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The Montclarion

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THE MONTCLARION

#MSUStudentVoice Since 1928

Volume XXXII, Issue 1

Thursday, September 9, 2021

themontclarion.org

Montclair State Students React To Returning To Campus For In-Person Education



Montclair State University students return to in-person learning.

John LaRosa | The Montclarion

Jennifer Portorreal
Assistant News Editor

Montclair State University students are sharing their perspectives on returning to campus for in-person learning after taking hybrid courses for the past year during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Some students are expressing concerns and mixed emotions regarding being back on campus.

Ivanuska Bailon, a junior physics major, expressed how she feels about being back at the university.

"I'm nervous and excited," Bailon said. "Nervous because

of COVID-19 and also the delta [variant]. Excited because I'm finally going to in-person class and all of my classes are in person."

Isabel Castello, a junior family science and human development major, also shared her excitement about in-person courses.

"I'm so excited to come back to campus," Castello said. "Along with excitement, I am a bit nervous because we will be around more people. Supposedly, we're all vaccinated in order to go [and] be on campus. The part that makes me nervous is that I heard from other students that they have waived that option. I respect everyone's opinions, but at the end of the day,

I just hope we are all healthy and safe."

For some, being on campus feels like returning to the pre-pandemic life.

Kayla Acensios, a junior family science and human development major, expressed that she is looking forward to in-person learning.

"Although I'm taking hybrid courses, being able to go back to campus is a relief," Acensios said. "I haven't been on campus since the pandemic started because of the fact that all my classes have been all online. I'm very excited to finally be able to go to campus

again and get some type of normalcy back."

As students return to campus, they are expected to continue following safety precautions to avoid spreading the virus.

Acensios also shared her expectations as a student regarding the safety protocols for this academic term.

"My expectations as a student in terms of safety protocols is that [maintaining] the six feet distancing is still in effect," Acensios said. "Just because the virus is still out there and I wouldn't want everything to shut down again."

The Montclair State commu-

nity is hoping that the administration shares new updates with everyone as soon as they make any decisions and, as Castello points out, that they do not wait until the last minute to communicate important announcements.

"One thing I do hope is for the school to communicate with us and also be ready to make quick decisions if they end up noticing an outburst on campus," Castello said.

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THE MONTCLARION

School of Communication and Media, Room 2035
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The Montclarion has a commitment to accuracy and clarity and will print corrections or clarifications if information is found to be incorrect. To report an error of fact or a Letter to the Editor, email the Editor-in-Chief at montclarionchief@gmail.com.

Information reported in the Red Hawk Rap Sheet comes directly from the MSU Police Department. We do not print retractions to the rap sheet unless information directly from the police report is incorrect. We can print an update to the events only if the newspaper is given access to relevant documents to corroborate the information.

All submissions to the newspaper become property of The Montclarion. We do not print articles from anonymous contributors.

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The Montclarion Returns to Print Newspapers

The Montclarion switched to an all-digital format during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is our first printed edition since March 5, 2020. The editorial team hopes that you enjoy this issue. New issues will come out every Thursday. If you are interested in joining The Montclarion, we have weekly meetings on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. in The School of Communication and Media. Continue to check us out online at www.themontclarion.org and on social media.

The Montclarion

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Est. 1928

Red Hawk Rap Sheet

Saturday, Aug. 9

Theft: A female student came into Police Headquarters to report a theft of a wallet. The wallet was later recovered, however the contents of the wallet were not. This incident is under investigation.

Wednesday, Aug. 25

Theft: A female student came into Police Headquarters to report an incident of fraud and theft by deception. The student advised that she was contacted via her University email account in regards to participating in a work-study program. After providing her personal information, the student later realized that her personal bank account had been drained of nearly \$1000. This incident is under investigation.

Thursday, Aug. 26

Fraudulent activity: The Dean of Students office advised an incident of potentially fraudulent activity regarding the MSU Work Study program. This case is under investigation.

Friday, Aug. 27

Little Falls: University Police were contacted by the Little Falls Police Department, regarding a possible threat to the University community. Officers from the Little Falls Police Department assisted and were able to locate the source of the threat, back to a residence within their jurisdiction. An individual was identified and the threat was resolved.

Saturday, Aug. 28

Hawk Crossings: Officers responded to Hawk Crossings in regards to a report of an alleged sexual assault by an identified acquaintance. This incident is currently under investigation.

Monday Aug. 30

Harassment: A female student came into Police Headquarters to report an incident of harassment whereby a known male student approached her and pulled her in for an unwanted hug. The student declined pressing charges against the accused. Nothing further to report.

Anyone who has information regarding these incidents is urged to call the police station at T-I-P-S (8477). All calls are strictly confidential.

Montclair State University Announces Vaccine Policy for Employees



A vaccine being administered back in April of this year on campus.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*

Sam Nungesser
Editor-in-Chief

Montclair State University has updated its vaccine requirement for employees, now requiring that all new full-time, part-time and temporary employees receive a complete coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination.

By Sept. 10 at 5 p.m., all campus employees are required to complete an initial submission, whether partially-vaccinated, fully-vaccinated or unvaccinated, to Vax Check, which is a reporting mechanism created by the university where employees can submit their vaccination status. The portal also allows employees to request medical or religious exemptions.

According to Andrew Mees, Montclair State's media relations director, more vaccinated individuals are a step toward a return to normalcy for the campus community.

"Vaccination against COVID-19 is an important strategy for keeping our campus community safe and providing our students with a vibrant in-person educational experience," Mees said.

As for why the university waited to mandate vaccines for its employees after announcing on April 22 that it would be required for students to return to campus this fall, Mees said the school followed the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the guidance of state officials.

"Initially, the State of New Jersey took the position of strongly encouraging, but not requiring, state employees to get vaccinated," Mees said. "On Aug. 23, Gov. [Phil] Murphy announced a mandate for state workers to be vaccinated or get regularly tested."

According to Montclair

State's website, managers and temporary employees must submit proof of complete vaccination or a receipt of the first dose of Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson no later than Friday, Oct. 1 and the second dose no later than Nov. 1.

Managers and temporary employees who do not submit proof of complete vaccination, a receipt of the first dose or an approved religious or medical exemption by Oct. 1 will receive a written warning from human resources stating that the university does not have record that they are fully vaccinated.

Should the employee not submit proof after two business days, they will be placed on a five-day unpaid leave of absence beginning Monday, Oct. 6. Once the vaccination status is updated in Vax Check and approved, the employee will return to pay status the next business day.

The policy further states that the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Unit 1904, which consists of faculty, librarians and professional staff, must report that they are completely vaccinated by Dec. 15.

If anyone in AFT Unit 1904 has not submitted their complete vaccine documentation by Dec. 15, they will be given five business days to submit it. If they fail to comply with the extended deadline, they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until proof is submitted and approved. Medical and religious exemptions must be submitted and approved by Oct. 1.

Rich Wolfson, the president of the AFT Local 1904, said they worked closely with the university during the process of vaccine negotiations.

"Local 1904 worked closely with the administration negotiating the

impacts of the university policy on our members and hopes that everyone who is eligible is vaccinated," Wolfson said. "And those with waivers or for whatever reason cannot be vaccinated, are subject to a stringent testing regimen until this pandemic is behind us."

New hires must be vaccinated upon hiring.

According to Mees, 67% of Montclair State employees have voluntarily submitted their proof of vaccination to Vax Check as of Sept. 7.

PHOTO ESSAY: An Eventful First Week Back for the Class of 2025



Freshmen dining and socializing at the Student Center during Red Hawk Day.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*

John LaRosa
Photo Editor

After a year and a half hiatus, it seems like Montclair State University is returning to its usually busy campus life.

Many students were eager to be back out socializing on campus after being stuck at home away from friends for what felt like forever.

On the evening of Tuesday, Aug. 31, the university organized their annual Hawaiian Bash Party outside Blanton Hall, complete with a live DJ and a bubble machine. Students were

told they must keep their masks on during the event.

The following day, Sept. 1, the university hosted Red Hawk Day, a series of on-campus events for new freshmen to not only make friends but to familiarize themselves with what the campus has to offer.

The day started with freshmen gathering in the Memorial Auditorium. Music was playing and students came to dance on stage. Nearly every student was wearing red and riled up with Red Hawk spirit.

Soon after, the new Montclair State president Jonathan Koppell came on

stage and was met with a round of applause from the visibly red crowd.

