu vaccine, she will be far more likely to fall ill.

“I am for the university’s policy for students not receiving the flu vaccine,” Dougherty said. “I usually get sick a lot and if I did not get the flu vaccine every year, I believe I would feel worse.”

Although Dougherty believes that everyone should receive the flu vaccine, she believes that students who have underlying health conditions should not be mandated to get the vaccine.

“The only way I am not OK with the flu vaccine being mandatory is if someone has a preexisting condition,” Dougherty said. “If you are perfectly fine and have no other health conditions that can disrupt your symptoms, then the flu vaccine should be mandatory for those people.”

The email sent from the Montclair State administration announced that the University Health Center (UHC) will be holding free, on-campus flu vaccination clinics throughout the month of November. The UHC was not available for an interview about the new policy, but in a comment, staff nurse Barbara Ackerson highly recommends that people receive the flu vaccine all throughout the year.

John LaRosa
Staff Writer

Generally, Election Day in America is full of clamor, outcry, protest and even chaos. This may be true for other parts of the country, but Montclair State University residents have chosen to stay silent at this time.

Walking around campus, there are very few signs of student life. To the dismay of many, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused a setback in campus life, resulting in not much to be heard during what is arguably one of the most historic days in recent memory.

Anywhere you look, from the field outside of Freeman Hall, all the way to the Student Center Quad, there is nothing to be heard: no opinions, no discussion, nothing pertaining to the utmost importance of the presidential election.

There is not a political poster in sight that vouches for either former Vice President Joe Biden or for President Trump. With mail-in voting encouraged, many New Jerseyans have already made up their minds and voted early.

Perhaps the silence found at Montclair State today is a false omen of things to come, or a calm before the storm; only time will tell.
#FOCUSDEMOCRACY: PHOTO ESSAY: MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY REJOICES IN THE STREETS FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT BIDEN

After an intense waiting game to see who will be the next president of the United States, Americans learned early this afternoon that former Vice President Joseph R. Biden is projected to become the 46th president of the United States of America.

Celebrations are now occurring around the world, including in downtown Montclair, New Jersey, where people have headed to the streets to proclaim the victory of their Democratic candidate.

Montclair State University students and Montclair residents alike headed to Bloomfield Avenue to celebrate President-elect Biden’s win.

Having voted blue in this election, both Essex County and Passaic County citizens were ecstatic to see their party win.

With cars honking, people cheering, flags being waved and cries of joy echoing throughout all of downtown Montclair, one could feel the energy radiating off the streets.

John LaRosa
Staff Writer

Families drive through Montclair, showing peace and love for Biden.

Biden supporters celebrate on Bloomfield Avenue.

People wave a Black Lives Matter flag around downtown Montclair.

A sign of support for Joe Biden outside of a restaurant.

John LaRosa | The Montclarion

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Senator and Democratic vice presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, visited Philadelphia on the eve of the 2020 Election in an effort to secure votes from the state of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is expected to play a pivotal role in the results of the 2020 election, given that depending on which way their votes go, the state could decide the winner of this historic election.

While former Vice President Joe Biden visited Pittsburgh last night, Harris spent her evening in front of a large crowd in the City of Brotherly Love. The two aired the campaigns on their social media platforms and combined their respective events. Biden was accompanied by performers Lady Gaga and Harris with singer John Legend.

Harris’ event was originally “invite only,” but there was nevertheless a line of cars around Citizens Bank Park with people waiting to get into the parking lot. The long wait was due to extensive security, but many people waiting in line were still able to watch the event via Twitter, or by leaving their windows rolled down so that they could listen to the event as it was happening.

Harris made a short speech, focusing on Biden’s character and dignity. She also criticized President Trump for his poor judgment in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Harris ended her speech by encouraging people to vote, and to encourage friends and family to vote as well. She thanked her supporters who helped campaign all across the country. She projected an air of confidence, in that their efforts would pay off in the upcoming days.
More than 300 popular creators on the TikTok app have formed a virtual content house. Instead of renegade dance challenges, teens and young adults are peddling political activism. While those part of the collective “TikTok for Biden" movement hope to secure Democrat Joe Biden a 2020 presidential victory, their youth and inability to vote leaves many, including Montclair State University students asking how, if at all, this campaign will impact the election.

TikTok, a platform with more than 100 million U.S. users monthly, has been the cause of some recent controversy. Nevertheless, the app has also provided an online hub for virtual activists looking to boost their issues and amplify their voices.

The spontaneous nature of the app, which allows for anyone to quickly gain views, has taken the U.S. and the world by storm. The astounding majority, or 60% of TikTok users, are people between the ages of 16 and 24. However, their youth has not stopped them from playing a role in the 2020 presidential election.

The app, created in 2016 by the Chinese company ByteDance, has already been at the center of some election buzz. TikTok users, mostly minors, staged somewhat of a political practical joke.

The prank included teens and young adults registering to attend President Trump’s reelection campaign rallies and then not showing up. While this has ignited a laugh in some and outrage in others, it has become a source of ire for President Trump. He has even gone as far as proposing to ban the app.

The movement has also gained some traction in the press. Take 16-year-old Bella Their for instance, who said that her goal and aspirations with the campaign were quite clear.

“We are working to get Biden voted into office,” Their said.

With more than 800,000 combined followers on TikTok, Twitter and Instagram accounts, the campaign boasts members like critically acclaimed author Hank Green, Glee alumnus Kevin McHale and other popular creators on the app.

One member of “TikTok for Biden,” Jeremy Muchemi, discussed some possibilities telling numbers in relation to the upcoming election.

“We’ve amassed over 100 million total combined followers, which is more than what [President] Trump got in votes in 2016,” Muchemi said.

Sam Wilk, a freshman psychology and gender studies major, is happy to see that minors like Jeremy are trying to become involved in politics.

“I think ‘TikTok for Biden’ is motivating minors to care about the world they live in. I hear so many teens saying they don’t care about politics because they can’t vote, but you shouldn’t not care about the world around you,” Wilk said. “This campaign entices young people to get educated and care.”

TikTok’s multiphase nature should help to make Biden appeal to a younger audience. However, many of the content creators, most of whom fall into Generation Z (Gen Z or Zoomers), meaning they were born during the late 1990s and the early 2000s, are not old enough to vote, which leads many to wonder how this campaign will impact the 2020 presidential election.

Alexia Lynne, a member of the campaign, was able to shed light on the process of getting into “TikTok for Biden” and discussed what the campaign hopes to accomplish.

“So basically it’s just a campaign [or movement by Gen Z TikTok users] to encourage people to get involved with this election and vote blue. We never ever expected it to get this huge, but bigger and bigger creators started joining and it took off,” Lynne said.

At the beginning of the campaign, a prospective “applicant” needed 10,000 followers on the platform to be considered. As the campaign grew, that number was bumped up to 100,000 followers.

It may seem steep, but the campaign was starting to be nationally recognized by the likes of NBC and PAPER Magazine.

When asked how she first learned about the campaign, Chiana Rodriguez, a freshman psychology major at Montclair State, saw it on her TikTok feed.

“It showed up on my ‘For You Page,’ Rodriguez said. “[TikTok for Biden] has opened people’s eyes.”

In addition to spreading the word, members of the campaign are responsible for creating content for the “TikTok for Biden” handle on Instagram,
Sam Wilk, a freshman psychology and gender studies major, TikTok user and a first time voter, poses for a photo in the Student Center Quad. Photo courtesy of Sam Wilk

"We never ever expected it to get this huge, but bigger and bigger creators started joining and it took off."
-Alexia Lynne, TikToker

TikTok and TikTok, along with encouraging others to get out to vote, become poll workers and generally encourage political interest in teens and young adults. One member, 17-year-old Maurice Williams, stated that his parents are not very political motivated, but Williams is still devoted to the cause.

“I wanted the chance to fight for change and the right to equality,” Williams said.

Another member of the “TikTok for Biden” campaign, 22-year-old Harvard student Claira Janover, also spoke about the TikTok campaign.

“I’d say all of my family [and] friends are Democrats. [‘TikTok for Biden’] is a fun group of people from various ‘niches’ of TikTok, promoting voting, Biden and the democratic process,” Janover said.

In addition to online efforts for Joe Biden, the campaign also sells merchandise, all proceeds of which are donated to Joe Biden’s campaign fund, the Democratic National Committee and social justice organizations, including Black Lives Matter.

“TikTok for Biden” has become a launching pad for a new generation of political activism, from connecting people all over the country, to influencing those that cannot yet vote in this election.

Members of the Montclair State community have lauded the virtual campaign as a place for young Americans to learn and engage in their political futures.
Even if marijuana is legalized, students will not be able to smoke it on campus, as Montclair State University has a "Tobacco Free Campus" policy that strictly prohibits smoking, vaping, and tobacco use.

