The Montclarion, November 4, 2021

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Monclair State University students took a step toward democracy by casting their votes on campus and voicing their opinions about the New Jersey gubernatorial election on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

AP News announced Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy as victorious over Republican nominee Jack Ciattarelli on Wednesday, Nov. 3.

Many students interviewed at Montclair State believed Murphy would win and become governor for the next four years.

Though there are many students who care about the political issues related to New Jersey, the polls on campus were not crowded. Hidden past the front desk of Machuga Heights, barely any students even glanced into the room while walking by.

Brandon Koch, a freshman marketing major, gave insight on why he is choosing not to vote for this election.

“It’s a Democratic state, so it’s [going to] be Murphy,” Koch said. “So, the vote doesn’t matter. Both campaigns are terrible and they both didn’t make it clear what they were going to do.”

Andrew Linden, a junior acting major, said he is voting for Murphy.

“I usually go with the leading Democrat,” Linden said. “[Murphy] is not the best, but he’s not Republican.”

The argument of voting for Murphy either because he is a Democrat or because he was already likely to win appeared to be a popular one.

Jalynn Miller, a freshman family science and human development major, has not turned 18 yet and thus cannot vote, but would still vote for Murphy if she could.

“If I could vote, it would be for Murphy just because I believe he’s [going to] win,” Miller said. “I don’t have any personal feelings toward him. I’m neutral on both sides.”

For many Montclair State students, this may be the first gubernatorial election they can participate in.

Emily Swedelson, a freshman business administration major, said this was an important milestone in her life.

“It’s the first time I was able to vote and I was excited to exercise my right,” Swedelson said.

Contrary to some of the other students, Nyla Egerton, a freshman accounting major, and Detrah Bowman, a freshman medical humanities major, are highly invested in the outcome.

Egerton had a similar mindset regarding what the governor should pay attention to.

Avery Nixon
Staff Writer

The Montclarion
themontclarion.com

Crossword puzzle & more
on page 13

The Best of Montclair: Coffee Shops

Launches ‘Unmasked’ Series

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Montclair State Senate Discusses Efforts to Boost Student Voter Participation Upcoming Election

Mariel Pagan, who oversees the Montclair State Votes Coalition and is the director of the Center for Student Involvement, gave an update on efforts to get students to vote at the Oct. 20 Senate meeting.

"Now that the New Jersey voter registration deadline has passed, our next priority is to focus on students taking a pledge to vote," Pagan said.

The pledge is part of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, where campuses around the country take part in increasing student voter participation. According to the ALL IN to Vote website, which is updated weekly, Montclair State University is currently No. 1 with 530 pledges.

"When students take the pledge to vote, they will receive a reminder about elections," Pagan said.

Montclair State is also competing in the New Jersey Ballot Bowl, a statewide competition to get students to register to vote. The New Jersey Ballot Bowl partnered with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge this year and will not only be counting voter registrations but also pledges.

Pagan also said they are helping the state to recruit poll workers. Poll workers can work in any county in the state, not just the one in which they are registered to vote in.

Poll workers make an hourly rate of $21.44 on in-person early voting days and $300 on Election Day. They can also earn an additional $30 for attending a required training provided by the County Board of Elections. Anyone who wants to apply must be an American citizen and at least 16 years old.

Sailor Marfiewicz, a junior visual arts major, said she's registered to vote but did not plan on voting in the gubernatorial election.

"I just didn't really think about it," Marfiewicz said. "Not that I'm not interested in politics, [but] I just don't get into it as much as I probably should or know a lot about it."

Grace McCarthy, a junior business administration major, said she had received her ballot but was not planning to vote. After learning that the governor's race was one of the major races in this election, she changed her mind.

"I personally feel like maybe we need a switch-up in the governor," McCarthy said. "I feel like [Gov. Phil Murphy] hasn't handled [COVID-19] very well."

For more information, visit Montclair State’s Civic and Voter Engagement website.

Cristal Santos
Staff Writer

A crowd in Weequahic Park in Newark, New Jersey during a rally for Gov. Phil Murphy.

John LaRosa | The Montclarion

Sailor Marfiewicz did not plan on voting in this election.

Cristal Santos | The Montclarion

Grace McCarthy planned to vote for a new governor.

Cristal Santos | The Montclarion
Election Day in New Jersey

Professor Thomas Franklin’s photojournalism class at Montclair State University took photos to highlight New Jersey’s gubernatorial election. Republican Jack Ciattarelli ran against incumbent Democrat Gov. Phil Murphy. The race was a close call but AP news has announced Murphy as the winner.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Ciattarelli poses for photos with children in Morris Plains, New Jersey.

Francis Churchill | The Montclarion

Republican candidate Jack Ciattarelli speaks with media members at the Morris Plains Veterans from Foreign Wars Post.

Francis Churchill | The Montclarion

Supporters of Jack Ciattarelli gather at the Suburban Diner in Parsippany, New Jersey wearing branded clothing in support of the candidate.

Michelle Coneo | The Montclarion

Hackensack resident leaves the polling place in Hackensack with a smile on Election Day.

Michelle Coneo | The Montclarion

Voter leaves Barringer High School in Newark, New Jersey after voting on Election Day.

Photo courtesy of Lauri Bell Femia
Students React to Close Call in Election

“I am surprised that it is close. I thought it would be one or the other.”

Michaela Forbes
Junior Environmental Science major

“Maybe other citizens feel that we just need a bigger change, and maybe start moving on from all the stigmas that New Jersey has. Like high taxes, mask mandates and vaccine mandates. I feel like a lot of New Jersey citizens feel like they need a change.”

Valerie Rojas
Sophomore Biochemistry major

“I hope Murphy wins. I’d prefer a Democrat, and he’s not a phony Democrat, he seems generally progressive enough. He got weed legalized, he kept [COVID-19] cases down, I feel like he kept his [campaign] promises. I don’t think we need a Republican governor. All this [stuff] about critical race theory, don’t we all have better [stuff] to worry about?”

Ross Stern
Senior Filmmaking major

“Of course, I thought it was going to be an easy win for Murphy. I didn’t even think it would be that close.”

Yasmin Sanchez
Sophomore Criminal Justice major
NEW JERSEY
And the Birth of the
ATOMIC AGE

Last year was the 75th anniversary of the creation of the atomic bomb. Recognizing this important milestone in human history, Montclair State University has organized a series of free public events from October to December 2021 that examines New Jersey’s critical role in providing the scientific talent and resources for the development of the atomic bomb, its strategic value during the Cold War and ethical issues related to nuclear use and proliferation.