Following the address, students headed to the Student Center, where they were met with a complimentary barbecue, filled with hot dogs, hamburgers and corn on the cob. Many students enjoyed their meal while making new friends.

Next was the Playfair, dubbed “The Ultimate Icebreaker,” which was held at the Panzer Athletic Center and emphasized making new friends. It was open to both new and returning students. Students

were put into large circles where the host would ask them to move towards the center circle if they liked a topic the host brought up.

Around an hour later, the “Think Fast Gameshow” was held in Memorial Auditorium. Students got together in groups of five to compete in a quiz-style show for a chance at winning prizes. The host also had one student from select groups dance on stage, where the crowd decided who has the best moves.

Towards the end of the day, Rec Fest was held at the Student Recreation Center. Many games were

set up, including Jenga, a test-your-strength game, basketball and hamster balls in the pool, among many others.

Many intramural and club sports also had information stands set up for students curious about on-campus sports.

Red Hawk Day was a peek into how different campus life is shaping up to be this semester, compared to what it was like just one year ago. With the vast majority of students and faculty vaccinated, everyone can hopefully have a safe fall 2021 semester and future.



Students dance at the Hawaiian Bash outside Blanton Hall on Tuesday, Aug. 30.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



Freshmen at the Community BBQ hosted at the Student Center during Red Hawk Day.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



New Montclair State freshmen dancing on the stage of the Memorial Auditorium.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



New Montclair State President Jonathan Koppell introduces himself to the new freshmen.

John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



A group of friends conversate after the Community BBQ. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



The host of the Playfair event in the Panzer Athletic Center. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



Friendships are made during the Playfair in the Panzer Athletic Center. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



A Montclair State freshman introduces herself as a guest on the "Think Fast Game Show." John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



A student loses at Jenga during Rec Fest. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



A student falls victim to the hamster ball at the Student Recreation Center pool. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



Students unpack and move into Machuga Heights. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*



Antonio Talamo (far left), coordinator for Commuter Life, stands alongside freshmen commuters in the Class of 2025. John LaRosa | *The Montclarion*

Montclair State Community Reacts to Crisis in Afghanistan



Kelly Weckstein | *The Montclarion*

Jenna Sundel
News Editor

Last month, the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan after the Biden Administration ordered United States troops to leave the region, ending the United States' longest war.

United States troops have been stationed in Afghanistan for 20 years, and their complete exit allowed the Taliban to take control of the government in the nation. After gaining power in the region, the Taliban carried out violent attacks in many cities. People are now attempting to flee the country, fearing stricter laws once the Taliban gains full control.

Hossein Hafezian, an adjunct professor of political science and law at Montclair State University, specializes in Middle East politics and shared how he would explain what is happening in Afghanistan

right now to his students.

"Apart from the role that the [United States] played in the rise of the Taliban by leaving Afghanistan prematurely, domestic political forces had failed to reach consensus on how to run an efficient government," Hafezian said. "Nobody wanted to defend an inefficient and largely corrupt government, which paved the way for [the] Taliban's conquest."

Hafezian visited Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, in 2006 to participate in a conference. He explained that the conditions there could have played a role in the rise of the Taliban.

"The roads in the city were in dire conditions and the city infrastructure needed immediate attention," Hafezian said. "I came to the conclusion that the [United States] had just focused on the military and security aspects of its mission in Afghani-

stan and they had done little, at least by that time, which was five years after the invasion, to help the country develop economically. It was no surprise that with widespread unemployment and economic underdevelopment, the Taliban and other terrorist groups had an easy job in recruiting youngsters for their campaign against the Afghan government."

When asked what he thinks will happen in Afghanistan in the future, Hafezian said the Taliban will reverse many of the changes made in Afghanistan in recent years.

"The Taliban will roll back the positive achievements that the Afghans have gained within the past 20 years," Hafezian said. "Women will be particularly hard hit by the Taliban's government and it will be almost impossible for the citizens to remove the Taliban from power except through another foreign in-

tervention."

Muslim students at Montclair State shared their thoughts on the crisis in Afghanistan, how it has affected them and what they are doing to help. Ali Eldeeb, a sophomore exercise science major and event coordinator of the Muslim Student Association, explained that the actions of the Taliban do not reflect the teachings of Islam.

"As a Muslim, none of this represents Islam or the morals Islam teaches," Eldeeb said. "Islam isn't 'radical' as the media tries to emphasize. There isn't any religion on this earth that encourages and advocates for violence."

Eldeeb also encouraged others to help the citizens of Afghanistan in any way possible.

"As a community, we should help our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan with any aid that we can," Eldeeb said. "Any financial

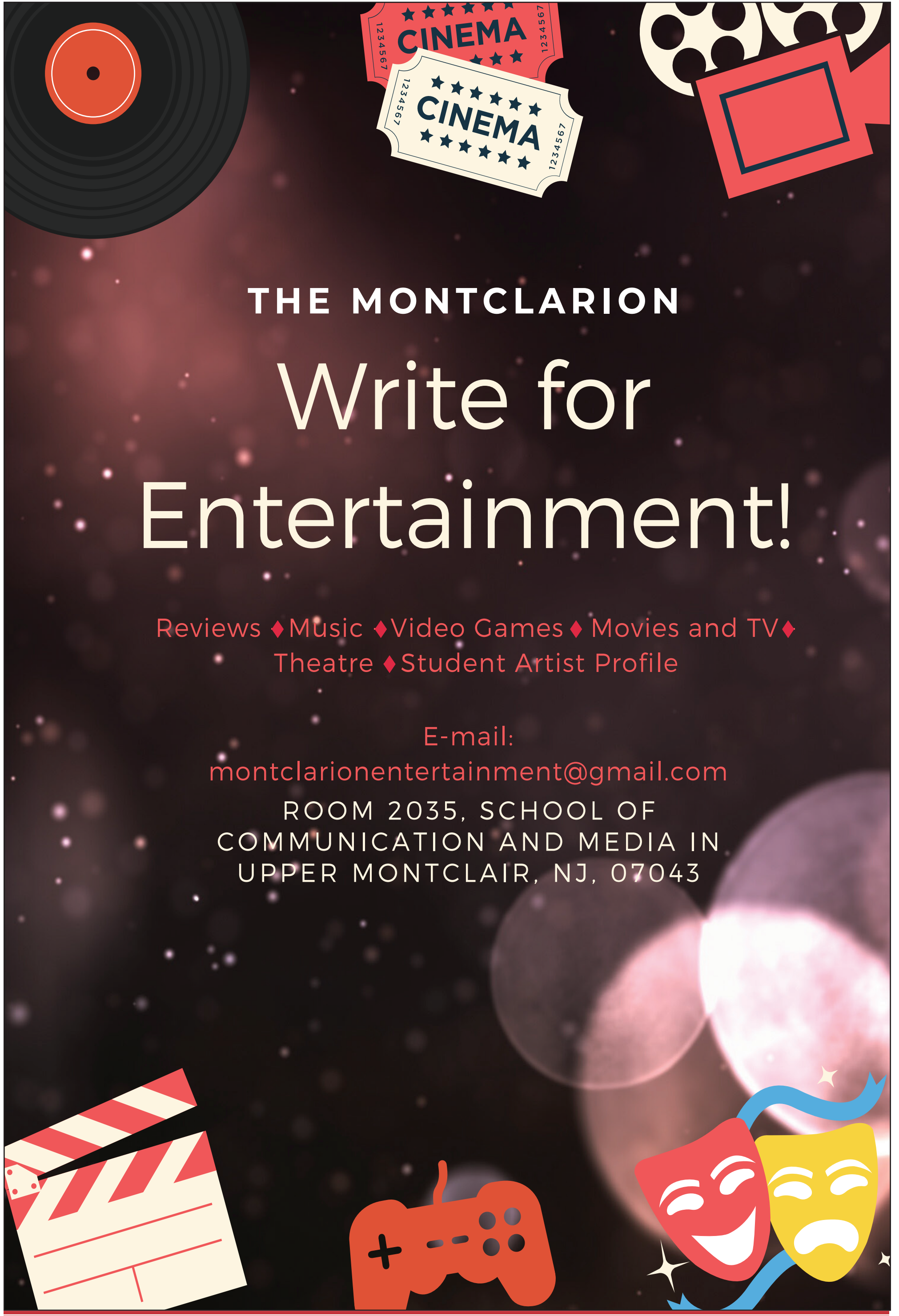
or moral support regardless of how little or large it is would help them immensely. We need to come together as a community and help everyone in need."