John LaRosa
Staff Writer

A question given to all New Jersey residents on this year’s ballot for the 2020 election is whether or not to legalize marijuana. Since most students at Montclair State University are presumably over 18 years old, those who are New Jersey residents have the power to vote for change.

Although Gov. Phil Murphy has been pushing for the plant to be legalized, Therese Bailey, a freshman film major, voiced her concerns about marijuana.

“I personally do not think it is a good idea,” Bailey said. “Weed is a gateway drug into far more dangerous drugs.”

While Bailey possesses a dissenting opinion on the matter, that does not seem to be the case for most students. Tatiana Cook, a junior art and illustration major, agrees that marijuana should be legalized in New Jersey.

“I think it is a good idea because a lot of people get charged for it when it’s not causing harm to anyone else,” Cook said. “If weed was treated like alcohol and had the same laws in place, a lot of people would not be in jail or kicked out of school because of it.”

Meghan Loeffe, a sophomore family science and human development major, adds her voice to the chorus of students who see the benefits of legalizing marijuana.

“I also think that weed kind of has a negative connotation, as some people think it is a gateway drug, but alcohol can be even worse, especially long term,” Loeffe said. “I think weed should have been legalized by now, as long as you use it properly just like with alcohol.”

Angel Hernandez, a freshman pre-major, is furious that marijuana is still illegal in 2020.

“It was illegalized because of racist and social economic issues,” Hernandez said. “It is propaganda.”

The issue of legalizing marijuana is not as straightforward as some might think. Je’ Anna Cadavid, a freshman art and illustration major, is one of these people.

“I think there’s overall positive upbringings, reducing crime rates, [it] helps medically, [it] can create businesses and jobs for those looking to sell THC and [marijuana] products around the state,” Cadavid said.

But Cadavid also has concerns about what may happen if marijuana is legalized.

“I can understand people being worried that [other] people will just go around being high and getting themselves in trouble,” Cadavid said. “[But], I think with proper precautions, it could be an overall great thing.”

It turns out that many students shared viewpoints that aligned with Cadavid’s statement, including Eleni Marakis, a sophomore family science and human development major.

“As long as there are regulations so that underage [people] cannot get into it and things like that, I see no problem with it,” Marakis said.

Legalizing marijuana in New Jersey is not as simple as flipping a switch; there are many steps to reverse its illegality.

Rebecca Kobik, a freshman television media major, may have said it best.

“Regardless of whether it’s legal or not, kids and adults alike will find a way to get a hold of weed,” Kobik said.

Gov. Murphy has been pushing for New Jersey residents to vote “Yes” for the legalization of marijuana on this year’s election ballot, shown by the tremendous support he received on his “Legalize It” Instagram post.

Even if marijuana is legalized in New Jersey, students will not be able to smoke it on campus, as Montclair State is a “Tobacco Free Campus,” and strictly prohibits smoking, vaping and tobacco use.

John LaRosa
The Montclarion
I have the coronavirus (COVID-19). I am asymptomatic, which is a stroke of luck on my part; I am usually very unlucky, so we will see how that progresses.

I suppose I should start from the beginning. On Halloween, I was indirectly exposed to the virus while attending an on-campus event with Team Rocky, which I am also a part of. As a precaution, I decided to get tested on Thursday, Nov 5.

My positive test result came back on Nov. 8; that was when the guilt set in. I had to think back to every interaction, no matter how small, that I had in the days prior. I remembered having worked at the library and having gone to campus for my in-person class, but that does not mean that I am irresponsible. I would not have gone to these places if I knew that I was sick. My class was on Tuesday and my last day of work was on Wednesday.

In addition, I did not know that I was infected until Thursday. Even though there was no way that I could have known, I still feel incredibly guilty.

I was in contact with Montclair State University about my exposure, as soon as I was informed. One of my roommates tested negative, which I took as a good sign. I gave this information to a woman named Jan, who is very nice and understanding.

I was in contact again, this time with Patricia Ruiz, who is the director of the University Health Center. She asked me about how I was adjusting, how I was feeling physically and where I was on campus between exposure and diagnosis.

I also heard that she got in contact with my roommates, who will now have to quarantine, regardless of whether they tested negative or not. One will be staying at home, another with his girlfriend and the last is staying in our dorm by himself.

That is one of my biggest guilt factors: I could have made my friends sick. Not only that, but they had to cancel their film sets because of this. Safety first, I know, but I still feel horrible about it.

My first night alone was lonely. I do not know how to make that sound better than it is. I sat alone, in a makeshift couch setup that I made by pushing the arm chairs together. This is where I do my homework and watch Netflix.

I have never handled change well, so I was far too nervous to get a good night’s sleep. Sound travels fast in an almost empty apartment; every small noise that I heard made me think that someone else was in the apartment too.

The locked door next to mine did not help with this fear either, even though I know that this fear was only a part of my anxious state.

I never thought I would be so happy to have class; it gives me something to do in order to break up the monotony. Unfortunately, I cannot go to work until I am cleared, so this evening will be filled with Netflix, some reading and homework.

I hope to make the best of it. In fact, I can take this as a sort of writer’s retreat; I have always wanted to go on one of those.

I do hope to get some creative writing done, but I also see this as a great opportunity to give you all an insider’s look into my “COVID-cation.” Not everyone will be unlucky enough to experience what isolation on campus is like. Fortunately, you have me to live out the situation for you.

I will be providing pictures for you, but bear in mind, they will probably be terrible. I am not a great photographer.

I also hope you get some enjoyment out of my isolated thoughts. Hopefully, I do not go all Jack Torrance up here from being trapped for so long.

If by any chance I do, at least you would have gotten an insider’s view into my slow descent into insanity.

I took a selfie in my “Cozy” to show how I relax in style.
Two weeks ago, we published an editorial endorse-
ment for the 2020 presidential, Senate and New Jersey ballot measure elections. Since then, Joe Biden has become the pro-
jected 46th President-elect of the United States, Cory Book-
er was reelected to the United States Senate and New Jersey voters elected to legalize adult-
use marijuana and provide tax breaks to military veterans who served in peacetime.

In that same editorial, we explained how the election of former Vice President Joe Biden was essential to beginning a healing process for the United States and its citizens. Furthermore, the United States now has a Democratic majority in the Senate, a Democratic president, a Republican majority in the House of Representatives and a conservative majority on the Supreme Court. Our government is en-
tirely reflective of the body it governs, split, more or less, di-
rectly down the middle.

When Donald Trump de-
feated Hillary Clinton in 2016, half of the country celebrated joyously while the other half was left devastated. Instead of choosing to use the next four years to battle out legislation in Congress, Democrats chose to try to have Trump removed from office, based on allega-
tions of international agencies meddling with the election.

Today, President Trump is refusing to concede the elec-
tion to Joe Biden, claiming the majority of Biden’s votes, which were mail-in ballots, were illegal and should not be counted. Many of Trump’s supporters, both in govern-
ment and regular citizens, are standing by him, also believing the allegations of mass voter fraud.

Just like how the Democrats should have accepted defeat in 2016 and moved on with the governmental process, Repub-
licans must learn from that juvenile mistake and do the same. While it remains impor-
tant to investigate any cases of voter fraud that yield substanc-
tial evidence, the only thing that will come out of baseless claims made out of stubborn-
ness is more anger amongst country-people and four more years of unproductivity.

Democrats must remem-
ber what it was like when Hill-
ary Clinton lost the election to Donald Trump four years ago. People were frightened to let the dust settle, assess the horizon and proceed with mindfulness, compassion and purpose.

Campus Voices:

Do you think your votes in the election made a difference?

By Brielle E. Wyka

“I feel like my vote mattered very much in this election be-
cause right now, a lot of times people feel as if their voices aren’t being heard and the smallest things can eventually count at the end so I feel like my one small vote helped im-
pact the bigger picture.”

- Mark Lovell
Dance
Sophomore

“It was my first time voting for a presidential election [and] it was really exciting, I think my vote did play a role... I know a lot of people tend to think their vote doesn’t matter in New Jersey since it’s already a blue state, but I read this article that Biden won a town in Pennsyl-

vania by only one vote and it made me realize that your vote really does matter despite the color of your state.”

- Mariana Luna-Martinez
Biology
Freshman

“I think because it was so close this time, I definitely couldn’t miss out on it. Even though New Jersey usually goes blue, it’s still important to me.”

- Hailey Gleeson
Undecided
Freshman

“I think my vote mattered a lot, considering who’s the pro-
jected president.”