For more information, visit montclair.edu/csam/nj-and-the-birth-of-the-atomic-age

*Everyone (visitors, students, employees, etc.) who attends in-person events on-campus needs to complete Hawk Check (https://www.montclair.edu/red-hawk-restart/about-hawkcheck/), bring proof of vaccination (or a negative COVID test within the last 72 hours if unvaccinated) and wear a mask.*
The Best of Montclair: Coffee Shops

Alyssa Smolen  
Guest Writer

Montclair, New Jersey is known for having delicious food. With the plethora of restaurants and places to choose from, it can be difficult to know what spots are worth paying more than $5 for a cup of coffee.

As a Montclair-area native, I have spent a lot of my college years trying out any and every new, local spot that pops up. Though many places tend to come and go just by the nature of high rent prices, and now, because of the challenges the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has forced upon businesses, there are still a few tried-and-true places I always recommend to people when they need a place to grab a cup of joe.

The Corner: 115 Grove St., Montclair  
The Corner, which gets its name from its location, is my go-to breakfast, lunch and coffee shop. When in doubt, I know that here I will have a great meal and a delicious cup of coffee. However, no matter the time you go, it will most likely be packed with other brunch-goers. The constant turnover of customers inside their business should be an indicator that it’s a popular spot and well worth the wait. I wouldn’t recommend bringing your laptop and trying to finish some work there, as they keep the flow of their customers timely.

Java Love: 49 Church St., Montclair  
Java Love makes a delicious matcha latte and brownie. You can grab a coffee, a matcha-infused beverage or tea. They have both vegan and vegetarian dishes. With outdoor seating and indoor dining, you can enjoy this restaurant all year round.

Red Eye Cafe: 94 Walnut St., Montclair  
You can grab a bite to eat or a cup of coffee. They have a variety of choices on their menu whether you are going for breakfast, lunch or brunch.

Paper Plane Coffee Co.: 194 Claremont Ave., Montclair  
Paper Plane is new to the Montclair coffee shop scene but they seem to be sticking around. Opened in Montclair in 2019, Paper Plane has been able to make a name for itself. This small spot has a broad option of unique coffee flavors and tea from butter beer-themed coffee to Moka Cola, a bubbly cold brew. You may not be able to sit and work to your heart’s desire, but you won’t want to because you’ll be too busy talking about your inventive and buzz-worthy drink.

Le Salbuen Cafe: 97 Walnut St., Montclair  
I may not be able to pronounce the name of this place, but I continually recommend this restaurant to everyone I know. It’s a small spot but does not lack in big flavor, big bites and a big menu. You can bring anyone you know and they will be sure to find a dish they like.

By visiting these spots, you are supporting local businesses and keeping them alive, which is more important now than ever. Regardless of whether you need to buckle down and work for hours, hang out with one of your friends or just try a new drink on your commute, there is a shop in Montclair for everyone.
Book Review: ‘One Last Stop’ By Casey McQuiston

Amanda Alicea | The Montclarion

August is relatable to most early 20-year-olds, especially myself. We see her struggling to figure out a career and see her constantly expecting the worst, in fear that everything she cares about will crumble around her. I feel like most young adults feel this dread when it comes to establishing a career and life for themselves when they’re young. McQuiston normalizes these fears and allows us to see August make a transformation that proves she’s sure of herself by the end of the book. When August meets Jane Su on the Q train, it is love at first sight for August. A punk Jane, who is full of charm and mystery, quickly becomes the best part of August’s days. While one might think that everything is smooth sailing for the two, there’s one giant problem; Jane is stuck on the Q train.

Not only is Jane unable to get off the train, but she’s also displaced in time from the 1970s with no memory of how she got there or stuck in the first place. She only becomes aware of time and the train before then. Readers are fed Jane’s adventurous, lust-filled memories of August’s days. While one might think that everything is smooth sailing for the two, there’s one giant problem; Jane is stuck on the Q train.

In August’s e

Amanda Alicea | The Montclarion

McQuiston not only highlights a charming love story, but she highlights inclusivity in all the characters. She includes transgender characters, an entire community of drag queens and portrays each character in such a safe and charismatic way. Readers will fall in love with August and Jane and with the characters who surround them. They bring a sense of family and community to the story.

“One Last Stop” is full of twists and turns that will take you on an emotional journey, from laughing out loud to crying heartfelt tears. Seeing this love story blossom will have you wondering why you haven’t met your edgy soulmate on the train yet.

Ben Caplan

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The End of an Era: Montclair State’s Makeup Artistry Certificate Program To Be Canceled

Courtney White
Staff Writer

After several years and different teaching styles, the Makeup Artistry Certificate Program at Montclair State University was a small program with less than 200 students. Many didn’t know about it until they went looking for it or unless they knew someone who was already in it.

The program consisted of a few classes, and of those few, the core classes were taught mostly by the same professor, Tia Hebron. She was an original contributor to the program's ideation, content development and course design as well as has experience in the field as a freelance makeup artist. She says that during her six-year tenure at Montclair State, she has had the opportunity to inspire both artists and business in the cosmetic industry.

"While I am saddened by this incredible program coming to an end, I share more thoughts of pride and joy because of my students," Hebron said. "They have moved on having gained new expertise, confidence and success."

The university program was originally run and hosted at the Bobbi Brown cosmetic store in Downtown Montclair; but when that closed in 2019, the program shifted gears. Instead of being taught exclusively with Bobbi Brown cosmetics, it was then taught with any and all makeup products.

As for the program’s original goal, Hebron says it was more than just makeup. The program found its roots at the Bobbi Brown store in Montclair with the goal of promoting creatives from all walks of life to not only be exceptional makeup artists, but to transcend their craft and become cultural historians, business executives and social entrepreneurs in a flourishing industry," Hebron said.

The Makeup Artistry Certificate Program consisted of only six courses. They focused on skincare, application and diversity — as it relates to working on different types of people. In classes held before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, students worked on models or brought in friends to learn how to use products on older skin, paler or darker skin and oily or dry skin. Other classes taught stage makeup, cultural differences in appearance and different application types of makeup.

"The program is shutting down due to the program director, Debra Otte, retiring and there being no one left to continue the program. The program was also part of the theatre and fashion departments. Although it wasn’t associated with a cosmetology school, it was meant to give the same accreditation. Upon finishing the program, Montclair State students would receive a makeup artistry certification."

Many students shared great memories of the program and are sad to see it go. Dena Montez, a senior communications major, is one who was deeply impacted by the program. She said the makeup program was a huge drawing point as to why she came to Montclair State. She liked that she could work on both makeup and her major at the same time.

Though the program is coming to an end, Montez appreciates what she was able to learn from the experience.