Sophia Esheileh, a junior business administration major, said the conflict is devastating and has affected all Muslims.

"Being a Muslim, this has affected and devastated me, my family and every Muslim around the world," Esheileh said.

Like Eldeeb, Esheileh said she is trying to do everything she can to help the citizens in Afghanistan.

"I always do my best to be grateful with what I have because there are many people out there who have way less than what I have now," Esheileh said. "I keep the innocent people in my prayers and sometimes do my best to donate money, food and other necessities to them in order to help them survive."



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FEATURE



The maple drizzle elevates these cookies and tops them off with the perfect fall flavor.

Samantha Bailey | *The Montclarion*

Gourmet Bailey's Just a Bite: Gluten-Free Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Samantha Bailey
Feature Editor

The fall brings us many things. The feeling of a fresh start, beautiful scenery, crisp weather and of course, the amazingness that is pumpkin everything. So, I decided to capitalize on that and give you an easy pumpkin chocolate chip cookie recipe with a maple glaze.

For this recipe you will need:

- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup coconut sugar
- 1/3 cup almond butter
- 1/3 cup pumpkin purée
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 ½ cups almond flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips

This recipe is naturally dairy-free, which is perfect for me and so many others who do not react well to it. As always, this recipe is super simple and easy to follow, so let's get into it.

Using a wooden spoon, start by combining the wet ingredients in a bowl. This includes your egg, coconut sugar and vanilla extract. Once that is combined, add your almond butter and pumpkin purée.

I used all-natural almond butter which is a great consistency at room temperature. It's easily mixable because of its runny texture. If you are allergic to almonds, cashew butter is a great option too since it has a much milder taste than almond butter. Once all your wet ingredients are evenly combined, you can move onto preparing your dry ingredients.

In another bowl, add your almond flour, pumpkin pie spice and baking soda and begin to mix until everything is distributed. Use cassava flour or hazelnut flour if you are allergic to



Always measure your chocolate chips with your heart.

Samantha Bailey | *The Montclarion*



The almond flour in these cookies keeps them from rising too much, which allows you to fit more on each tray.

almonds.

Add to your wet ingredients in thirds. Once all your dry ingredients are mixed in, fold in your chocolate chips. I know it says ½ a cup, but measure those with your heart.

It's time to chill our dough. I would recommend chilling the dough for at least one hour, even overnight if you can.

Once your dough is finished chilling, roll your cookies into balls. This recipe should make 14 cookies but I rolled mine small and was able to make about 22.

Place the dough balls on a baking sheet about 1.5 inches apart. Press the cookies down just a bit to make them flatter. Bake them at 350 F for 12 to 14 minutes. These cookies are meant to be soft, moist and fudgy so don't worry if they seem undercooked.

The best part of these cookies is the maple glaze. I would recommend using

Trader Joe's maple butter as a topping if you can find it. This gift from above is a whipped maple syrup that is spreadable and perfect for these cookies, a cornbread muffin or even a topping for cinnamon buns. But, if you can't use this one, you can make a great glaze for your cookies using just three ingredients.

Take ½ cup of powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons of pure maple syrup and 1 tablespoon of almond milk and mix until smooth. Drizzle the glaze onto your cookies or if you would like, put a dollop onto the top and let it drip down.

These cookies are so delicious and the perfect first-baking venture for fall. They combine the classic fall flavors of maple, cinnamon and pumpkin, bringing a warm and comforting taste into your home. Enjoy these on a football Sunday with friends, family or roommates. Until the next bite.

The Office Of Commuter Life Braces For 'CLAW'



The CAMP mentors pose in front of the Red Hawk statue as they prepare to welcome students back to campus for the first time in over a year.

Photo courtesy of Antonio Talamo

Amanda Alicea
Staff Writer

The melodic sounds of student chatter and bodies shuffling to and from classrooms now fill Montclair State University's campus.

What could have been mistaken for a scholastic ghost-town last semester, the campus is now covered in new commuting students looking for their ways across the unfamiliar grounds. Amongst these students are Commuter Assistance Mentorship Program (CAMP) mentors, helping commuting students in any way they may need.

CAMP is a program that matches upper-classmen commuters with first-year commuters to assist with their transitions to college. The members and coordinators of CAMP are embracing Commuter Life Appreciation Week (CLAW) with open arms this semester. CLAW, which is held for one week each semester, is known for its fun activities such as Golf Cart Karaoke, spa days and movies in the quad.

Antonio Talamo, the coordinator of Commuter Life, is especially excited about the new activities planned for the semester.

"You will see hybrid models of certain events for commuters who may not want to stay on campus," Talamo said. "For example, we are co-sponsoring a trivia event that occurs every Thursday that is live online and in person. During CLAW, we are also very excited about our superhero-themed event which is going to feature different stations to represent the various Marvel heroes."

CAMP mentor Samantha Ascenzo, a sophomore business administration major, began working with the Office of Commuter Life as a mentee when she was a freshman and is now helping other incoming commuters.

"A good majority of people commute and a lot of people tend to think that commuter students can't get involved so I want to break down the stereotype," Ascenzo said.

Madeeha Kathawala, a sophomore business administration and finance major, is also a CAMP mentor with similar goals to Ascenzo.

"I initially wanted to get involved because I wanted to be a resource and a friend for the



Mario Rodriguez is a big Marvel fan and is excited for the superhero themed event on Sept. 20.

Photo courtesy of Antonio Talamo



Madeeha Kathawala aims to bring the commuter community together and encourage new friendships.

Photo courtesy of Antonio Talamo



Samantha Ascenzo hopes to spread awareness about events and activities on campus. Photo courtesy of Antonio Talamo

incoming freshman and transfer students," Kathawala said. "I want to be there for people who are starting their college journey with the Montclair [State] community."

With the university finally able to host in-person classes, some CAMP mentors hope it will motivate commuters to stick around after their classes.

CAMP mentor Mario Rodriguez, a sophomore exercise major, hopes to bring some motivation to new commuters.

"Of course no one is going to argue how nice it was to roll out of bed and get straight to class in a matter of seconds but over time, it could take a toll on our mental health," Rodriguez said. "Our overall goal is to break the commuter stigma of strictly going to school and leaving [as soon as possible]," Rodriguez said.

The Office of Commuter Life and its coordinators also supply commuters with various resources on campus to ensure a smooth transition to university life.

"I want our commuters to feel valued and cared for because we put a lot of thought into our events," Talamo said. "We want them to find comfort in knowing we are there for them and we care."

These resources include locker rentals, commuter pit stops throughout campus, laptop rentals and even parking information, which Ascenzo often stresses to new commuting students.

"Last year parking was fine because there weren't a lot of people on campus," Ascenzo said. "This year everyone is back to in-person classes so make sure you are giving yourself ample time."

Students can find the Office of Commuter Life housed within the Center for Student Involvement. Each mentor has office hours for any mentees or interested commuters to stop by with any questions or concerns. Commuters can also reach out to any mentors or coordinators by emailing msucommutes@montclair.edu or reaching out to them on their Instagram page @msucommutes.

Help Wanted

Other

JOBS AND CLASSIFIEDS

AFTERSCHOOL SITTER WANTED

2 days/week, 6-8 hrs/week in Maplewood
Looking for a kind and friendly sitter to do school pickups at 3:15pm 2 days/week for a 5-year-old kindergartener. Will involve doing pick-up, walk 1 block home, and play until dinnertime. Some days will include dinnertime and some play afterward. Looking for someone warm and reliable; undergrad or grad students. Must have great references. If interested, please email athena.masci@gmail.com.

OTHER

ARE YOU IN CRISIS OR STRUGGLING?

HEALING, HOPE AND HELP CAN HAPPEN!
Please CALL the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) at any time to speak to a counselor and get support. You can also connect to the Crisis Text Line by texting "Hello" to 741-741 to be connected to a counselor. All services are free, confidential and available 24/7 for anyone in crisis.