- De’jah Seabrooks
Film
Freshman
To Pass or To Fail? That Should Not Be the Question

ANTON SPECHT
ASSISTANT
OPINION EDITOR

When we were all stripped away of our traditional schooling last spring, we entered uncharted territory. It was a dive into the unknown, a dark void of seemingly foreign ground. To compensate for the sudden change, Montclair State University offered a pass-fail option for courses. This meant that if students were not pleased with their grade in a class, they could choose to receive a universal “passing” grade, in which it would not affect their GPA at all, pending if they received any grade above an F.

This option was a breath of fresh air in the midst of the sudden changes that all of us were affected by. It was a very stressful time for everyone and it was a difficult adjustment to take our entire education online. The pass-fail option made sense and was important to have at the time, but not anymore.

Currently, there is a virtual petition circulating around the student body of Montclair State, calling for the administration to implement another pass-fail option for the fall 2020 semester.

Aforementioned, we were prepared for the circumstances of this semester. We had more than half of the spring to grow into this digital schooling format.

Over the summer, professors catered and organized their courses to fit into online settings, something the courses were not designed for last semester. If you felt as though you could not handle a full semester of online schooling, then it may have been wiser to take the semester off, like thousands of students across the country have done. It is valid to say that you could not do that because it would mess up your life schedule, or delay your chances of graduating and finding work. However, as of now, next semester is not likely to see much of a change, as many classes will still be held virtually. We can either adjust to this new form of education, or take a break until things get back to normal. We should not use the current circumstances as an excuse to not work as hard as we can.

We are not here to say that online schooling is the best option for education, but it is what we have been dealt. So let us use this current situation as an opportunity to better ourselves and prove we can power through any situation, regardless of the unfamiliarity. We, as students, can build off of this.

The pass-fail option petition being signed around right now should not be signed or sent to any administrative authorities. It is being used to open a loophole for students who are choosing to not put their best foot forward and persevere through this tough situation. This is a part of life, and once we are all out of college and enter the professional world, we will not be offered opportunities to idle by while reaching regular standards is entirely achievable.

Case For Compassion: Pass-Fail

BRIELLE E. WYKA
VIDEO PRODUCTION EDITOR

I am worried about how accustomed we are all becoming to living through a global pandemic.

Back when students first registered for the fall 2020 semester, we were still in the early stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We were making plans to come back to campus with minor adjustments to our daily lives, but we had hoped the threat of getting sick would not be as dire as it was. Plus, we thought we would have the love and support of our friends, peers and professors to surround and guide us. Even over the summer, as new information about the semester emerged, cases in New Jersey were decreasing and spirits were rising around the state.

Now, we are nine months in, with no end in sight. Some of us have battled the virus personally. Some of us have lost loved ones. Some of us are grappling with economic hardships as a result of the pandemic. Most of us have struggled with our mental health like never before.

We signed up for a semester, not knowing how heavy we would already be by the time we got there. We went to school, regardless. Besides, what else were we supposed to do? Sit around and wallow in this ever-present doom and gloom?

Montclair State University has recognized the difficulties that we have faced, with very few practical solutions to our problems. No amount of doodling, walk-taking or meditation is going to make my workload disappear and keep my GPA going up. My stresses about my finances, academic progress and the health and safety of my loved ones and myself cannot be erased with “Stuff a Plum” in the Student Center ballroom. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can barely handle the volume of students in need during times of normalcy; and now they are overrun with students in crisis.

The fear of falling behind in our society is undeniable real. You cannot create a system that normalizes extending ourselves, then act surprised when we burn out. Through open and honest conversations with my peers, I know most of us are struggling to keep up in life, work and school; I know we will try our hardest to stay on track, despite what it is doing to our health. I also know we should not have to risk so much, just to be able to succeed.

This “new normal” is not normal and we should stop acting like it is supposed to be. We are forcing ourselves to adapt when we should be adjusting our conventions instead. We require masks, social distancing and sanitation for our physical health. Where are the safety guards for our mental and emotional health?

To make matters worse, many outbreaks on campus have not been handled with honesty and transparency, which has caused unrest among the student body. Many students have found out that their classrooms and common-spaces have been contaminated, via whispers and word-of-mouth, with no additional announcements or safety measures put in place by administrators. We cannot even trust that our learning and living spaces are safe.

Incompetency aside, there are plenty of universities across the country making proper accommodations for students who are doing their best, just to learn during these unprecedented times. Massachusetts Institute of Technology has made their entire semester pass-fail, as has New York University and certain portions of Duke University. George Washington University has offered students to choose just one class to take pass-fail, American University students get to pick two and University of Massachusetts students get to pick three. Surely, if such prestigious schools can care for their students in such a basic manner, ours can do the same.

I urge the Montclair State administration to take into consideration the petition circulating amongst the student body to give students the pass-fail option for fall 2020 semester courses, and that they learn from the accommodations that other institutions are making, before it is too late.

Grades should never take precedent over actual learning in higher education, but it is especially despicable to hold them in any regard during such unprecedented and mishandled circumstances.

BRIELLE E. WYKA, a junior communication & media arts major, is in her first year as video production editor for The Montclarion.
Is It Really ‘All Here?’

When I look out the window of my dorm, I see the hills rolling down to the main roads and the New York City skyline’s silhouette on the horizon. It is the sense of freedom that gets me out of bed every morning and keeps me from my bed until late at night. When I enrolled at Montclair State University, I was told, “It’s all here.”

Effective Nov. 9th, we will no longer be able to leave Montclair State for work, or for healthcare without a waiver. Waivers will be mandatory to go to the grocery store to pick up food items, to go to a pharmacy to get necessary prescriptions, even to go to work to get the money needed to be a student here on campus.

Residents students were aware when we signed the paperwork to get our rooms that there would be restrictions such as Hawk Check, mask-wearing and not having guests. However, we were not told outright that if we were to stay on campus, we would essentially be made to stay forever.

While this change may be for the “greater good,” it still entails serious consequences. Students who need medication delivered by family members will be unable to access it safely. Students who depend on part-time and full-time employment will need permission from the school to go to their jobs.

It is one thing to go out and party, putting yourself and others at risk for the sake of selfishness, but it is another to block students from being able to cross the street to go to a grocery store that sells necessities. Even with online shopping and meal delivery options, students, as well as those workers, are given an undue burden to get basic necessities. For one thing, it means a student paying $25 for simple groceries would have to contend with paying exorbitant delivery fees and the possibility of a lost driver ending up on the wrong side of campus.

If the visitor restriction reads as it does in the email sent out by Montclair State President Susan Cole, it could mean that there is a ban on delivery drivers for the Amazon lockers, food delivery workers and even parents dropping off rolls of toilet paper to their children at school.

If this is to be enforced as strictly as it is stated in the email, it could spell trouble for students who plan on staying until Dec. 14. Those students might not be able to work, go grocery shopping or walk outside for some fresh air.

Sure, the new restrictions may seem sensible on paper, but it makes for a bureaucratic mess students will suffer through and will overall create a less than stellar image for Montclair State.

This will necessitate some form of clarification from the office of the president. It is one thing for Residence Life to send out a cheeky email saying, “stay in the bubble, stay out of trouble,” but receiving a serious and sobering email stating that, effective immediately, students cannot leave campus, is an entirely different and far more concerning notion.

There is a certain irony in proclaiming “it’s all here” and then banning students from leaving their dorms to ensure they experience it.

Carley Campbell, a sophomore journalism major, is in her second year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.

No Testing Site

When we needed them most, they vanished

When I discovered that I might have been exposed to the coronavirus (COVID-19), I did what anyone would do when faced with the serious nature of potentially being exposed to a deadly disease: panic.

After panicking for a few minutes, I decided to do what some do when tending to not panic: research. In a case of exposure, it takes common sense to get tested immediately so you can inform public health officials, as well as family and friends or other parties you may have been in contact with. So, I needed to get tested for COVID-19 and fast. Now, here is the issue: There were no nearby options I could go to for a test.

The closest testing site for a residential student is by Clifton High School. If you were to look at a map of COVID-19 testing sites in the state of New Jersey, you would see a plethora of testing sites in the towns of Montclair and Verona. If you have a car, that would be no problem, but what if you depend on ride-share apps like Uber and Lyft, or have to use public transportation options like the bus or the train? Utilizing these options would, in fact, bring more potential harm and entertain the possibility of more exposure to immunocompromised students, staff and other surrounding citizens. Yes, walking was an option, albeit an extremely counterproductive one.