“Overall, the program has taught me how to carry myself as a professional makeup artist,” Montez said. “I have gained friends and mentors from this program.”

Danielle Vocaturo graduated last spring with a bachelor's in public relations but was one of the last few to remember bothstyles of teaching in the Bobbi Brown studio and on campus.

Vocaturo has used the skills in her life outside of school now that she has graduated. She currently works at a salon and also does some freelance makeup on the side.

"Most importantly, [the program] taught me key elements on how to interact with clients on a more professional scale," Vocaturo said. "Before taking classes in the makeup program, I was freelancing and doing family and friends, which didn’t necessarily require me to speak or act very professionally. This program taught me the proper etiquette when taking new clients."

Programs like this help students improve upon their other interests rather than just academics. The ending of the Makeup Artistry Certificate Program at Montclair State is certainly upsetting, but will not put an end to the creativity of Montclair State students.
"In America, the President reigns for four years, but Journalism governs forever." – Oscar Wilde

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**BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST**

Seeking responsible, reliable, caring, and motivated part-time Behavior Specialist to work with a teen with autism. Reliable transportation to the Wyckoff, NJ area is a must. 10-20 hours/week (may include morning, evening and/or weekend/holiday - TBD). Salary: $20-$30/hr (commensurate with education and experience). Will train and supervise.

Please email gdang0709@gmail.com if interested.

**PART-TIME EVENING BABYSITTER**

Looking for a fun, energetic part-time evening babysitter for our 3 children (7, 5, and 2.5 yrs). Job would involve picking them up from elementary school in Upper Montclair and daycare at MSU, taking them to after school activities, preparing dinner, and caring for them until we get home from work. We are looking for 3-5 days a week (Mon-Fri) from approximately 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Exact days and times can vary based on our schedules. Interested applicants should have their own transportation and clean driving record, be fully vaccinated, and have references available upon request.

Interested applicants please contact Katie at klivigne@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

**PART-TIME BABYSITTER**

Seeking a sitter for a pleasant 8-year-old child who attends public school in Montclair. Care needed weekdays, one hour before school opens (7:10 am to 8:10 am) and one hour after school (6:00 pm to 7:00 pm). The child can play in a park near the school while being supervised or at other locations to be agreed upon. The rate of pay is $16-$20/hr.

Please email dezmiller12@comcast.net if interested.

**OPTOMETRIC TECHNICIAN**

Part time to work in optometrist office in Clifton, minutes away from Montclair State University, as an optometric technician. Willing to train a quick learner who is outgoing, reliable, and enjoys working with and assisting patients. Duties include front desk, verifying insurance, pre-screening patients, and optical sales. All hands on training. All Candidates must be fully vaccinated to apply. $13.50 an hour plus commission.

If interested, please email Dina at newjerseyeyes1020@gmail.com.

WANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING GREATER?

The Montclarion

Write for feature! Fashion writer wanted
The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

New Jersey Edition

By Kayla Carlamere

Across
3. This animal is New Jersey’s official state bird.
5. This iconic actress is known for numerous movies such as “Mamma Mia,” “The Devil Wears Prada,” and “Sophie’s Choice.” She was born and raised in New Jersey.
7. This city is the capital of the state of New Jersey.

Down
1. Six Flags has unique, specific names for each of their parks. What is the name of our very own, located in Jackson, New Jersey?
2. This popular New Jersey city located on the coast is known for its many casinos, beaches, and its Boardwalk.
4. In which New Jersey city was the first recorded baseball game played?
6. New Jersey is the _____ Capital of the World due to having more of these types of places than any other state.

Sudoku

Word Search

*For answers to the puzzles, please check The Montclarion Facebook page every Thursday.*
Future Governor, Will You Keep Your Promises?

New Jersey is the home of Bruce Springsteen, the ‘pork roll vs. Taylor ham’ debate and the state with the most diners. It is no question that New Jersey is a dynamic place, full of character, diversity and culture.

Our amazing state deserves genuine representation and tender, loving care, and as the governor, you have big shoes to fill. The 8 million inhabitants of New Jersey are counting on major changes to take place in their home state.

If you can’t tend to our passions and problems, what is the point of being in the position of power you are hoping to achieve?

Whoever wins, whether it is the familiar Democrat and current Gov. Phil Murphy, or Republican opponent, Jack Ciattarelli, the people and the businesses of New Jersey are counting on someone to make some real changes and improvements to the place we call home.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has displaced many people all over the country. People have lost their homes and jobs, and small businesses were left out to dry. What are we going to do to uplift the people again, especially those who are unemployed and hardly making ends meet with governmental assistance?

You need our support because we come in numbers, but too often it seems that politicians, like you, are taking advantage of our struggle to get votes, sponsorships and money for your own estate. Education seems to be an important issue for both candidates, as well as many of the politicians of our past elections. However, schools remain underfunded, and the American youth are consistently falling behind our international counterparts.

It seems that to get a valuable education, not just high education, the cost is too much for too many. It is a price tag that divides people who are just as deserving of these resources but unfortunately are not granted access, due to being of lower socioeconomic status. New Jersey may be one of the highest-ranked states when it comes to education, but it is also home to some of the most segregated schools in the country.

When it comes to education, what about the state of our public schools? More specifically, the ones in marginalized communities, where important programs are being cut and teachers are tired and underpaid?

Speaking of underpaid, it is time to increase the minimum wage. The cost of living is expensive here, considering we are right outside of New York City and our taxes are some of the highest in the country. The current minimum wage is far from a livable one. No wonder businesses have been having a hard time keeping employees during the pandemic; nobody wants to risk the safety of themselves and their loved ones for $12 an hour.

One of New Jersey’s more infamous qualities is our thriving manufacturing industry. The odors of factories and burning materials consume nearly every car driving on the New Jersey Turnpike. The amount of times there has been an advisory about unsafe air conditions is alarming, and it seems to become more frequent as the years go on.

The future of the environment is counting on those in positions of power to make real change. It is one thing to push the initiative to get the people to recycle or use paper bags instead of plastic, but what about the major industries polluting the earth?

Mega-corporations like Amazon are most responsible for the deterioration of the world, and though these companies may positively impact the government and the economy, it is not benefiting the everyday person. In fact, they are exploiting us, and that must change.

Murphy praised Amazon’s latest plan to build a “mega-hub” in Newark Airport, but protesters, several former Amazon employees among them, made their displeasure clear. Will you listen to the people when they tell you what they want?

I am only scratching the surface of things the residents of New Jersey expect from the governor. We demand change and action, not false promises made to gain our support during your campaigns.

It is easy to act like you have the people’s best interests in mind. But at the end of the day, you must choose between your reputation and wealth, or doing better for this state and the people you are responsible for.