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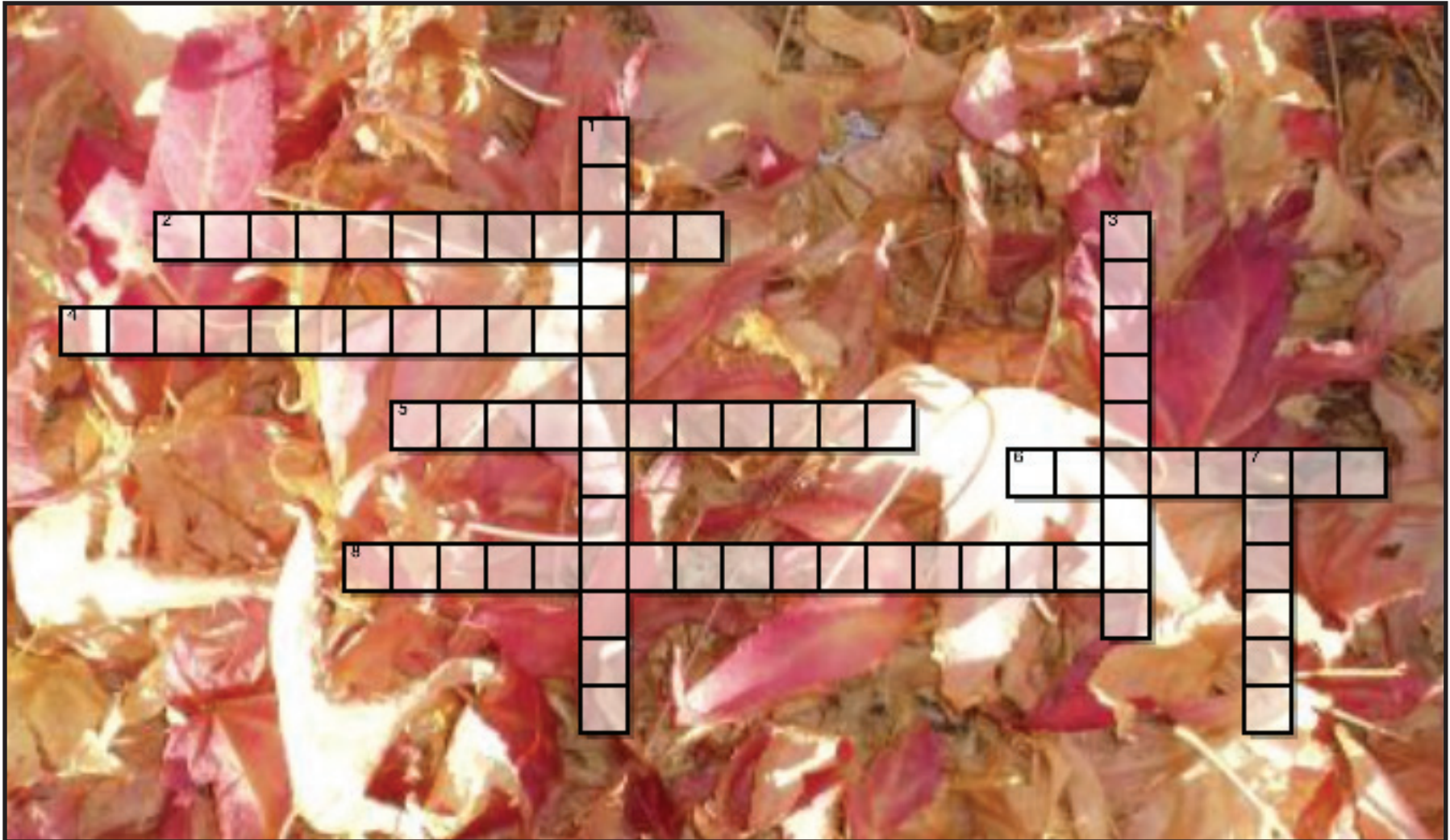
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Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043



The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

Back to School Edition



Across

- 2. "Aca-scuse me?"
- 4. Jack Black
- 5. "Toga! Toga! Toga!"
- 6. Team Edward or Team Jacob?
- 8. "We're All In This Together"

Down

- 1. "Don't You (Forget About Me)"
- 3. "That's so fetch"
- 4. Pink Ladies

Sudoku

	5		7	4				
4		2		5			1	
	7		6				4	9
9		5						2
		6			2	4		8
3						9		
5							8	
		3	1		5	6		
		8					3	

Word Search

n	v	n	r	s	c	h	e	d	u	l	e	t	j	q	i	n	a	b	v
f	n	f	f	z	g	o	i	t	a	q	h	t	i	y	k	r	a	n	
c	l	x	w	z	f	t	z	x	t	z	w	o	f	n	q	d	y	q	
z	k	y	u	b	m	p	w	d	g	r	d	x	f	g	z	z	w	i	e
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v	i	o	b	n	l	u	e	o	h	r	g	e	u	y	n	d	s	y	p
t	q	a	c	e	t	a	t	s	r	i	a	l	c	t	n	o	m	u	b
n	h	i	r	v	c	v	z	k	f	m	q	s	i	s	e	p	x	b	q
e	l	g	h	r	x	l	q	d	s	s	h	k	o	d	l	y	w	i	x
d	s	a	e	d	g	d	a	a	h	n	a	o	a	n	k	e	i	m	e
u	h	a	b	t	t	c	y	s	s	p	m	o	v	e	u	r	i	k	w
t	n	u	a	s	x	f	w	q	s	f	h	b	p	i	z	x	v	v	x
s	k	n	c	l	e	g	o	x	q	r	v	x	z	r	k	h	f	i	b
e	e	b	k	r	u	s	v	i	e	r	o	h	l	f	n	i	f	s	l
p	r	d	p	c	n	z	s	x	s	i	x	o	i	i	r	n	g	w	k
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| pen | professor | schedule |
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| books | classes | friends |
| classroom | montclair state | lecture |
| homework | exam | backpack |

For answers to the puzzles, please check The Montclarion Facebook page every Thursday.

OPINION

TRUE FEMINISM MEANS HOLDING WOMEN ACCOUNTABLE, TOO

Maddye Belov-Boxer
Opinion Editor

The false association between fame and goodness has placed a protective shield of sorts around celebrities, who in reality are just humans and therefore capable of intense moral fallacies.

Placing people who hold this kind of sway over the public on a pedestal solely based on popularity, good looks and charisma is, of course, a horrible idea. Immunity to scrutiny is directly related to how much power one has, and when powerful people learn they can get away with things, they don't stop.

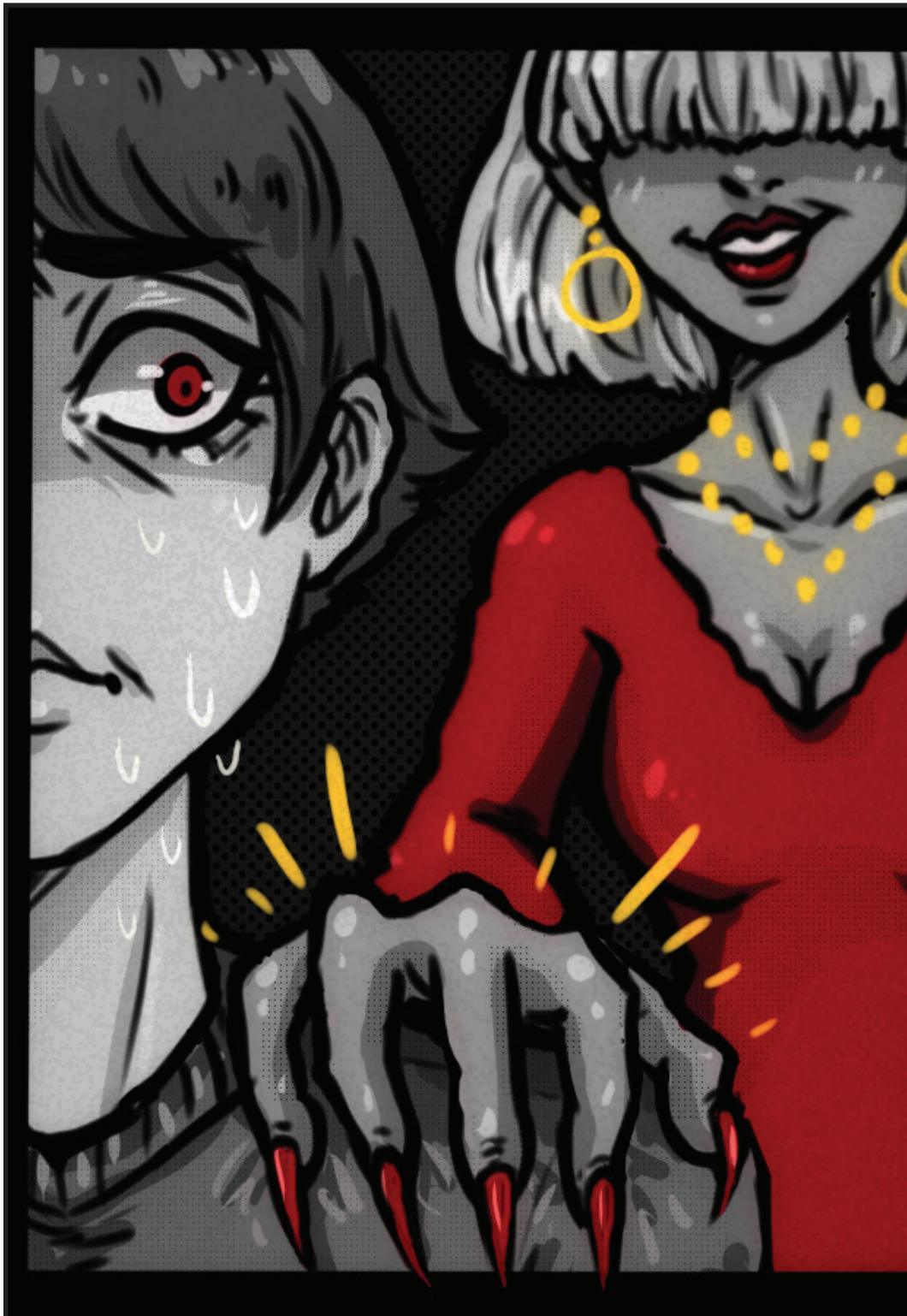
This insidious phenomenon is often associated with the disturbingly high level of protection afforded to men accused of sexually predatory behavior, specifically against minors. But even as this issue receives more attention and more prolific men are held accountable for their actions, women who exhibit the same behavior are often overlooked entirely.