If COVID-19 has brought one thing to our attention, it is the need for proper resources and equal access to them. The University Health Center at Montclair State University is doing the best they can to contain the spread of COVID-19 and in doing so during the months of September and October, the school offered COVID-19 testing for students, so long as they fit within specific categories. Student athletes, residential employees and performing arts majors are some examples of students dependent on the availability of testing to ensure that they could continue their studies. For comparison, West Virginia University offers free testing to their students, on specific dates and times, to ensure they can monitor the rate of COVID-19 transmission on their campus.

It is common for colleges to not take the responsibility to test their students. According to an article from NPR on colleges avoiding testing students, the plans vary wildly and do not offer much comfort for students who are concerned with the pandemic.

Considering that Montclair State has the honor of being the second largest college in New Jersey, as well as having a growing nursing program, it would seem natural for the school to offer some form of testing in order to protect its vulnerable populations.

Even if there are not a lot of students living on campus, measures such as waivers to leave campus and the Hawk Check health and wellness survey show a genuine desire to flatten the curve at Montclair State, in a far more empirical way.

Despite these important efforts, something is still missing. Besides, what is more data-based than offering to test the student body, publicizing the results and using it to present better and more informed options to the university community as a whole?

Carley Campbell, a sophomore journalism major, is in her second year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.
Have a thought about on campus or off campus matters? Write for Opinion!

Email: montclarionopinion@gmail.com

Room 2035, School of Communication and Media in Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043
You have Trump, who will accept you no matter what. He makes you feel good, doesn’t he? His loud, unapologetic, off-the-wall speeches give you surges of strength and power and you know he’s speaking directly to you. He is commending you for supporting him and in turn, supporting America. In other words, you turn to him to help you feel your own worth.

Don’t make it feel bad when they no longer want to acknowledge what you say after telling them you support him, or at least the idea of him. You believe what he says and you internalize his rhetoric, even if it clashes with your own personal values. When you’re enamored with someone’s persona, it’s easy to ignore the qualities or statements that make you uncomfortable. I learned this for myself from being in an abusive relationship.

You’re probably thinking, “uh, this isn’t an abusive relationship; he’s the president and I support him.” Before you dismiss my comparison, I want you to take a moment to consider how you have felt since you started supporting Trump.

If it’s come up in conversation that you support him, how do others react? Does it make you feel bad when they no longer want to acknowledge what you say after telling them you support him? Whatever, you don’t need them.

Regardless of what you consider to be “good,” Trump hasn’t kept a lot of the promises he made to you. The wall isn’t built, Obamacare is in tact and the United States is still being ravaged by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. I don’t want to put words in your mouth, but this is the complete opposite of all the fundamental promises that Trump has made.

I’ve met people from all walks of life who are Trump supporters, so I know that you’re a diverse bunch: immigrants, whom he’s tried so hard to deport; people of the LGBTQ+ community, whom he’s tried to strip of healthcare and the right to serve; women, to whom he promised jobs for their husbands; Black people, whom he tokenizes in the form of meet-cutes with Black celebrities, even as he avoids denouncing white supremacist hate groups.

Have you ever seen pictures of him posing with any of the millions of people who adore him, besides at his rallies? Or is he usually seen hanging out with fellow billionaires? You’re not going to like this, but sometimes the things you least want to hear are the things you need to hear the most.

Donald Trump needs you more than you need him. When he thinks someone doesn’t like him anymore, he gets rid of them, like the countless staffers and aides who have passed through his White House. If that’s how he treats his most loyal followers, what does that say about what he thinks of you?

Being angry all the time is exhausting and you shouldn’t feel obligated to be enraged on Donald Trump’s behalf. When I made that connection earlier, between supporting Trump and being in an abusive relationship, I didn’t mention the most important part of that comparison: it’s OK to walk away, especially when you find yourself having to justify staying.
Good news everyone, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is over. The know-it-alls at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention might tell you otherwise, but they cannot make choices for us. America is the land of liberty, and as a free man, I have decided to officially declare an end to the pandemic.

Giving up those last few months of the spring semester was understandable and the extended spring break was just what I needed. The stress of being a communication and media arts major had really started to take its toll. Like my fellow students, I took advantage of the pass-fail option and ceased all coursework that was not readily available on Quizlet. But there was no way in hell I was giving up my summer because someone's granny might get the sniffles.

Babes, beaches and brews are always on the menu and grouchy ol' Fauci wants to keep me locked up? If he is so worried about the flu, he can keep playing Dungeons and Dragons in the National Institute of Health's basement, but I have got a life to live. I will play the odds on a disease as deadly as the common cold. As the “Rocky IV” villain, Ivan Drago, almost said, “If I die, I die.”

It is kind of hypocritical of “Dr.” Fauci, whose medical credentials I have yet to verify, to keep us indoors while he has the best summer of his life; out and about, throwing out mediocre first pitches, accumulating IMDb credits and salivating over the lucrative book deal he will sign once someone else develops a vaccine.

Meanwhile, proven scientific geniuses such as Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein remain silent on the matter. Bill Nye has chimed in, but next year him and I will have the same level of education, so take his advice with a gargantuan pile of salt.

At least that knucklehead, Gov. Phil Murphy, knew to keep our state’s beaches open. A great choice that reminded me a lot of Mayor Vaughn from “Jaws.” That man was a true patriot who cared about his citizens and more importantly, the economy. The movie gets kind of boring after that though, and they took everyone, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is over. The know-it-alls down at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention might tell you otherwise, but they cannot make choices for us. America is the land of liberty, and as a free man, I have decided to officially declare an end to the pandemic.

Good news everyone, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is over. The know-it-alls at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention might tell you otherwise, but they cannot make choices for us. America is the land of liberty, and as a free man, I have decided to officially declare an end to the pandemic.

On a side note, did anyone else know Chris Christie was not in office anymore? I totally thought that being the governor of New Jersey was a lifetime deal, like the pope or the dalai lama. Anything, I come back to campus in August and they try to test me for COVID-19, like I am some kind of fool. We all know that you cannot get it if you are not tested, just like any other STD.

My personal favorite is the idea of wearing masks. Acting like this tiny piece of paper is going to prevent the spread of a disease, when all it actually does is prevent the flow of oxygen. Trying to breathe in a mask is like trying to file your own taxes – impossible. It is much easier to just pay the fine and move on. Luckily, I had shin splints in high school, so I am exempt from wearing one.

Personally, I cannot wait for this publicity stunt to end on Nov. 3, Fauci-bot to power down and the world to stop this charade.

If anyone wants to grab a bite before then, I will be at Cuban Pete’s.

Chris Giacomini, a junior communication & media arts major, is in his third year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.
How Montclair State Jazz Musicians Are Learning During the Pandemic

Chelsey Johnstone
Contributing Writer

As the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to affect communities across the world, universities are having to reinvent the common ways of teaching that institutes are formerly used to. For students in the arts, particularly the performing arts, socialization and close contact is typically required in their studies.

With no sign of the pandemic subsiding, the professors and students at Montclair State University’s John J. Cali School of Music are working together to find ways to create music while being socially distanced.

Oscar Perez, the jazz studies coordinator, discussed the early stages of the pandemic for jazz students.

“In March, when we basically had to shut down everything, it was kind of like the first foray into what would end up being the modality that we’re teaching now,” Perez said. “That is basically when everything moved to online.”

According to Perez, when Montclair State decided that all academic courses were going to be held virtually, the music department was quick to ensure that all professors had the resources they needed to successfully run their courses remotely.

“A lot of it was basically going in and running a triage unit, where I was like, ‘OK, what do you need’ and ‘how can you do your class,’” Perez said.

Once faculty and staff were equipped with the technological basics needed to run remote, online classes, the Cali School of Music spent a large portion of the summer waiting to hear from Gov. Phil Murphy on how they would be allowed to proceed.

“For a lot of music schools, they just decided pretty early on [that] there’s nowhere we can run when we’re so unsure of everything,” Perez said. “We’re just going to go ahead and call it early and say that we are not going to have any kind of instruction happening in person.”

However, after Anthony J. Mazzocchi, director of the Cali School of Music, brought up the fact that the Montclair State’s music building is only 10 years old and is equipped with quality air ventilation systems, the school was able to apply for a waiver to allow them to give performance-based courses on campus.

Fortunately for the department, the waiver was approved and music ensembles were set to have in-person instruction.

Despite this permission to proceed with in-person courses, the Cali School of Music must still adhere to strict guidelines in order to maintain their appearance on campus. For some students and faculty, the COVID-19 guidelines in the department raise concerns.

Carolina Perez, a junior jazz studies major, discussed the new measures that are taken during rehearsals to ensure everyone’s safety.

“The weird part is having to clean up after yourself at the end of class,” Perez said. “You have to spray the chairs and spray the music stands, but it’s kind of stupid because I’m grabbing the music stand with my bare hands to put it back after I sprayed it.”