Will your promises be met? Or will New Jersey be disappointed and continue the cycle many are so desperately trying to break? That’s all up to you.
Phil Murphy Can Do More — In His Next Term

Jack Ciattarelli's Plans For New Jersey

Ian Horn, a political science major, and Sal DiMaggio. IAN HORN | GUEST WRITER

While some may worry that this reduction in taxes will take away from the funding of healthcare, Ciattarelli has pledged to make it more affordable for New Jersey residents. He plans to implement a free-market healthcare system, and prohibit any health insurance company from de- nying or limiting someone’s coverage for a pre-existing condition. He also wants to redirect Medicaid funds from the federal government so those who have limited access to health care can help.

Relating to the issue of immi- gration, Ciattarelli has pledged to end the Sanctuary City system the state and various cities within have imple- mented. He also supports an EVerify system to make sure any immigrant who wants to work is eligible to do so.

This may upset New Jersey vot- ers, as residents may fear for undocu- mented relatives who could lose their jobs due to the Republican Party’s generally strict anti-immigra- tion stance.

Additionally, Ciattarelli stresses balance when it comes to solving the climate crisis. He advocates for less- ening carbon emissions coming from the state until a safe alternative is settled upon, such as micro nuclear, geothermal, hydro power, carbon cap- ture and hydrogen batteries.

But at the same time, Ciattarelli plans to keep natural gas in use along with renewable energy. However, Murphy’s plan costs too much, saying that the current governor’s energy plan will cost $52,500 per resident over the lifetime of the plan as esti- mated by Affordable Energy for New Jersey, and will hurt New Jersey fami- lies, as they heavily rely on natural gas in their homes.

Last but not least, we have Ciattarelli’s stance on abortion, and reproductive rights. While Ciattarelli does not support taxpayer funding of abortion, he is a supporter of the Pain-Capable Child Protection Act, which prohibits abortion after 20 weeks, ex- cept in some cases of rape, incest and when the pregnancy is endangering the life of the mother, while ensuring that all women have access to high-quality prenatal care and education. He also wants a part of an emphasis on educa- tional and innovative ways to prevent teenage and unwanted pregnancies.

Democrats outnumber Republicans in New Jersey by 1.2 million, or al- most a 2-1 scale. Furthermore, Murphy has a 9-point lead over Ciattarelli in a recent poll, so things are not looking in his favor. This doesn’t mean it’s over for the Republican candidate; the last time a Democratic governor won reelection in New Jersey was 1977.

This election is a big one for New Jersey. How we vote on Tuesday affects the way the state runs for the next few years and therefore our futures are shaped. At the end of the day, Jack Ciattarelli’s vision has much to offer for this state, even if it doesn’t mesh with the state on every single issue. The question is, though: does he have what it takes to lead New Jersey? I think so.

If you want to learn more about Ciat- tarelli’s policies, you can visit both his website and YouTube channel.

SAL DIMAGGIO | STAFF WRITER

Jack when Phil Murphy an- nounced his run for governor in May 2016, many people drew paral- els between him and former Gov. Jon Corzine.

Both served long tenures at Gold- man Sachs before entering politics and financed their campaigns with tens of millions of dol- lar's from their own pockets.

However, while Corzine was griped by unpopular budget decisions, eventu- ally losing to Chris Christie upon run- ning for reelection in 2009, Murphy looks set to win a second term, with a recent poll by Monmouth University in which he was leading 50% to 39%.

If he does win reelection, Murphy will become the first Democrat to win reelection as governor since Brendan Byrne in 1977, and this is not due to chance.

Murphy has managed to carve out a place for himself in the state’s Demo- cratic party and pushed through policy that seemed unthinkable at the start of his term.

The two of his most lauded policies, a millionaire’s tax and the legalization of recreational marijuana, both seemed impossible after he took office. This was largely due to a shaky relationship between Murphy and Democratic State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney.

For the first two years of his term, Murphy and Sweeney had an icy rela- tionship, in part due to Murphy pushing

out Sweeney in the 2017 gubernatorial primary, as well as ideological differ- ences. Murphy is a staunch progressive, while Sweeney lies closer to the center and had a close relationship with Re- publican former Gov. Chris Christie.

But despite this, the two have gradu- ally found a working relationship. During budget negotiations in 2020, Murphy and Sweeney, together with speaker of the General Assembly Craig Coughlin, were able to come to agree to Murphy’s millionaire’s tax.

The 10.75% tax rate, previously only applied to people making above $5 mil- lion, would be extended to those mak- ing above $1 million. As part of the compromise, some of this new income would be used to fund $500 tax rebates to lower and middle-income earners.

Legal marijuana was another issue where compromise was needed, but after voters approved a referendum on legalization 67% to 33%, the legislature got to work on a bill.

Negotiations were again tense, but an initial bill legalizing marijuana was signed in February of this year, with further action on the way. Murphy said he was “open-minded” on adjusting policies to allow home cultivation of marijuana in a recent interview with NJ News 12.

Other policies accomplished since his inauguration include the passage of a $15 hourly minimum wage, automatic voter registration, equal pay laws, resto- ration of $7.5 million in women’s health funding and a ban on jails signing con- tracts with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Murphy’s first four years have been wildly successful, making much head- way on progressive policies that help those who sorely need it. But, there’s still much more work to be done.

By harnessing the fundamental change brought to our state’s politics, Murphy could seek to remedy funda- mental issues in New Jersey, building off the successes of his first term.

For example, New Jersey has one of the most segregated school systems in the nation, something that Murphy has taken little action on in his first term, other than a 2018 lawsuit filed by peo- ple close to Murphy.

This lawsuit, Latino Action Network v. New Jersey, is backed by the New Jersey Education Association and led to talks on proposed solutions on the issue. The talks gradually broke down, and now case moves to the state’s Superior Court in January of last year.

A strong performance in the gov- ernor’s election would give Murphy a commanding mandate to address this, whether it be through a push for statewide school districts, legislation to increase the amount of affordable housing or some other solution.

Yet this is just one example of what Murphy could handle in a hypothetical second term.

At the end of the brutal 2009 cam- paign, after the narrow loss that led to eight years of Christie, Corzine gave a bitter speech.

“There is more for you to do, there is more for all of us to do,” Corzine said. Twelve years later, these words ring more true than ever. Much good has been done since Murphy took office — so much positive change that seemed impossible at first is working to be completely satisfied.

New Jersey needs a second term of Phil Murphy at his best. If the momen- tum the last four years is continued until 2026, then our state and its peo- ple will be closer to the ideals of free- dom and equality than any other state, at any other time.