For example, the long-running partnership between singer Sia and dancer Maddie Ziegler has been popularly viewed not only as a collaboration between creative minds but as an endearing mentorship. Sia seems like a "cool aunt" or big sister figure to Maddie, who rocketed to stardom after appearing in Sia's music videos and dancing onstage at many of her concerts.

But Maddie has been working almost exclusively with Sia since she was very young and in 2017, when she was 15 years old, she said she spent more time living with Sia than her own family. Sia has said she would not continue to work on any art or projects if Maddie were not involved. Maddie is also one of two people who Sia follows on Instagram, meaning her life is almost the only thing Sia ever sees on her feed.

This is a trite question, but here it's one worth asking: how would we as a society react to this disturbing behavior if Sia was male? Why does every article about Sia and Maddie lovingly describe their "friendship" as though it's normal for a 45-year-old to obsess over someone who can still be called a teenager? Predatory relationships do not need to be sexual in nature to be disgusting.

Feminism is often mistakenly thought of as the belief that women should be held in superior re-



Kelly Weckstein | *The Montclarion*



Maddie Ziegler starred in Sia's movie "Music."

Photo courtesy of Prime Video

gard to men. What feminism truly promotes is equity and equality for all genders, and true equity can only be achieved if the deepest evil is recognized on the same level as goodness. The idea that women cannot or do not commit the same level of atrocities as men when it comes to victimizing and manipulating younger people is harmful and toxic.

When men prey on children, everyone in earshot is rightfully enraged. Society has largely decided this kind of behavior is unforgivable, whether it is merely a creepy passing incident or a horrifying assault.

But when it comes to women engaging in the same behaviors, the reactions are more doubtful, sometimes even forgiving to the perpetrator. Young men and boys are often made to feel as though they should be so lucky to have an older woman pay attention to them. Adult film star Riley Reid once bragged about sexually assaulting a man and was seemingly never investigated.

This attitude not only enables predators, but it also shames victims of abuse and delegitimizes their stories, even when they make the incredibly brave decision to come forward and press charges.

There's a reason many sex trafficking rings often use women as the front or lure in their operations. Women are generally seen as more trustworthy, more inclined towards maternal instincts that would render them incapable of committing atrocities. To be clear, this is not a positive association but rather a sexist trope and a dangerous assumption.

Women have been demonized in many ways for a long time, and this is not an invitation to do so any further. Conversely, putting anyone on a pedestal because of their celebrity status, gender, physical attractiveness or preconceived notions of how they should act is no better. People are people, for better or worse, and there are countless uncomfortable truths we must continually face in order to accept this simple fact.

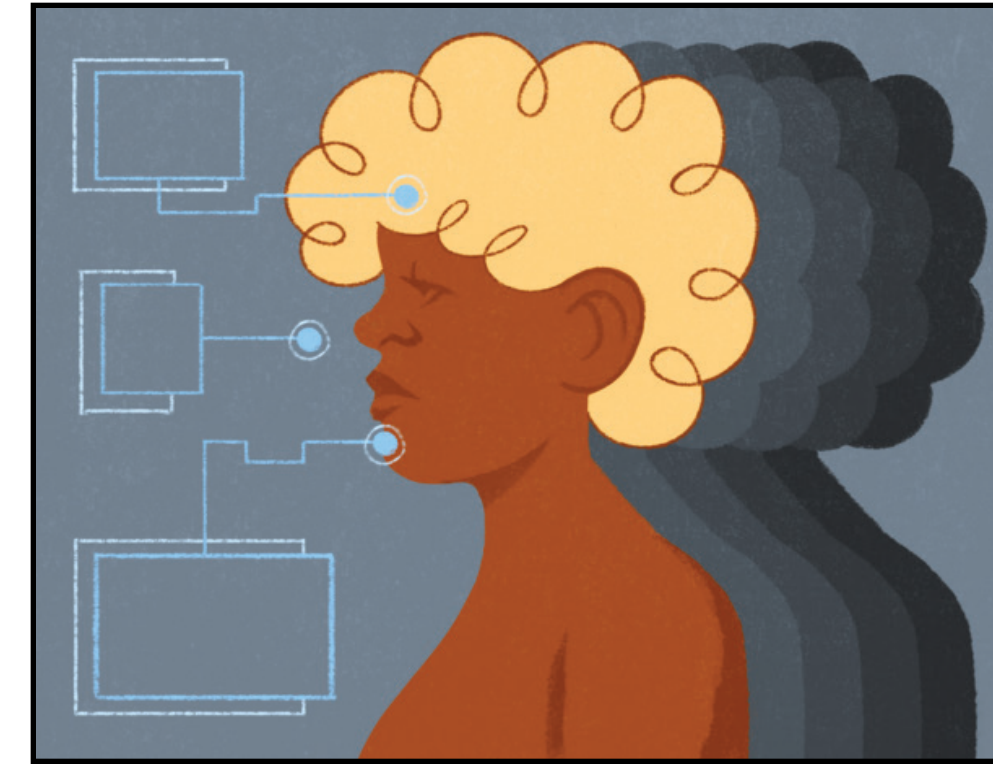
Kathleen Pierre
Guest Writer

The Medicalization of Prejudice

Dehumanization is defined as the process of taking away positive human characteristics and qualities. When you think of the 21st century and the Black Lives Matter movement, you must consider the root causation of systemic and institutionalized racial prejudice. The historical connotations of the word “black” continue to cause prejudices today, increasingly in a medical context.

According to Peter Conrad and Meredith Bergey, medicalization is the theory and process of labeling nonmedical problems such as gender, sexuality, obesity and premenstrual syndrome as medical syndromes requiring treatment. Even worse, as the medicalization of ordinary life continues to intensify, it also amplifies “race-based diagnostic tools and treatment guidelines that reinforce antiquated and scientifically inaccurate notions of biological race,” resulting in increasingly aggressive actions by medical personnel against Black Americans.

The lingering effect of Jim Crow laws has long since been evident in the racial divide of American history, from the Tuskegee Study to the ever-persistent historical cases of racial violence, medical inequity and proliferation of human experimentation on Black Americans. Jim Crow laws are defined as racial segregation laws enforced mainly in the Southern half of the United States during the mid-1800s up until the mid-1900s. Jim Crow laws, often called black codes, were used to prevent “colored folks” from voting, drinking or



Ian Long | The Montclarion

using white public amenities, as well as limiting “black” access to economic gain and employment.