In addition to the spray bottles and routine sanitation, the music classes must take a 15 minute break after every 45 minutes of playing while close together. This means that a scheduled two-hour class period must have two 15 minute breaks, which reduces practice time by a half-hour.

“One crucially different element the Montclair State music students gained this year is an ultraviolet, air-purifying, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. According to Perez, it kills 99.9% of germs in the air, including those related to the coronavirus.

“They run [for] 24 hours a day and they’re just constantly recycling the air and cleaning the air,” Perez said. “The breaks [that] the classes take allow the system to more effectively clean the air.”

Despite Moring’s concerns with the HVAC system, one of his current bass students, Nathaniel Perrucci, a junior jazz studies major, is not too bothered by the protocol.

“The sound doesn’t really bother me,” Perrucci said. “It’d be nice if it wasn’t there, but it’s not silly-loud.”

Although this year’s experience at Montclair State is different for both the faculty and students, Oscar Perez is thankful that the John J. Cali School of Music is prepared for any type of educational experience, whether it is in-person or virtual.

“You can’t have a defenestration attitude,” Perez said. “We have to see the silver lining.”
Netflix’s New Film ‘Holidate’ Regresses Back to Primitive Thinking

Megan Lim
Contributing Writer

Finding love during the holidays is a classic plot for romance films. The media rarely seems to celebrate spending time with loved ones or enjoying your own company, unless it is with a significant other by your side. Add comedy and cynicism to that, and you have the premise of “Holidate,” a Netflix film released on Oct. 28, 2020.

The film is predictable in every way that its audience can expect a romantic comedy film to turn out. “Holidate” hones in on the development of lead character Sloane, played by Emma Roberts. Sloane is constantly bombarded by pressure from her family to bring a boyfriend home for the holidays. Along comes Jackson, played by Luke Bracey, who encounters difficulties with casual dating. Both seeking to bring a judgment and commitment-free companion to each of their holiday family gatherings, the two form an agreement to be one another’s “holidate,” a punny way of saying “plus one.” This sets the stage for a year’s lineup of dates for Sloane and Jackson, attending New Year’s parties, Easter brunches and sharing Cinco de Mayo drinks together.

How does the rest of the film play out? The audience can already guess. With such a predictable plotline to “Holidate,” there is not much in the movie that can surprise its viewers. However, what can be deemed shocking is the regressive, almost childish themes that inspire the premise of the film, such as the absolute necessity to have a partner.

Sloane’s family troubles themselves a great deal with her love life, constantly pressuring her to reach out to men or attempting to set her up on dates. Sloane carries herself in a bitter way that further solidifies the film’s emphasis on the need for a romantic partner. Rather than standing her ground and finding love in a more natural environment, as a modern heroine might, she instead gives way to familial pressure. Sloane’s choice to secure a “holidate” contributes to the romanticization of partners and relationships, which can be beautiful, invigorating and a positive experience. This ideal also continues to trump celebrating independence and self-priority.

Knowing that today’s society has made strides toward recognizing the importance of self-love, self-care and independence, viewers could have hoped to find this 2020 film to be reflective of such standards. “Holidate” does the opposite, feeding into the notion that people are incapable of being content on their own and must seek a partner by any means necessary.

Sexism is yet another prevalent theme in the film. Disappointingly, it is not disputed or proven wrong by the characters, but rather glorified and given justification. Generalized, offensive statements are woven throughout scenes, speaking power to claims that “women are clingy” or “all men panic and flee.”

The script of “Holidate” disregards the strides once taken to debunk such archaic assumptions. The agreement between Sloane and Jackson to be commitment-free seems to make them think that disrespect and degradation are acceptable, as they make crude comments on one another’s looks and genders.

Sexism is the film’s foundation for incorporating humor. However, it is done in such poor taste that it simply leaves the audience feeling second-hand embarrassment from the dialogue and frustration of having socially reverted back to old ways of thinking.

To add insult to injury, Roberts starred in the 2019 film, “Paradise Hills,” generally known as a film that empowers and highlights feminism, quite contrary to the actress’s role in “Holidate.”

If one can manage to look past the consistent jabs aimed toward the stereotypes of men, women and their choice of being single or in a relationship, the basic plot of “Holidate” is standard enough to be enjoyed and related to a younger, open-minded audience. The appearance of Broadway’s own, Kristin Chenoweth, may be an incentive to “Wicked” fans, as well. If these saving graces are not enough to rope you in, you may want to pencil in a “holidate” with another movie.
Top Picks to Stream
Best of the Month

Dash and Lily' on Netflix

“A Dash & Lily” is an eight episode romantic comedy series that premiered on Netflix on Nov. 10, 2020. It follows the main characters, Dash and Lily, who begin writing notes to each other in a red notebook that they find in a bookstore. We watch them send each other on dares and scavenger hunts all throughout New York City at Christmas time. Although the two have never met in person, they are instantly connected through this book.

We watch them deal with their own personal struggles when their pasts come back to haunt them at points. Each character learns to step out of their comfort zone and become a better version of themselves. After all, what is life without taking risks? If you are looking for a heartwarming series that you are looking for a heartwarming series that people can watch with their families, this is a perfect match. Read the full review on themontclarion.org.

- Caitlin Aristizabal
Contributing Writer

The Queen’s Gambit’ on Netflix

The holiday season has arrived and a majority of people have been spending most of their time at home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Because of quarantine, plenty of people have taken up binge-watching various television shows and films on Netflix. Although this year we won’t be able to gather in large numbers, there will still be time for you to find your next binge-worthy series. If you love fiction shows that involve realistic issues such as major growth and Cassie’s insecurities and fears of falling in love again, consider her previous plights. This is a big change of pace from the previous songs, which cover the early stages of love.

“Weekend, is one of Grande’s most personal songs from the album. The change in tempo from the four previous songs gives a more sentimental, ethereal vibe.

With it, Grande reflects on her insecurities and fears of falling in love again, considering her previous plights. This is a big change of pace from the previous songs, which cover the early stages of love.

Check out my full review on themontclarion.org

Ariana Grande Showcases Growth And Maturity In New Album ‘Positions’


Denise Jugo
Staff Writer

After the success of her last two projects, “Sweetener” and “Thank U, Next,” Ariana Grande is back again with her sixth studio album, “Positions.” Grande showcases her growth, not only as an artist, but as a person experiencing the excitement and hardships that come with falling in love.

Over the last two years, Grande has worked nonstop and continued to release new projects with various artists, including Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber. With the amount of music she has been releasing, her growth and improvement have become increasingly evident with each new track.

A week before the album’s Oct. 30 release, Grande released the music video for the title track, “Positions.” The video kept fans on edge and the anticipation for the new project grew even bigger.

Following the music video release, Grande dropped the track list online. The song titles were very telling of what kind of album her fans should prepare for. With titles like “34+35,” “Nasty” and “My Hair,” fans began to speculate that “Positions” was going to be an album about sex.

While sex is a common theme throughout “Positions,” there are many other themes which coincide and meld together to tell a story, with an intelligibly musical through line. Similarly to her previous albums, Grande reflects on how her past experiences have affected her. Despite the eagerness to spark a new flame, it can be difficult to take down the walls that she has built around herself and become vulnerable again.

There was also excitement regarding the abundance of features on the new album, with artists Doja Cat, The Weeknd and Ty Dolla $ign making appearances on several songs. The album begins with “Shut Up,” which accurately sets the tone for the feel of the album. The string orchestra and its use of pizzicato sparks flashbacks to opening themes of Disney fantasy movies.

The album’s second track, “34+35,” is one of the steamier songs on the album. The lyrics are much more full-bodied than Grande’s previous works. The romantic orchestral sounds, which give off a pure and sweet ambiance, juxtaposes the risqué lyrics for a perfect blend of flirty and seductive.

One track that I looked forward to the most was “Motive,” particularly because of the Doja Cat feature. While the song itself is catchy and likable, Doja Cat misses the mark. In the song, the track was not the right fit for her, despite how versatile she is as an artist.

“Off the Table,” featuring The Weeknd, is one of Grande’s most personal songs from the album. The change in tempo from the four previous songs gives a more sentimental, ethereal vibe.

With it, Grande reflects on her insecurities and fears of falling in love again, considering her previous plights. This is a big change of pace from the previous songs, which cover the early stages of love.

“Will I ever love the same way again? Will I ever love somebody like the way I did you,” Grande sings.

These sentiments that Grande channels, combined with The Weeknd’s strong and heart-rending vocals, make for a go-to track that people can cry to.

On “My Hair,” Grande goes for a more jazzy and soulful vibe, which is fresh and exciting, but very much quintessential when she utilizes her full vocal range. Grande sings in her lowest vocal range which complements the song’s smooth sounds. She also utilizes one of her most impressive vocal abilities, known as whistle notes.