Ian Horn, a freshman political science major, is in his first year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.

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Although having the car has given me an immense amount of freedom in comparison to my freshman year, it didn’t help my case so much in terms of getting into the city. It still seems to take the same amount of creativity and money to get me just 15 miles east of campus.

On my first city trip after almost two years, I had to spend a couple of hours the day before simply trying to figure out a place to park my car for the night that wasn’t overpriced. I did eventually find free parking in Bloomfield where trains to the city leave every hour or so on the weekends.

I did all this just to miss the train the next day due to a faulty GPS and a conductor who decided to pull away from the station 10 minutes early. Getting back to campus the next day was a whole other adventure. Needless to say, in my experience, New York City is not as accessible to Montclair State as is advertised.

This isn’t just an inconvenience for students, it is a safety issue as well. There have been countless times where I’ve been stranded in some sketchy places by myself at night, just because of one train or bus coming early, or a tiny flaw in my travel plan.

The Montclarion did discuss this issue with Montclair State President Jonathan Koppell, and he expressed concern for this problem as well as interest in finding a solution.

There are several ways to address this issue, starting with giving the students the resources they need to be safe and have fun in the city. A simple web page on the university website with resources that could help students plan an affordable and safe trip into the city would go a long way.

Koppell even mentioned potential- ly providing a shuttle service through the school that would transport students to and from a station with access to the city on the weekends, like Secaucus Junction.

Either way, the administration needs to address this in some way, as we are a part of the Montclair State community on the weekends too, not just the weekdays. Our safety and overall quality of experience on weekends should be a priority.

Emma Caughlan, a junior journalism major, is in her first year as managing editor for The Montclarion.

Researchers discover critically endangered condors are capable of asexual reproduction

Actor and New Jersey native Kal Penn comes out as gay, reveals engagement to partner of 11 years

Jon Bon Jovi tests positive for COVID-19

Paterson schools denied millions in aid by New Jersey State Board of Education
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Room 2035, School of Communication and Media in Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043
‘As You Like It’ Launches Montclair State’s ‘Unmasked!’ Series

Megan Lim
Entertainment Editor

Montclair State University’s Department of Theatre and Dance held a three-day run of William Shakespeare’s ‘As You Like It’ from Oct. 28 to 30 at Memorial Auditorium, kicking off the academic year’s collection of 11 in-person, live student productions known as the ‘Unmasked!’ series.

Directed by Avery Glymph, ‘As You Like It’ is a comedy that incorporates gender-bending, adventurous elements as it tells the story of Rosalind, played by senior acting major Talia Wynzel, and how she and those around her develop their romantic lives in an unconventional setting.

Rosalind is joined by her cousin, Celia, played by senior acting major Alex Farrell and court fool, Touchstone, played by junior acting major Trent Greenwell, when she flees from royal court after being banished by senior actor major Ethan Meta’z character, Duke Frederick.

Upon arriving at the Forest of Arden, Rosalind eventually crosses paths with the son of a well-known nobleman, Orlando, played by sophomore acting major Jared Preston, who she had recently fallen in love with at first sight prior to leaving home.

Production manager Peter Davis had the role of coordinating the work done by the show’s director, designers, managers, performers and technicians, as well as creating schedules and budgets. This position granted him insight into the distinctiveness of the performance.

‘William Shakespeare wrote this play over 400 years ago,’ Davis said. ‘And it has been presented [a] thousand times. Every one [of] those productions is unique. That is the beauty of Shakespeare.’

What sets Montclair State’s rendition of ‘As You Like It’ apart is it being the school’s first production performed for a live audience in nearly two years since before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is an important aspect in the growth of theatre students, according to Davis.

‘It is very fulfilling to see our students producing work in front of an audience again,’ Davis said. ‘Live theatre is a unique experience that requires the presence of an audience, like the proverbial, ‘Tree falling in the forest.’ There are many components to the training of theatre artists, but it really needs to include the live performance experience."

With practices beginning immediately after parts were cast and much individual and collective effort being done to deepen understanding of the play, the students involved made the final production of two hours and 25 minutes, including intermission, a memorable one.

Each scene was vibrant and noteworthy in its own way whether it be simple but stunning set designs and lighting, live music being played on the guitar or the attention-demanding stage presence of the cast members.

Throughout the performance, those watching were alive with laughter from consistently hilarious exchanges between characters like Rosalind, Celia and audience-favorite, Touchstone. Comedy was the clear genre of ‘As You Like It,’ as it used a mix of actors speaking directly to the audience, making quick, witty remarks and fully developed comedic scenes with the intent of providing viewers nothing but minutes of pure humor.

What seems to come naturally to the cast members is actually the product of intense personal work, according to Wynzel.

“We have to come up with backstory for our characters that is not written in the script and really mold our own version of the character throughout the story we are telling,” Wynzel said. “It happens so fast. Before we know it, we are in the theatre and all the elements, lights, sound, the set, costumes, come into play, and our characters really come to life.”

The culmination of these components ensured those in the audience walked away from “As You Like It” with a positive memory of their return to in-person performances.

Hunter Ayala, a junior business administration major, especially loved the closing number that drew the production to an end. A standout scene in a play of many unforgettable moments, the entire cast came together in a final, choreographed dance scene that highlighted the goal of “As You Like It,” to leave the audience with a fun experience.

“The dance number at the end came out of nowhere,” Ayala said. “I felt like it was very needed after very much speaking and acting and the intensive fight storyline of what was going to happen. That dance number at the end where everybody was able to come together was amazing.”

It wasn’t just the audience left with fluttering hearts after the curtain closed as Wynzel explains.

“This show was so beautiful,” Wynzel said. “From the set to the costumes, the sound and lighting, to the acting. We all came together and poured a little bit of our hearts onto the stage for everyone to see. I will never forget this show. Thank you to everyone [whose] heart has been left on that stage forever.”

Trent Greenwell (center), a junior acting major who plays Touchstone, soars in front of the crowd to simulate his character skydiving, while carried by Elijah Davis (left) and Andrew Linden (right).

Avery Nixon | The Montclarion

Talia Wynzel and Jared Preston shine as the leads, Rosalind and Orlando, of “As You Like It.”

Avery Nixon | The Montclarion
Colin Kaepernick Takes The World By Storm In ‘Colin in Black And White’

The Netflix series, “Colin in Black & White,” released on Oct. 29, 2021, follows Colin Kaepernick, a former NFL quarterback widely known for his activism and protesting of racial injustice as evident in his decision to kneel during the national anthem at football games.

Directed by Ava DuVernay and narrated by Kaepernick himself, the show depicts his struggles and efforts to fight racism in his middle school and high school days, where he had to deal with doubtful coaches and was surrounded by uninformed, ignorant individuals.