Today, skin color binary is no longer a model for racial prejudice, and Jim Crow laws are technically banned, though their remnants are disturbingly apparent in some parts of the United States. Instead, the more nuanced discriminations between color tone or “degrees” of Blackness is now a factor of disparate treatment, heralded by bigots

and racists as the new Jim Crow laws of the land. Additionally, the medicalization of racial prejudice has brought satire to the foul odor of systemic racism.

The word “Black” has a rich racial history. From the word “preto,” found to be racially acceptable in many Latin and Portuguese cultures, to the word “negro” found in the Italian and Mediterranean region, to the even now more common term, “black,” found in nations around the world, being Black was nev-

er a disease to be classified in Eastern and Western cultures.

However, as cancel culture continues to proliferate worldwide, colorism and colorblindness have replaced racism as a platform for dehumanization and Jim Crow tactics. The number of people harmed has multiplied by the weight of pure hereditary context.

Racial rhetoric continues to seep through the American populace as a fad that can be taught and cogent as a mode of validating dominant ideation. But we are no longer primordial creatures.

We must stop the propagation and the thirst for inherent evil as a cause for cruel microaggressions. We must rise to the occasion, cast away our unhealthy rhetoric and seek the remedy of law, ethics and racial justice.

Conflict is not a eugenic domain. The best apology is the one we can give ourselves. And in the end, only real measures create real change.

Kathleen Pierre, a junior medical physics and humanities major, is in her first year as a contributing writer for The Montclarion.



Thumbs Up

Statue of Robert E. Lee removed in Virginia

Jamie Spears petitions court to end Britney Spears’ conservatorship after 13 years

Montclair State University fully resumes in-person learning for first time since March 2020



Thumbs Down

Supreme Court refuses to hear Texas abortion ban

Actor Michael K. Williams dies at age 54

Millions of New Jersey residents and businesses affected by flood damage from Tropical Storm Ida

‘He’s All That’ Is Surprisingly All That



Rae plays an Instagram influencer who attempts to turn the least popular boy in school into a prom king.

Photo courtesy of Netflix

Sam Nungesser
Editor-in-Chief

Movie and television lovers are no strangers to the age of remakes. From any Disney-movie-turned-live-action to television classics such as “Beverly Hills 90210” and “Gossip Girl,” we’ve seen it all. While these remakes draw out a certain nostalgia, they can just as easily ruin the film, especially when they omit the classic feel and replace it with Gen Z, well, everything.

The same mistakes have happened time and time again, and when I first saw “She’s All That” was getting a Netflix remake called “He’s All That,” starring TikTok dancer Addison Rae, I expected it to turn out the exact same way. I wondered how they could take the ‘90s classic that starred Freddie Prinze Jr. and Rachael Leigh Cook and not ruin it with a TikToker.

However, having since watched it, I stand corrected.

Don’t get me wrong, it is totally stained with Gen Z, but the story pays enough homage to the original while also making fun of the shallowness that is social media and today’s obsession with self-image, making it a fun and enjoyable watch. And for her first real acting gig, Rae isn’t as bad as one could have expected. In fact, she plays the part quite well.

The premise follows a similar pattern as the original film, albeit gender-swapped. Rae, who plays Padgett

Sawyer, is an Instagram influencer. When one faulty livestream threatens her sponsorship and college fund, she accepts a challenge to redeem herself from the Paul Walker character of this film, Alden, played by “The Game Plan” star Madison Pettis. The challenge calls Padgett to turn their high school’s least popular boy, Cameron Kweller, played by “Cobra Kai” star Tanner Buchanan, into a prom king.

I am happy to announce the ‘90s trope of obtaining instant beauty once removing one’s glasses was substituted with obtaining instant hunks by giving Cameron a haircut.

Speaking of Cameron, a standout scene in “He’s All That” and blatant reference to his karate prowess in “Cobra Kai” comes to mind when he releases those “wax on, wax off” moves on his constant tormenter, Padgett’s ex-boyfriend. This was a small part of the film but felt worth mentioning.

The film’s plot moves smoothly and feels just close enough to the original flick without being the exact same. Yes, there is another choreographed dance scene at the prom, just like all high schools have. And yes, they end the film with a pop remix of “Kiss Me” by Sixpence None The Richer.

In fact, Cook, who played the original nerdy girl, Laney Boggs, in “She’s All That,” plays Padgett’s mom in the remake. It was hard to miss her cheekily asking why she knew the song when it started playing.



Madison Pettis (left) and Myra Molloy (center) play Padgett’s friends, Alden and Quinn.

Photo courtesy of Netflix

“He’s All That” stays true to the heart of the story portraying its vain “makeover challenge” theme. However, Rae manages to embody the girl with more to her than the glitz and glamour of being an influencer in 2021 the same way Prinze Jr. did for the jock with the “perfect life” in 1999.

Though Buchanan executed the role of Cameron in a similarly flawless way, my only gripe is that his character development seemed to happen a little too quickly. Cameron seemingly lost his righteous arrogance in one of his very first scenes with Padgett. Perhaps making him more of a challenge would have further emphasized the drastic

personality shift.

One cameo the movie could have done without is Kourtney Kardashian’s. She plays Jessica Miles Torres, who sponsors Padgett on social media. Though she’s only seen when she calls Padgett to threaten her sponsorship, the reality star is no actress and should absolutely keep it that way.

Overall, “He’s All That” is a light-hearted take on the classic teen rom-com. It has its cringe moments, but that’s to be expected from a movie of its genre. For anyone looking to stream something new, Netflix’s “He’s All That” is sure to keep a smile on your face from start to finish.



Rachael Leigh Cook, who plays Laney in “She’s All That,” returned to star as Padgett’s mom.

Photo courtesy of Netflix



Addison Rae and Tanner Buchanan star as Padgett Sawyer and Cameron Kweller in “He’s All That.”

Photo courtesy of Netflix

‘Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings’ Combines Kung Fu and Comedy



Simu Liu plays Shang-Chi in “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings.”

Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

Tiffannie Coy
Staff Writer

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” tells the story of Shang-Chi, played by Simu Liu, and how he overcomes his father’s dominance while remaining true to himself and maintaining his mother’s legacy.

His idea of resolving conflict with peace is put to the test when he learns the ways of his mother’s village, Ta-Lo, and what they’ve been protecting for hundreds of years.

Not only does the film bring recognition to Western history in a classy way, but it portrays the women in the film as strong, resourceful and independent. They help shape the plot dramatically and always for the better.

This includes Katy and Xialing, who unleash their true potential toward the climax of the film.

Shang-Chi’s younger sister, Xialing, played by Chinese actress Meng’er Zhang, is a Kung Fu expert like her brother.

Katy, Shang-Chi’s childhood best friend, is played by comedian Awkwafina, whose genuine personality shines

through the role. Although she normally plays best friend and sister roles, this one suits her particularly well.

Katy isn’t your normal sidekick that already knows 10 different ways to save the day; she’s creative, and honestly, not very talented in fighting, making her the perfect best friend for Shang-Chi. It adds to the film being comedy-rich with sarcasm and snarky comebacks that don’t feel overused or gimmicky.

The director and film crew took a lot of time to make sure that every interaction between the main characters added to their development and the plot. The film is laced with various flashbacks that give insight into everyone and how they will grow as the film progresses.

The fighting in this movie is a breath of fresh air. For the majority of it, the action is rich in different types of fighting: mainly Kung Fu. The film makes sure the audience understands how important Kung Fu is to Shang-Chi and does not gloss over its role in his character development.

Though it’s common knowledge that all of the fighting scenes are stunts,

they do a great job at making them feel unrehearsed. I often found myself hiding behind my hands as if one of the actors might actually take a punch.

It isn’t a Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) movie without good computer-generated imaging (CGI). For “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” it was outstanding. With a combination of well-written characters and mind-blowing effects, the climax of the movie was everything it was meant to be and more.

While the film is a little over two hours long, you don’t feel it drags on or is rushed in any way. The film has various points that are fast-paced and action-based and other times where they allow viewers to breathe and understand what had happened in previous scenes.

I highly recommend this movie to anyone who loves action and Kung Fu or those who want to watch a Marvel movie without the hassle of connecting it to a million other things in the MCU.

Despite this film not being a direct mirror of the comic book, Liu lives up to Shang-Chi’s name as the “Master of Kung Fu.”



Meng’er Zhang (left) plays Shang-Chi’s sister, Xialing, while Awkwafina (right) plays his best friend, Katy.

Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

Top Picks to Stream

Best of Summer Edition

‘Luca’ on Disney+



Photo courtesy of Disney+

Wholesome and family-friendly, “Luca” is an original coming-of-age story about a young boy and his best friend, Alberto. Set in a seaside town on the Italian Riviera, Luca and Alberto go on many scooter trips and enjoy plenty of gelato and pizza along the way. They love making new memories together but they are hiding a big secret: they’re deep-sea monsters.

The movie is an exciting adventure of learning to be true to who you are and developing self-love instead of hate. With various elements of “The Little Mermaid” and “Finding Nemo,” “Luca” doesn’t fall short of meeting the expectations that come along with being a Pixar film.

If you’re looking for a lighthearted movie with friends and silly animations, check out “Luca” on Disney+.

- Tiffannie Coy
Staff Writer

‘In the Heights’
on HBO Max



Photo courtesy of HBO Max

Say goodbye to summer along with the cast of “In the Heights,” a musical film produced by “Hamilton” lead Lin-Manuel Miranda. Released on HBO Max, this drama tells the story of Usnavi de la Vega, played by Anthony Ramos, and the struggles his neighborhood encounters during one of the hottest summers they’ve ever experienced.

Along the way, viewers feel a part of the community as they follow characters in their day-to-day lives, whether that consists of running the street’s corner store, gossiping with ladies in the local beauty salon or chasing their wildest dreams. Watch how their lives unfold through a series of original songs, including the viral TikTok hit, “Blackout.”

- Megan Lim
Entertainment Editor

Timeless Classic 'Cinderella' Receives a Modern Update



Singer Camila Cabello plays Ella in the Disney classic remake.

Photo courtesy of Amazon Studios

Megan Lim
Entertainment Editor

Amazon Prime Video closed out summer on Sept. 3 with the release of the musical film "Cinderella," an anticipated remake of the Disney film of the same namesake, though the title may be all the two share.

Still loosely following along with the original plot, viewers can expect to see the core elements that defined the 1950 version the first time around: an overworked daughter, her less-than-considerate stepmother and stepsisters, mice turned into footmen, a glass slipper and a clock that strikes at midnight.

Otherwise, the adaptation proves hard to compare to its original counterpart with how modern and modified it has become, from a rebellious prince with the throne as last priority to a "Fabulous Godmother" that clearly fits the self-proclaimed title. Let's not forget the stepmother going soft after realizing her own suppressed dreams or the many other new characters and detailed backstories we are given about them.

These inclusions seem necessary in order to set this remake apart from its more successful predecessors. With

tough acts to follow, this romantic comedy relies heavily on positive moral lessons and newly introduced characters to stand out.

That, along with a star-studded cast. Aside from the film being a product of "Pitch Perfect" director Kay Cannon, "Havana" singer Camila Cabello plays Ella, the ambitious, career-driven Cinderella of 2021, while Idina Menzel of "Wicked" plays her only slightly evil stepmother. "The Late Late Show" host James Corden, Billy Porter, Pierce Brosnan and Minnie Driver also star in this film. These names are enough to reel in viewers from more than one generation.

Upon watching, however, "Cinderella" is evidently geared toward a younger target audience with its quick-witted, easy-to-miss remarks from characters. While the humor just happened to align with mine and delivered some genuine laughs, it may certainly fly over most viewers' heads.

Unfortunately, what's also rather easy to gloss over is the film's mise-en-scène. There is nothing particularly eye-catching about what's put in front of the camera, whether it's the wardrobe or overall setting.

Today's technology and creativity allowed "Cinderella" so much room to



Viewers see the movie's full capacity for effects in the scene with Ella's "Fabulous Godmother," played by Billy Porter.

Photo courtesy of Amazon Studios

leave a lasting impression with memorable, grand costumes and set designs. Instead, the remake fell flat and lacked the aesthetic magic of the timeless classic, leaving the film to feel underwhelming and toned down.

The only moment to redeem the lackluster look of the movie is the interaction between Ella and her "Fabulous Godmother," played by Porter. Viewers will see the movie's full capacity to utilize effects in the sadly short time this scene lasts on screen.

What "Cinderella" may have lacked in visual appeal was made up for with

a fun soundtrack that the cast performed well, including hits like "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran, "Let's Get Loud" by Jennifer Lopez and "Somebody to Love" by Queen. The most excitement I felt during the movie was waiting to see which bop would be covered next, all of which fit the scenes they were inserted into perfectly.

Fans of Cabello will especially enjoy her original song, "Million to One." It captures the message of Ella's story, one in which she believes in her ability to defy the odds and succeed at having her artistic talents be recognized.

Cabello's performance as Ella is more than impressive as she fits the goofy, empowered role even in real life. Though far off from the reserved, humble persona that characterizes the original princess, Cabello effortlessly portrays a modernized heroine that stands for more than just falling in love. It's certainly a successful acting debut in how natural she comes across, leaving people such as myself hoping to see her full range of acting abilities in future projects.

"Cinderella" may not be a complete reflection of the Disney classic it was inspired by, but with a phenomenal cast and their success in highlighting important life lessons through the power of song and dance, it's still a ball to watch.



Idina Menzel of "Wicked" plays Ella's stepmother.

Photo courtesy of Amazon Studios

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Upcoming Red Hawk Games

THUR 9/9

Women's Volleyball vs. Drew University
7:00 p.m.

FRI 9/10

Women's Cross Country at Ramapo Season Opener
5:00 p.m.

Field Hockey vs. Rhodes (TN)
7:00 p.m.

Women's Volleyball vs. Cortland
7:00 p.m.

SAT 9/11

Men's Soccer vs. New York University
12:00 p.m.

Football at Delaware Valley University
1:00 p.m.

Women's Soccer vs. Ursinus College
3:00 p.m.

SUN 9/12

No games

MON 9/13

No games

TUE 9/14

Women's Volleyball vs. Rutgers-Camden
7:00 p.m.

WED 9/15

Women's Soccer at DeSales University
4:00 p.m.

Men's Soccer at Moravian College
5:30 p.m.

Field Hockey at Vassar College
7:00 p.m.

Underclassmen Carry Men's Soccer To Dominant Win

Men's Soccer Opens 2021 Season In Style



Freshman midfielder Amer Lukovic advances the ball past a Cyclones player.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia

Jess Liptzin
Assistant Sports Editor

On Sept. 1, the Montclair State University men's soccer team, ranked number eight in Division III, kicked off their season with a bang, defeating Centenary University in a 6-1 blowout.

Throughout the game, Tropical Storm Ida brought rain and wind that made for some tough playing conditions. Nevertheless, head coach Todd Tumelty and his squad never let up for the entirety of the 90-minute game.

Mixing and matching line-ups throughout the game allowed Tumelty and the coaching staff to start forming ideal rotations for the season.

"Early on in the season you have to find a rotation that works," Tumelty said post-game. "I think today we are starting to get our stride and see who can play where."

The Red Hawks' biggest strength is their depth, as many of their bench players can fill in as starters at any given moment. Getting Montclair State on the board early was freshman forward Reed Karsen with an assist from junior forward Josiah Crawford. Crawford would finish with two assists as well as a goal later in the game.

Following that first goal

in the half, Centenary held strong especially in the goal as junior Andrew Tarkazikis finished the game with 10 saves.

When the second half came, the Red Hawks' fresh legs pressed hard, never even giving the Cyclones a chance. Their defensive presence was so dominant it carried over into the offense breaking through. In the first 11 minutes of the second half, the Red Hawks rattled off three goals, including freshman Owen Murphy's penalty kick goal just 49 seconds into the second half.

"Our philosophy is as soon as we lose the ball, we want

to get it back," Tumelty said. "They understand the press. We are fit and that allows you to do the press."

Underclassmen contributed in this game as three freshmen athletes scored goals. This was huge in helping to propel the team to a big win especially with some key members not being able to play.

"Our freshmen have been excellent and I'm really pleased with the way they are playing," Tumelty said. "They are going to get a lot of minutes." Senior goalkeeper Shane Keenan did a fantastic job blocking anything that came his way. However, he did have

a late-game mistake leading to Centenary's only goal from junior Mahir Yilmaz.

The Red Hawks went on to finish the game with a penalty kick from senior Brent Llewellyn. Montclair State extended their opening day game record to 21-0-4 for the first time since 1996. They also have now won all nine meetings versus the Cyclones.