The smooth guitar and slick bass, fused with the recurring orchestral sounds and a surprising trumpet feature, give this track a sophisticated and mature feel.

Grande ends the album with “POV,” a beautifully written song that steps away from the more sexual themes and delves into what it means to be loved by a significant other and simultaneously love yourself. She speaks on the experience of love, as a person who is fallible and has flaws.

“I wanna love me / The way that you love me / For all of my pretty and all of my ugly too / I’d love to see me from your point of view,” Grande sings.

The dreamy kalimba-sounding melody, paired with the various harmonies, makes for a satisfying ending to a sublime album.

“Positions” does not fail to show Grande’s growth as an artist and is easily one of her best projects to date. The multifaceted sounds and relatable lyrics will take listeners away to a pop fairy tale dream.
“In America, the President reigns for four years, but Journalism governs forever.” – Oscar Wilde

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Nearly six years ago, Bryson Tiller became famous practically overnight after releasing his hit song, “Don’t,” on SoundCloud. Since then, the R&B rapper from Louisville, Kentucky, has climbed his way up in the music world with three albums, multiple singles and features in more than 20 songs. He sits at the edge of global fame, yet it is unclear whether his most recent album will launch him over the edge.

Tiller’s most recent album, “Anniversary,” was released on Oct. 2, 2020. The album should be listened to multiple times, as the first time around was not impressive; it tends to grow on listeners after a few playbacks, especially for fans of R&B.

Tiller has a smooth, distinctive style of R&B rapping and carefully crafted lyrics, which has always drawn me to him. The tracks in “Anniversary” have classic 808s and static noise, a quality often found in SoundCloud beats. This stylistic choice is a common theme found across much of his work.

The album cover of “Anniversary” shows Tiller saturated in a blue tint and facing off to the left, which appears to be a mirrored image of Tiller from his debut album, “Trapsoul.” The artistic display infers that he might be going back to his roots and rapping about topics such as love and heartbreak.

Tiller, who shared a deep connection to his late grandmother, dedicated his latest album to her. The track, “Keep Doing What You’re Doing,” begins with a voicemail from his grandmother and the rest of the song goes into depth about how much she believed in and supported him throughout his journey to success.

In the album, Tiller is very vocal about his internal struggle of time passing by too quickly. The 27-year-old rapper presumably has plenty of time left in his life, yet many of the songs such as, “Outta Time” or “Years Go By,” suggest his time is running out.

Kevin Doyle
Staff Writer

“Outta Time” is the only song from “Anniversary” that features another artist, Drake can be heard backing up Tiller, as their sleek voices blend well together. As one of the best songs from the album, the two artists rap about playing games with a woman and attempting to leave a toxic relationship.

“Sorrows” is another notable song from the album. Tiller sings about a lover who is slipping away because his sorrows are getting in the way of his relationship.

“Know there’s been somebody else since me, babe,” Tiller sings, alluding to his paranoia that the woman might have her eyes on someone else.

On Oct. 22, Tiller dropped his music video for “Always Forever.” The video features Tiller and singer-songwriter, Kehlani, portrayed as a couple who share a deep physical connection, while lacking an emotional connection. The video, which displays intriguing visuals, jumps to different scenes of their strained relationship, with their facial expressions showing that they do not want to address the situation, despite knowing that there is something wrong.

Prior to the release of his sophomore album in 2017, “True to Self,” Bryson Tiller struggled with depression and kept it a secret until after the release. Now, Tiller appears to be doing better mentally, spending time with his two daughters and giving frequent updates to his supportive fans through social media.

Following a three year hiatus, I am slightly disappointed in Tiller’s new work. When comparing “Anniversary” to his first album, “Trapsoul,” they both have similar vibes, but it is clear that Tiller held back, since much of the album lacks variety.

Nonetheless, “Anniversary” serves as a beautiful tribute to Tiller’s grandmother and there are some notable songs that are worth checking out. It took me a few listens to fully enjoy the album, but I am hopeful that this is merely a preview of what is to come.
‘How To with John Wilson’ Exposes The True Poetry of New York

Timothy Rabel
Staff Writer

In the trailer for “How To with John Wilson,” John Wilson admits that even HBO does not know what to call his new show.

Watching the first episode, you might think you have stumbled upon a show about an alien learning how to fit in with the human species, as he roams around New York City. As part documentary, part comedy, part scathing exposé into the tragic human psyche, the show refuses to adhere itself to any single genre.

Wilson, the show’s eponymous documentarian, carries a camera, a microphone and a certain naïveté as he journeys around the city holding on-the-spot interviews with fellow pedestrians. It is his naive personality that seems to make his subjects feel comfortable enough to let their guard down, and the result is a “Humans of New York”-type study of the many personalities that make up the incredible city.

At times, Wilson’s innocently curious nature creates these tense and uncomfortable moments people have come to associate with shows like “The Office” and “Nathan For You,” a show created by Nathan Fielder, the executive producer of “How To with John Wilson.”

For instance, when Wilson goes to buy a used rug that has “stress-related bloodstains” on it, he expects small talk about interior design. Rather, he gets an earful about the seller’s divorce. Unlike “Nathan For You,” there is no facade coercing these strangers to open up to him, but there is something about him that compels them to do so anyway.

The moment that best sums up the show’s premise comes in the premiere episode, during 20 seconds of airtime, showing “Twin Peaks” actor Kyle MacLachlan unsuccessfully attempting to swipe his card on a New York subway. It proves a moment of true humanity. Whether you are rich or poor, sometimes your metro card just will not scan.

As more than a documentary, the show acts as a living poetic statement about the microcosmic, universal qualities of the city. Wilson’s commentary is candid and noticeably unpolished as if he is directly telling you about his experiences.

“How To with John Wilson” is an example of how you can find enthralling stories everywhere, if you are willing to change your standards of what qualifies as interesting. For instance, the second episode starts out similar to a PBS documentary about city scaffolding, before a guy shows up and starts revealing to Wilson his sexual escapades that are somehow relevant to the episode’s theme.

Overall, the show plays out like a time capsule, documenting the strange human experiment that is New York City. Its characters are all of New York’s everyday people, including Wilson himself, who rarely appears on camera, as he seems to experience his own catharsis over the course of the first two episodes.

This glimpse into the perception of one New Yorker ultimately pays off and the experience is rich and illuminating.

“How To with John Wilson” premiered on Oct. 23, 2020 on HBO.

Wilson travels around New York City and holds on-the-spot interviews with fellow New Yorkers.
Fifth-Year Javelin Thrower Lena Bilotti Poised To Make A Run At Nationals

She plans to make the most out of her extra year of eligibility

Corey Annan
Assistant Sports Editor

When the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic canceled the rest of the 2020 outdoor track and field season in March, fifth-year senior Lena Bilotti feared that her throwing career could be coming to an end.

“Our team had to wait weeks before finding out that our season was canceled,” Bilotti said. “When I found out on Instagram, I was worried about [whether or not] we were going to get our season back.”

Thankfully, Bilotti is going to have the opportunity to compete for one more outdoor season. In late March, the NCAA announced that all spring sports athletes across Divisions I, II and III will have an extra year of eligibility to compete.

For this reason, Bilotti was planning on staying at Montclair State University for an additional year to finish completing the school’s teacher education program.

Having more time to compete in the sport she loves has also provided Bilotti with an even more important goal: placing first in the javelin throw at the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) championship meet that same year, her first appearance at the event.

Nevertheless, Bilotti has her sights set on winning the NJAC, as well as qualifying for nationals in the spring 2021 season. Using the long off-season to get back into shape, she has been focusing on body weight workouts to keep her muscles strong and loose, while staying cautious due to a herniated disc that she suffered from a few years ago.

“I really want to go to nationals and get the All-American status that I didn’t get last year,” Bilotti said. “I want to go to nationals again and take that as my ultimate goal. Having more time to compete in the sport she loves has also provided Bilotti with an even more important goal: placing first in the javelin throw at the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) championship meet that same year, her first appearance at the event.

Nevertheless, Bilotti has her sights set on winning the NJAC, as well as qualifying for nationals in the spring 2021 season. Using the long off-season to get back into shape, she has been focusing on body weight workouts to keep her muscles strong and loose, while staying cautious due to a herniated disc that she suffered from a few years ago.

“I didn’t really lift anything heavy because of my back injury,” Bilotti said. “I obviously couldn’t go to the gym because of the [pandemic], so I was running, doing pushups and stretching. It was more important that I did workouts to get my back to heal.”