Kaepernick is played by Jaden Michael, who does a brilliant job at portraying a young Kaepernick. He himself is a biracial male living in America and can relate to the struggles Kaepernick faced as a young athlete.

Adopted by two white parents, played by Mary-Louise Parker and Nick Offerman, Kaepernick and his family live in the city of Turlock, Cali- fornia, a place that screams no diversity and white privilege.

Growing up with two white adoptive parents gave Kaepernick the idea that their privilege was his privilege, but he would soon find out he was in for a long, brutal ride.

Right from the start, the tone is set by Kaepernick’s narration as he openly speaks about Black history in the sports world. His narration is less of a TED Talk, and more so an intimate conversation. Although some may feel his narration is too repetitive as scripted scenes already reveal the content, audience members can sense the emotion and feel like they are in the room with him.

While he narrates, strong visuals follow. In one of the scenes, for instance, viewers get to see the striking similarities between white coaches scrutinizing Black professional athletes and the auctioning off of Black men during slavery.

An outsider would never think once about comparing the two, nor think they have anything to do with each other. However, by having Kaepernick and the show’s writers incorporate this visual, it really educates the audience and gives them a look into the harsh reality that racism does run deep in sports.

Kaepernick’s dream of being a quarterback was repeatedly shut down by the cultural and institutional hurdles he had to face. Whether it was his hair style or the way he dressed, no matter how talented and hardworking he was, he still felt ignored and out of place. This stood true for Kaepernick even at home.

His parents are caring individuals but seemed to be quite unaware of the racial bias their son would endure in school. They didn’t realize the impact their naive, yet obvious racism had on him. Kaepernick also makes a huge effort to educate beyond the sports world, even though the show focuses on struggles he faced as a teenager. The consistent theme of rejection and fallen dreams in his life fueled his activism and choices beyond his teenage years.

Some scenes can be very serious and attempt to force one to understand the struggles of Black athletes and the fight for equality. With such important and sensitive topics, it may seem like there is no room for humor. However, throughout each episode, subtle jokes are made, which create a balance and put the audience in a more lighthearted mood.

This compelling series is entertaining and thought-provoking, despite the mix of fiction and nonfiction content. The message and storyline leave the viewer with a strong appreciation and inside view of Kaepernick’s personal struggle to embrace his identity and the sacrifices he made in the fight for racial equality.

Despite what society may think, always remember your race, culture and who you are as a person is beautiful. So, embrace it. More importantly, believe in yourself.

Sehena Sembenu
Staff Writer

Top Picks to Stream

Matthew McConaughey Edition

Matthew McConaughey gives the performance of a lifetime in Christopher Nolan’s “Interstellar.” Set in a future where the Earth is becoming uninhabitable, NASA sends former astronaut Cooper (played by McConaughey) and his team out into a wormhole. Through the wormhole, the team has to explore different planets to try and find a new home for humanity.

While exploring one of the potential habitable planets, two of the members return after just a couple of hours, but are met with a horrifying discovery. This Academy Award-winning sci-fi film with a star-studded cast is a thrill from beginning to end.

- Avery Nixon
Staff Writer

‘How to Lose A Guy In 10 Days’ on Amazon Prime Video

“How to Lose A Guy In 10 Days,” directed by Donald Petrie, continues to be a fan-favorite when looking for the perfect rom-com to watch by yourself or with a group of friends.

After Andie Anderson, played by Kate Hudson, pitches a brilliant idea to her editor, Lana, played by Bebe Neuwirth, she sets out to fulfill her task of getting rid of a guy in only 10 days.

Meanwhile, Ben Barry, played by Matthew McConaughey, an overly confident advertising executive with a very flirtatious personality, makes a bet that he can get a woman to fall in love with him in 10 days.

When the two cross paths at a party, they both unknowingly get involved in each other’s schemes.

- Vanessa Diaz
Guest Writer
Movies Where Men Don’t Get Away With It

Avery Nixon
Staff Writer

With the ever-growing popularity of Netflix’s hit original show, “You,” viewers find themselves romanticizing the character Joe Goldberg, played by Penn Badgley. Joe is a psychopath who believes he is a “nice guy” while simultaneously stalking, tormenting and murdering those who fall victim. The issue isn’t with the underlying themes of the show at all.

“You” is just doing its job as a psychological thriller; the real problem is rooted in the fact that we allow ourselves to completely disregard Joe’s torturing of his ex-girlfriends and go as far as to glamorize it.

Our feelings conflict between our morals and these characters’ actions, making us want to revisit films where the tables are turned. That is, movies where the bad men don’t get their undeserving happily ever after.

With that being said, here are some of the best films where the men don’t get away with it:

1. “Promising Young Woman” (2020, Available on Amazon Prime Video)
A horror-cult classic, “Promising Young Woman” has the hook that makes us want to be best friends with all the girls on our crush’s Snapchat.

This 2020 aesthetically pleasing masterpiece brought to life by director Emerlad Fennell, is the revenge thriller of the decade.

A horror-cult classic, “Jennifer’s Body” has taken the honor as a horror-comedy must-see.

“Hush” is a horror movie that tells the tale of a deaf writer, Maddie, who lives isolated in the woods. She only has contact with her friendly neighbor whose home is a bit far from hers.

5. “Freaky” (2020, Available on HBO Max and Hulu)
While the protagonist of “Freaky” is played by Vince Vaughn throughout the film, it still tells the story of a shy girl seeking revenge on a serial killer who tried to end her life. The ridiculously funny comedy plays a twist on the classic “Freaky Friday” (2003) situation. The town’s infamous serial killer (Vaughn) tries to murder the shy, unpopular and anxious teenage girl, Millie, played by Kathryn Newton. In the process of doing so, the two characters switch bodies.

6. “Freaky” (2020, Available on HBO Max and Hulu)
Now, Millie is stuck in the disgusting and filthy body of the serial killer as she has to learn to overcome her fears and get her old body back before any more students are killed.

Though not the standard coming-of-age film, it’s still a must-see comedy for horror fans.

These films contradict the viewing of women as constant targets of sexualization, abuse and unjust treatment in our favorite movies and shows. Seeing these characters overcome their abuse and fears creates a more empowering atmosphere for women in cinema.
The Franchise Continues With ‘Paranormal Activity: Next Of Kin’


The franchise isn’t just about cameras catching ghosts and a family being haunted. The plot of all seven films surrounds a witch coven and their hunt for first-born males in order to form an army of possessed men for a demon, dubbed as “Toby,” in exchange for wealth and power.

“Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension,” the last installment before “Paranormal Activity: Next of Kin,” leaves off with Toby taking a human form.