The team will travel this weekend for a couple of games set to be played in Maryland as the Red Hawks will be competing in the Athey Cup tournament. This includes games against DeSales University and Washington College.



The Montclair State men's soccer team huddles up before the game.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia

SUN 9/5

Red Hawks Men's Soccer: 3
Washington (MD): 1

Red Hawks Women's Soccer: 2
Marywood University 1

Red Hawk Recap

WED 9/6

Red Hawks Men's Soccer: 7
Hunter College: 0

Red Hawks Women's Soccer: 1
Vassar College: 2

SAT 9/4

Red Hawks Football: 20
Rensselaer Polytechnic: 21

Red Hawks Field Hockey: 1
SUNY Cortland: 3

Field Hockey Team Hopes To Build Off A Tough Spring Season

Red Hawks hoping to make it back to the NJAC Championship Game



A Montclair State player tries to gain control of the ball.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia

Corey Annan
Sports Editor

One could argue that the Montclair State University women's field hockey team has dealt with the worst luck a college sports team could face during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic sports era.

With only six games on the regular-season schedule for the Red Hawks in the spring 2021 semester, COVID-19 protocols forced the cancellation of half of their games. The Red Hawks went 1-2 in the games they competed in and once again missed out on the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Championship.

Despite the unfair cards the program was dealt, head coach Eileen O'Reilly and her team have chosen to look on the bright side of things.

"A message that we want to keep up every single day is that we are lucky to be here and be doing this in as normal of a way as possible," O'Reilly said. "When I look back at the spring and think about the things that we did — the pods, weekly testing, practicing in small groups, it's crazy that we got through it all."

A big challenge that this team will face is the lack of in-game experience from many of their players due to the shortening of last season. O'Reilly mentioned that many of their younger players, even some seniors, are relatively inexperienced compared to past years.

"This has been a point of emphasis in our planning as [coaches]," O'Reilly said. "Not only with true incoming freshmen and sophomores, but our juniors have only had one normal season and our seniors are our most experienced group with two [normal] seasons. And honestly, for that senior group, a lot of them didn't see much playing time in those two seasons. In our planning process, the thought was that we do have a pretty young group and that we are inexperienced."

While the group may not be full of seasoned veterans, the roster is certainly not devoid of talent. Offensively, this team will be led by sophomore

midfielder/forward Carlie Van Tassel, the team's leading goal scorer and the NJAC Rookie Of The Year.

Despite her limited game experience last season, she stepped right in and proved to be a capable scorer. With Elizabeth Cimilluca graduating, Van Tassel will certainly be taking on more responsibility as the primary scoring weapon. One can predict that she will put up an even more impressive season stat line with a full season ahead of her.

"For her, taking it one day at a time and looking at the moment in front of you is huge," O'Reilly said. "When

you receive an accolade like that your freshman year, it's great that she accomplished that but she has everything to prove this fall. We are asking a lot out of her, so if she can have the [mentality of] one practice, one game at a time, she'll have a great season."

Defensively, the group will be led by fifth-year senior captain Maddie Spolarich, senior defender Katelyn Osterlind and junior goalkeeper Lauren Pickul.

Pickul has proven to be a reliable force at the box. She was an Honorable-Mention All-NJAC selection last season and even won the National

Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) Division III Defensive Player of the Week for her sensational 11-save performance in the team's last regular-season game against Stockton University.

Although, with the loss of stand-out defender and former First-Team All-NJAC player Janell Harden due to graduation, there will be a big void to fill on this defense.

However, a full offseason has given time for the coaching staff to implement a new defensive strategy that Spolarich and the rest of the team are confident in.

"We don't necessarily have that one strong force in our backfield like Janell was," Spolarich said. "With the new system, we are gelling more and working together more, rather than relying on one person."

Spolarich has been a member of some of the most talented teams in program history, including both the 2017 and 2018 teams that qualified to the Division III National Tournament. The team is thrilled to have her back for one last season, as her experience and leadership will be crucial for this group.

"What made me come back was that I didn't want my senior year to end the way that it did," Spolarich said. "My teaching program got pushed back so I already knew I was going to be here an extra semester, so that was a pushing force all throughout the summer to get me back here now because I wanted to have a normal season for my [final year at college]."

The field hockey team has historically been one of the best athletic programs here at Montclair State and with the pandemic-shortened season behind them, Pickul notes that aspirations to win the NJAC Championship have not changed.

"We set high expectations for ourselves on the field and we've been pushing ourselves in the preseason practices and scrimmages to improve every day," Pickul said. "We are going to use what we learned last year in the [COVID-19] season to try to be the best we can."



Senior midfielder/defender Katelyn Osterlind prepares to pass.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia

Montclair State Football Hopes To Repeat NJAC Glory

Montclair State looks to claim first outright NJAC title since 2014



Quarterback Ja'Quill Burch looks to pass during a 2021 preseason practice.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia

Ryan White
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The 2021 football season is finally upon us. Fresh off of winning the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) North Championship, the Montclair State University football team looks to win more silverware in their first full season in almost two years.

Due to last season being moved to the spring and having shortened schedules, the conference championship was divided into two parts: North and South. This year, however, only one team will be victorious in the end.

In the NJAC preseason coaches poll, Montclair State was picked second behind nationally ranked (#8) Salisbury

University. Though the Red Hawks have high hopes for this season, they realize there is still a lot of work to do.

The team will open their season on Saturday, Sept. 4 in Troy, New York against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Montclair State's first four games are nonconference matchups. After that, the Red Hawks have six straight conference games beginning with Salisbury University on Oct. 2.

Assistant coach Mike Palazzo is excited to have a full season again.

"In the spring, we only had our guys for an hour a day, so it was really fast and I had to kind of let some things go because you just didn't have time," Palazzo said. "You know, now we're back to hav-

ing time and being able to do some things that we'd like to do."

Having a full season gives the coaching staff much more time to implement new ideas. Throughout a football season, there are countless new schemes and plays constantly being practiced or added. Football is all about making the right adjustments and that is what separates good from great.

Finding an identity is going to be crucial for the Red Hawks this season. There are only about 35 current players that were with the team back in 2019. With over 60 new faces, it has been a challenge to find what works for this team.

"Offensively and defensively we are just trying to find

what we are good at," Palazzo said. "Every year at a coaching camp you kind [of] throw a lot at your team and see what fits their personality best."

Running back Abellany Mendez was awarded NJAC Co-Offensive Player of the Year in the spring and is destined for another special season.

"I have been improving on getting out more for the check-downs, making sure I am a receiver now, too," Mendez said. "And on my pass protections, I am trying to improve on that, too."

It is clear that Mendez wants to bring his game up a notch even after a solid season. Mendez becoming an elite receiving threat and a willing blocker can bring this offense to new levels.

Senior quarterback and team captain Ja'Quill Burch is coming back for another season. Burch had a fabulous spring season, throwing for 588 yards and three touchdowns last season in addition to being named First Team All-NJAC.

Another huge name returning on offense is senior captain and guard Matt Schnoll, who anchored the offensive line and was selected Second-Team All-Region.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Red Hawks are expected to be the top defense in the conference. Last season, the team landed 16 players on the NJAC North Division All-Conference Team, seven of

them being on defense.

With Zahir Wilder returning, the Red Hawks are bringing back one of the most dynamic players in the NJAC. Wilder was named Second-Team All-America selection and NJAC Special Teams Player Of The Year.

Wilder, who averaged 49.3 yards per return, also put up seven tackles and a pass breakup from the cornerback position. His return also made him the first Red Hawk to record a touchdown as a thrower, receiver, defender and return specialist.

Senior defensive back Brennan Ray spoke about his expectations for the Red Hawks this year.

"I have some high expectations," Ray said. "I like to dream big and I think we have one of the best teams Montclair [State] has ever had. I think this is going to be the biggest year yet, we are going for the NJAC championship. We want to win a ring this year."

Ray is coming off a phenomenal spring season as he was named First Team All-NJAC. Ray tallied 13 tackles, three sacks, three fumble recoveries and a forced fumble. The senior is highly respected in the locker room as a leader and he is an absolute enforcer on the field.

Coming into this fall season, the Red Hawks have an enormous amount of pressure on them to produce just as they did in the spring. Putting it all together is no easy task, however, between this veteran coaching staff and extremely talented roster, they are more than capable.



The Montclair State football team huddles up during their preseason scrimmage against Lackawanna College on Aug. 21.

Photo courtesy of David Venezia