As Bilotti prepares for a potential 2021 outdoor track and field season, she is also adjusting to COVID-19 protocols and procedures established by the Montclair State athletic department. The throwers begin their practices on Nov. 12 and will start virtually until the team is allowed to practice in “pods,” or in groups of 10.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage on, there are still several questions as to how the outdoor track and field season will operate. However, for throwing events such as the javelin, social distancing may not be a huge concern. Individuals typically throw their implements with a significant amount of distance around themselves to ensure that nobody is struck by one.

Bilotti believes that it would be safe to conduct outdoor meets, but also feels outdoor meets could be limited.

“With throwing events, there are various ways to avoid any-one getting the virus,” Bilotti said. “However, with other sports only competing against NJAC teams, we will probably have to do the same. We won’t know about regionals or nationals until next spring.”

Right now, Bilotti’s focus is on what she can control. There may not be a Division III national outdoor track and field meet in the spring, but Bilotti believes that she’ll be ready for it when the time comes.

With this being her last season as a Red Hawk, Bilotti wants to make sure her back issues do not restrain her from reaching her ultimate goal.

“I want to go to nationals so badly,” Bilotti said. “[My marks] have always been off by a few meters to qualify. I just want my back to be okay so that I can throw more often.”
Montclair State’s Anniversary Football Season Does Not Come To Be

50th anniversary of 1970’s might be halted, but spirits are still high

Kayla Francione Contributing Writer

Former Montclair State University assistant football coach, Don MacKay, looked down at his left hand.

“I’ve been wearing this for fifty years: the national championship ring,” MacKay said. “The best part about it? This ring cost $42 and we had to raise the money ourselves with cake sales and car washes,” MacKay said.

It has been fifty years since the 1970 Montclair State football team found themselves inside the hot and humid Atlantic City Convention Hall, playing in the Knute Rockne Bowl Game. It was Thanksgiving weekend as they went up against Hampden Sydney, who ranked number one offensively in the country at the time.

The game gathered lots of press going in, with Montclair State being ranked number one defensively in the country that season.

As soon as the game began, every-one knew it was going to be intense. On the second possession, Montclair State scored on third down with an in-zone touchdown.

Bobby Jensen, a linebacker for the 1970 team, says that while their predecessors had to play during times of chaos and war, they never let that get in the way of the team’s morale.

“Looking back at past years, it is hard to find any adversities that compare to what current collegiate athletes are dealing with today. Bobby Jensen, a linebacker for the 1970 team, says that while their predecessors had to play during times of chaos and war, they never let that get in the way of the team’s morale.”

The 1970 team was supposed to be honored during the 2020 homecoming game, which was scheduled to take place Saturday, Oct.10. Since it was not able to happen this season, the team has changed its plans and has scheduled to celebrate the anniversary next year at the home opener.

“The only adversity we may have faced is we had people for the war and people that were against the war,” Jensen said. “Lucky for us that never encroached on our team. Fifty years from now you are gonna say what crazy time we grew up in. That was insane. This is not the way it’s supposed to be. It’s just not.”

Fortunately, the current Montclair State football team has been able to practice this fall, but the season has been rescheduled for the spring. A lot of colleges did not arrange for the fall season to be made up, but fall athletes are glad that Montclair State plans to.

“This season was an important one for players like senior quarterback Ja’Quill Burch. He started all 10 games in each of the past two seasons and was looking forward to doing the same this season.”

“I figured [out] what’s next for us old guys,” Burch said. “Are they [going to] just kick us out, let us graduate and have nothing? But then I saw all the people dying because of the virus, so I sat back and said, ‘Alright, this is bigger than football. Let’s put [ourselves] on the back burner and take care of international health first. We’ll get back to football sometime soon.’”

There are many protocols and requirements that the team is currently required to follow. Even though they are different from anything they are used to, Burch insists they are ready to play whenever they get the green light.

Burch’s positive mindset is something that the younger players and his teammates can look up to.

“You can look at the virus [and see how] it helped us and [how] it hurt us,” Burch said. “We didn’t have to throw young guys out there right away, but then again, they got all this time to learn all the plays. It helps me get to know them, teach them and learn it. I’d rather be in person, I’d rather be on the field, I’d rather be on the white board, but with the circumstances, we’re just taking care of business.”

This pandemic may have put a damper on what could have been a chance for history to repeat itself after fifty years, but it is inspiring to see how the 1970 and 2020 team have kept a similar, optimistic mindset, even when dealing with completely different situations.
Samantha Impaglia
Sports Editor

In May of 2019, Anthony Gabbianelli graduated from Montclair State University with a bachelor’s degree in journalism, passing down his role as sports editor of The Montclarion and moving forward into the sports media job market. As he continues to secure internships and freelancing gigs during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Gabbianelli still holds his sights set on pursuing his dream of being a professional sports writer.

Finding a sufficient job has proven to be quite difficult for many recent college graduates, especially as COVID-19 has devastated the sports world. Gabbianelli started the job hunt before graduating and landed an internship with a sports business company in Hoboken, in Sept. 2019, writing for their blog a few times a week. A positive start to the postgraduate life, Gabbianelli was doing this up until December. The pandemic hit just a few months later, as he continued looking for work.

“As it’s an everyday routine for me to go online to the variety of job application sites and look at what jobs interest me and what I think I can succeed in,” Gabbianelli said.

COVID-19 has not brought all negatives to Gabbianelli’s life. He ended up getting a puppy to keep him company and he is still able to work his part-time job at a paint store in his hometown of Wayne, New Jersey. His work included freelance jobs, projects to help his brand and other outdoor activities.

“I’ve been working on a few projects, like writing in my spare time and working on my website just to put myself out there more, but outside of working and applying for jobs, I have been hiking and walking around some parks where I live. It helps me destress and clear my head,” Gabbianelli said.

The work search has given Gabbianelli the drive to focus on his writing and build on the opportunity to establish his brand as a writer. His dream job lies in being a sports journalist, specifically for baseball, but Gabbianelli has also come to see that writing about topics like legal reporting is also enjoyable and a fun alternative. He is also interested in ice hockey, basketball and has grown to appreciate esports.

“I have definitely put myself out there more and [have] experimented with other forms of writing,” Gabbianelli said. “I applied to a work that I have interests in writing about, but have not really done so. For example, lately I have been reading a lot about law and cases that end up going to court, just because that is really interesting to me, so I have applied to jobs that would have me write about that. I did have interviews and some jobs [that] even had me take exams that I found fun to write and learn about.”

Gabbianelli has had a lasting impact at The Montclarion, especially with the sports section. He served as sports editor for two years, while also writing for the rest of the sections at the paper: news, feature, opinion and entertainment. His work varies from student athlete profiles to album reviews and sports teams features. Gabbianelli even had the opportunity to interview former Olympic ice skater and Red Hawk, Isadora Williams, in 2018.

“I loved everything about being the sports editor,” Gabbianelli said. “It was the best job I’ve ever had and I’m really glad I had the opportunity to work with fellow writers and an awesome staff. The events and games I covered [is what] I miss the most, and especially everyone who I worked with in the office. I met so many great and inspiring people with my time there and interviewed even better people. I catch myself, every once and a while, missing that position and wanting to turn back the clock so I can relive all of that again. I miss it all, really.”

Gabbianelli was known to always fill The Montclarion office with a bright attitude through his humorous personality, getting along with almost everyone he came across. Ben Caplan, The Montclarion’s photography editor, is one of Gabbianelli’s closest friends, and had many fun experiences with him throughout their time together at The Montclarion.

“When I joined The Montclarion in 2017, Gabbie’s was the first editor that I worked with. He introduced me to the team and he made me feel welcome in the office. Over the years, our relationship has grown and now he is one of my best friends,” Caplan said. “Gabbie is one of the most genuine persons that I have ever met, and I really miss hanging out with him in the office and at sporting events around campus.”

As for now, Gabbianelli will continue to pursue a path in sports writing as he explores his options even more. Considering how well he writes, especially when it comes to his favorite sports, it seems this Montclarion alum will have no problem getting a sports writing gig if one comes across the board.
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The Los Angeles Dodgers are Major League Baseball’s 2020 World Series champions.

The team overcame the Tampa Bay Rays for the title

Ryan Contino
Assistant Sports Editor

The Los Angeles Dodgers are World Series champions after a long 32-year drought. Back in 1988, a much simpler time, a World Series ticket was $40, a gallon of gas was 91 cents, a movie ticket was somewhere around $3.50 and the number one song on the radio was “Kokomo,” by The Beach Boys. Only eight members of the Dodgers’ 40-man roster were alive the last time Los Angeles celebrated a World Series championship.