However, “Paranormal Activity: Next Of Kin” is a completely different film, as it brings us on a tour through a remote Amish farm and the community that resides there.

Margot, played by Emily Bader, is a young woman on a mission to find out about her birth mother. She learns her mother abandoned her after being shunned by her Amish community.

After using an ancestry website, Margot is brought to her birth family by her cousin, Samuel Baylor, played by Henry Ayres-Brown. They are joined by a filmmaking team, consisting of Chris, played by Roland Buck III, and Dale, played by Dan Lippert.

This movie doesn’t fit into the franchise whatsoever.

The cinematography differs extremely from the earlier “Paranormal Activity” films we’ve grown to love. Rather than cameras being set up around the house, the seventh film is filmed solely in a documentary style with the characters holding the cameras themselves.

Not only that, but viewers can expect that ghosts don’t ever appear in the film or make their way into the plot.

That doesn’t mean there aren’t frightening moments in the film, however. The setting is more unsettling than your average suburban home. It’s a lot darker and more evil than the first movies.

When Margot tells a little girl on the farm her mother used to live there, the young girl insists the mother is still present, sending chills down Margot and the viewers’ spines.

“She’s still here,” the girl says. “She doesn’t like you.”

Not only do we get to see creepy children, but also a disturbing church in the middle of the woods that looks like it hasn’t been touched since the pilgrims landed there.

If you enjoy elements like these, you will probably enjoy this film. If you are looking to reminisce on the original “Paranormal Activity” movies, this may not be the movie for you.

With a staggering drop from the original film’s 83% rating on Rotten Tomatoes to a measly 21% for “Paranormal Activity: Next of Kin,” it’s safe to say critics and audiences aren’t too keen on the reboot.

However, we cannot let our love of the old films stop us from enjoying the new ones. After the disappointment that is “Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension,” the change of atmosphere may have been needed.

While “Paranormal Activity: Next of Kin” does fall below the audience’s hopes, it can make for a great standalone movie once removed from the expectations of the first couple of films.

Not only does it establish itself from its previous films, but it also has a brilliant ending that makes you want to see a sequel. It is a perfect setup for the continuation of the franchise and includes even more sinister cinema for us to enjoy.

So, if you want to see ghosts in the suburbs terrorizing middle-class families, go watch the first three films. But if you need more of a change, watch the seventh film set in one of the creepiest farms known to man.
The new Red Hawk Sports Network is changing the game in sports coverage

Ryan White
Staff Writer

Sports coverage at Montclair State University took a turn in the fall of 2019. The Red Hawk Sports Network (RHSN) was born, and since then, it has changed everything about how Montclair State University’s athletics are viewed.

The way sports media has affected how we view sports is often taken for granted. Sports of the old, for the most part, focused primarily on the competitive events among athletes. Our sports culture today is not only made up of the competitive events themselves but the surrounding issues and stories among specific athletes.

RHSN covers all 18 varsity athletic teams at Montclair State, with live streams of all home contests on YouTube with a color and play-by-play commentator calling the game. The network also has a weekly show called “Inside the Nest.” The show releases a video every Monday on their YouTube page and is put together mostly by students in a class that meets twice a week, led by professor Stacy Gitlin.

All of the work for the class is done outside of the classroom, as the objective is to create the weekly show. The RHSN also offers social media content and the ability to cover non-varsity sports, such as a club team.

There is also an RHSN club that allows students who are not registered in the class to get involved. Although “Inside the Nest” is made with much collaboration, Gitlin is the one who navigates it all. Not to mention, she is also the director of the weekly show.

Each week, Gitlin says, students within the class typically have a project they are working on for that week’s show.

“There’s no consistency to [the projects]. One week someone could be doing ‘What to Watch For,’ which is really just a 20-second piece of video with a graphic,” Gitlin said. “And another week, they could be going to a game and shooting it live, to put together a ‘Game of the Week’ package that is much more complex.”

Seniors Jack Bartek and Alex Grabiec both play key parts when it comes to “Inside the Nest,” as they are both producers for the show. The two of them have been with the network from the very beginning and are in charge of working with the class, creating the rundown, editing the show and figuring out different ways to create content.

“I think we have a good idea of the stories that we want to cover,” Bartek said. “But it gets down to the nitty-gritty of it, [such as], ‘How do we want to say that the soccer team has won 10 games in a row?’”

In the content creation industry, you have to stand out, and with these two at the helm, RHSN has been in phenomenal shape. Grabiec emphasizes how he and the team do more than just report on sports.

“We cover every aspect of Montclair State sports while also highlighting the athletes who have more of a story to them,” Grabiec said. “Coverage of this magnitude is generally only seen in Division I schools and professional sports. Gitlin believes the class is incredibly helpful in preparing students for a future career in sports media.

“This class, if you want to work in this business, is exactly what you need,” Gitlin said.

Within RHSN, there are interns who are chiefly responsible for broadcasting the games and also contributing to the weekly show. Along with sending two sports commentators to every home game, a production team is sent out to film the game as well. Bartek says this is what he loves about his work.

“It’s my favorite part of the job — getting to call the games,” Bartek said. “I mean growing up, you listen and watch games all of the time and it literally is a dream come true.”

Sports communication majors at Montclair State have an opportunity that many students across the country don’t have. The RHSN prepares students for the professional world and it teaches them all of the requisite skill sets they might need in the field.

Kelly Whiteside, along with Gitlin, is the co-founder of the network. She spoke to The Montclarion about what skills a student could learn through the sports network.

“It’s a little bit of everything: writing, shooting, producing, managing and social media skills,” Whiteside said. “All of that comes into play when you work for the RHSN as a member of the club, an intern or a member of the class.”

The network has come a long way since its original initiation. The spring of 2020 was supposed to be huge for the network, but for much of that year, there were no sports due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The RHSN is constantly trying to expand, and just recently, they hosted their first-ever live pregame show that included interviews with players and coaches along with analysis. Future plans include live shows at every home sporting event, along with having sideline reporters, sports analysts and other positions.

Building a network like this takes a lot of hard work. Seeing the finished product doesn’t quite show just how much time and effort is put in.

Bartek explained why the RHSN means so much to him.

“I was there from day one. I’ve seen it grow every step of the way and I know what it can be,” Bartek said. “I hope that one day — 10 years [or] 20 years down the line — I can have a successful career and come back and see the network turn into what I think it could be.”

Coverage Of Montclair State Athletics

Has Been Changed Forever
Steven Breeman averaged 15 points and eight rebounds despite only playing four games last season.

Breeman attempts a layup during a 2021 matchup against William Paterson.