Fast forward 32 years to the most unusual year yet: 2020. With limited fans in attendance, a ticket could cost over $2,000, a gallon of gas costs roughly $2.60 and movie theaters, if open, were seen not long ago practicing tickets away after being shut down due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Not only that, but the pandemic ultimately forced Major League Baseball to make many changes to get the season off the ground.

Among these changes was a 60-game season with few to no fans, an expanded playoff format that included 16 teams, new rules for extra innings and the first ever World Series played at a neutral location. The Dodgers beat the Tampa Bay Rays four games to two at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, 1,400 miles away from their home stadium, in front of 11,437 fans.

Allan Rendon, a senior exercise science major at Montclair State University, was happy to see baseball back, even in limited capacity.

“Baseball is baseball, no matter the amount of games, we finally got it back,” Rendon said.

It has been a long time coming for a team that won eight consecutive National League West division titles, three National League pennants and suffered two painful World Series losses, in the span of two seasons. The Dodgers are finally atop the baseball world, bringing their seventh championship to the organization.

With a game six victory, a sigh of relief was felt after so many years of being known as underachievers who spend money, only to continuously lose. With an unusual postseason, the Dodgers called Globe Life Field their home. Los Angeles, like the other postseason teams, were dedicated to finishing out an unusual season, even though it took a bubble-like system to do so.

This championship also canceled the notion that starting pitcher and Dodger veteran, Clayton Kershaw, was not built for October baseball. Kershaw is the longest tenured Dodger, debuting with the team in 2008. His accomplishments include being an eight-time all star, three-time National League Cy Young winner, 2014 National League MVP (the first pitcher to do so since 1968) and having thrown a no-hitter before.

With such a long list of awards, Kershaw can finally add a World Series championship to that mix, and an almost automatic ticket into the hall of fame. When people began to write about Kershaw’s postseason woes, he once again proved them wrong, as he solidified his name in baseball history.

Fans from around the league, including Rendon, are happy for Kershaw and what he was able to accomplish.

“Kershaw is already a phenomenal pitcher and being the Dodgers’ ace for a long time, he already has a good resume,” Rendon said. “Being so close and finally getting that [championship] title just puts the cherry on top.”

It took more than one player to finish off this remarkable season for Los Angeles. Nine different Dodgers players hit a home run in the World Series, setting a new record. Stellar defensive plays were made by first baseman, Cody Bellinger, and right fielder, Mookie Betts.

Shortstop and World Series MVP, Corey Seager, had four doubles, two home runs and got on base 14 times throughout the series. Seager’s 2020 season marked his first full season since undergoing Tommy John surgery in 2018. It took the entire team from the bullpen, to the starting rotation, all the way down to the available coaches to finally finish the job.

What many thought would be a season that would never crown a champion because of COVID-19, the postseason and World Series gave baseball fans lots of moments to smile about during this time of uncertainty. The Dodgers being crowned champions sent the Rays home, who are still a part of the six teams that have never won a World Series title.

The Rays showed up on the big stage and delivered historical moments that we will never forget. Randy Arozarena rose to the occasion, setting major league records for most hits, home runs and total bases in a single postseason. Even with the Rays coming up short, they have a lot to be proud of and will likely continue to be contenders for years to come.

The Dodgers began the season as underdogs and proved all year long that they were a team on a different playing field than everyone else. Going the whole season while only having lost one series is a remarkable feat. With Dodgers players like third baseman, Justin Turner, and outfielder, Joc Pederson, heading into free agency this offseason, Los Angeles will still have plenty of star pieces to make a run at back-to-back titles in 2021.

If everything goes right, the Dodgers will also set themselves up to be continuous favorites to win their division, and to be a part of October baseball for a very long time.

With the 2020 season finally over, we will see what happens throughout the winter and get a glimpse of what the future holds for fans being a part of the atmosphere in stadiums across the country.

What Dodgers’ announcer Vin Scully said in 1988 after the Dodgers World Series win still resonates to this day: “In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened.”
Former Red Hawk Baseball Player Inspired to Write a Book

Perry Quartuccio was inspired by a psychology of sports class at Montclair State

It was the beginning of the fall 2019 semester at Montclair State University when Perry Quartuccio walked into professor Robert Gilbert's psychology of sports class. Quartuccio was a sophomore pitcher for Montclair State's baseball team at the time, studying psychology and minorining in sports coaching. He was ultimately walking into a class that connected both his passion for the two simultaneous subjects.

An early 8:30 a.m. class on a Monday is not something that most college students look forward to, especially after a fun and relaxing weekend. Gilbert, however, came into class with a lot of energy like his normal self. He began to preach: "You guys should write a book, break a world record," Quartuccio said. "Getting to learn and pick their brain about so many aspects of the sport, they took the time out of their day to talk to me, this college kid writing a book, [and] it was just awesome to talk to them," Quartuccio said. Without a doubt, the biggest inspiration to train as much on the mental side as they do the physical side." Quartuccio began to put all his thoughts on paper. He felt destined and on the right path, not regretting his decision to leave the game; baseball is such a mental game," Quartuccio said. "Incredible, incredible that I can have that effect on a person," Gilbert said.

Today, Quartuccio is beginning his coaching journey with Power Pitcher and Hitting Baseball, incorporating the mental performance aspect into youth baseball. Connecting and building relationships with his players is what Quartuccio looks forward to doing each and every time he steps out onto the field.

Quartuccio's ultimate goal is being a part of a mental performance staff for one of the 30 MLB teams. He can already picture the moment in his head. "I want to be in spring training, working with these guys one-on-one or in group settings with the team," Quartuccio said. Quartuccio finds guidance in a simple quote that carries him throughout his everyday life. "People won't care what you know until they know you care about them," Quartuccio said.

You can find Quartuccio's book "Reaching Home Plate" on his website reachinghomeplate.com, or on Amazon.com.

By Perry Quartuccio
"Reaching Home Plate", is available for purchase at Amazon.com.

Perry Quartuccio's book, Reaching Home Plate, is available for purchase at Amazon.com.
Virtual Swim Meet is The First Montclair State Athletics Event Since March

The meet is also 1st virtual Red Hawks athletics event

Jesse Liptzin
Assistant Sports Editor

On Nov. 7, Montclair State University’s swimming team competed in their first meet of the 2020-21 season. It was extremely different than what the Red Hawks are used to, since the entire meet was virtual and took place in three different states, against the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, but still went down as the first virtually-held swim meet in Montclair State history.

Though the season typically starts in October, with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic still looming, the swimmers found themselves starting the season a month later. This was the first competitive sporting event for a Montclair State team since the softball team played on March 13.

Red Hawks’ swimming head coach, Brian McLaughlin, says that it feels great to be able to participate again.

“T’ain’t easy, we were able to pull this off and actually compete,” McLaughlin said. “The Coast Guard Academy and Merchant Marine Academy I think, just like us, were just thrilled to actually swim and compete.”

In addition to no team points, diving was not scored during the meet. Virtual meets are taking place all over the country, however, they are not sanctioned by the NCAA. The meet style was also short: 11 races and two rounds of diving, coming out to 13 events in total.

A pair of Red Hawk junior swimmers performed well in the distance races. Taylor Waddleton had the top Montclair State time for the women’s 1000 freestyle and 500 freestyle. Tyler Dorsett had the top time in the men’s 500 freestyle. These upperclassmen essentially looked like leaders for the team, who both had at least one freshman in each event.

For the people at home, it must have been easy to forget the fact that there were no fans at the event, considering how outspoken and supportive teammates were on the sidelines. One of the commentators during the meet was swimmer, Amanda Chiappetta, who explained how vital it was to get that motivation from teammates now that they have no fans present to do it for them.

“Without fans and no opponents, the teammates need to make sure they help the swimmers as much as they can,” Chiappetta said. “When the swimmers are racing each other and no fans are in the stands, it is hard to keep pushing and that’s where the coaches and teammates really need to be there to help push one another.”

In the first meet of her collegiate career, freshman Lidia Boguslawska stood out among the competition. Even in an unusual setting, which could intimidate anyone, Boguslawska knew what she needed to do and she competed to the best of her abilities.

“This season is still up in the air, so everything I do [from] here on out is to get ready for next season, or just [to] be ready when it matters,” Boguslawska said.

Since virtual meets are not sanctioned by the NCAA, no team points were accounted for. Still, events like this are happening all over the country in order to get the athletes back in a competitive mindset.

While the team is still taking things slow, McLaughlin looks forward to being able to compete regularly again.

“We are going to shut down before Thanksgiving and regroup after Christmas,” McLaughlin said. “We are just taking the season one day at a time. I’m just hoping the country can get back together and we can continue to compete.”

The team is going to be taking about five weeks off, as they are set to compete against Ramapo College on Jan. 16, 2021.