Contributing Writer
Jack Barteck

Fall continues to peek its head through at Montclair State University, as the temperature dips towards the colder season. One of the telltale signs of the shift to autumn is sneakers squeaking on the gym floor of the Panzer Athletic Center, as the men’s basketball team begins their season.

The double doors from the locker room on the far side of the gym slowly opened meaning shootaround had begun prior to the first coaches’ practice of the season.

After an eight-month-long hiatus, senior forward Steven Breeman received an opening introduction by junior guard Keyon Pryce that would make even Bruce Bfuffer proud.

“There he is, the man himself!” Price said. “Steve Breeman!”

While he may not be the flashiest player in the gym, Breeman has certainly earned the title of “the man” through his impact on the men’s basketball program. Last year, he led the Red Hawks in a trying, pandemic-shortened season, averaging 15.8 points per game, in addition to 8.8 rebounds per game. Those numbers would put him right near the top of the Shore Conference First Team, which saw Moravian capture their first NCAA tournament win in school history. He played in 29 games each prior year at Moravian.

In his freshman campaign, Breeman received an opening introduction by senior forward Steven Breeman to [Montclair State],” Pryce said. “Steve was picking up left and right, trying to help guys interact, so he was definitely a step ahead of the game.”

After a disappointing end to his first year at Montclair State, which included missing the playoffs on the final day of the regular season, Potts and the Red Hawks seemed poised to make a run in year two. One of the biggest keys was the jump that Breeman had made in the offseason.

It was late February when the team was practicing in preparation for a home-and-home series with Rutgers-Newark, with the playoffs on the horizon. In an instant though, the whole tone of the season changed. Breeman had come down on a teammate’s ankle and would have to miss extended time.

“Once he said he was going to Montclair State, I thought: ‘You know what? Let me just give it some time [and] talk to my parents, because I am definitely going to go,'” Breeman said.

“Those were certainly challenges that lay ahead at Montclair State. Potts was known at Moravian for his in-your-face, press-for-40-minutes style, had a rotation of 12 players who played over 26 games each prior year at Moravian. Now, he had to take over a completely different roster that was unaccompanied with his style. One huge advantage, however, was bringing Breeman with him.

“Breeman still had on everyone, senior forward Irving Callender IV notes. “He was only a sophomore, but he knew there was something special about Breeman.

“I thought he was a guy that early in his career would take him a little bit of time,” Potts said. “I thought his work ethic and his commitment would have been an advantage Breeman had, already having spent a year in the system.

“Sitting out and watching my team, Breeman said he was determined not to let the time go to waste, finding any way to stay involved and help his team win.

“Even though he wasn't on the court, he was still getting us, so we still got the best out of him,” Callender said. “He's an extremely vocal leader. A lot of the young guys look up to him and he knows this system.

Now, nearly eight months later, Breeman is back and has a chance to help Potts complete the turnaround of the program. After another off-season of hard work, helping his team through captain’s workouts and practices, Potts had high praise for the man he started this journey with.

“I think he's just committed. He's as consistent a guy as I've been around in college basketball,” Potts said. “[He] is all in, [and] committed to trying to do the best for the team. He’s a guy who just wants to win. As a person, he is as good as it gets.”

As for Breeman, he doesn’t plan on measuring the success of his senior season on the wins and losses alone.

“No trying to get better every day,” Breeman said. “I'm trying to help the young guys get better every day. And I think if we can get a little bit better every single day, we could accomplish a lot.”

After giving Breeman a warm welcome back to practice, Pryce continued his praise for Breeman, knocking down jump shot after jump shot.

“He's extraordinary. He's different,” Pryce said. “That’s probably the best word you could describe [Breeman] with. He's just different.”

Despite being sidelined for the season, Breeman said he was determined to make the most out of everything he could to try and play. So, he took it hard in terms of not being able to finish the season on the court. But, I give him credit. He stayed in a leadership role.”
Kendall Hodges Looks to Playoff Glory After Breakout Freshman Year

Hodges has become the point guard of the future for the women’s basketball program

Ryan Nussbaum
Staff Writer

To most people in the sports world, a college athlete’s freshman season is more about player development and adjusting to new schemes and playbooks rather than gameplay. Freshmen are typically expected to sit on the bench and learn from more experienced teammates, especially on talented squads, where in-game minutes may be few and far between.

Don’t tell that to breakout star Kendall Hodges.

The 5’5” sophomore guard out of Abington Friends School, just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, proved to be a pivotal player for the Montclair State University women’s basketball team last season, which went on to the conference championship game.

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Hodges’ path to Montclair State was far different than any basketball recruiting class before her. Traditional in-person meetings with recruiters were replaced by Zoom calls and film studies with the college coaching staff.

“It was kind of weird,” Hodges said. “I did have [assistant coach Katie Sire] come to one of my games, but [head coach Karin Harvey] didn’t get to see me play until I got to campus.”

I was recruited off of film and phone calls.”

Once on campus, Hodges had to quickly adjust to the demanding lifestyle that college athletics requires. She described how fans and other students might not realize the commitment and sacrifice required to play for the Red Hawks.

“[Just today], I had a 6 a.m. practice,” Hodges said. “[I] got up at 4:45 a.m., was here at the gym by 5:30 a.m. I went to class at 11:15 a.m. and now I’m here [at Panzer Athletic Center] for treatment and another workout.”

When the 2021 season tipped off last January, her role quickly went from role player to leader after an opening night loss to Salisbury University. The coaching staff looked to the freshman to create scoring opportunities and bring her high energy to the Red Hawks.

“After the Salisbury game,” Hodges said, “I had a conversation with both of my coaches and they told me about the role I could have on this team. They needed a point guard who could lead the team and take us to where we wanted to go. It was then when I realized [my new role].”

During the basketball team’s next matchup versus William Patterson University, she found her way into the starting lineup and from there, Hodges, as well as the Red Hawks did not look back.

Montclair State went on a winning streak that lasted almost the entire season.

Senior captain/guard Julia Sutton was extremely impressed with the way Hodges stepped into such a big role for this team early on in the season.

“Taking on a leadership role as a freshman can be intimidating,” Sutton said. “But once she got her confidence up she became an amazing leader for the other players on the team and even myself.”

Hodges also provides the squad with a reliable scorer on the floor. Out of the 19 contests that were played during the pandemic-shortened season, Hodges averaged 9.8 points per game which was third overall on the team. In a close matchup versus Kean University, she led the team with a 16-point performance.

She isn’t afraid to pass the ball either. Hodges lead the Red Hawks with 34 assists, averaging 3.4 per game last season.

Defensively, she led the team in steals.

If you’ve watched a Montclair State women’s basketball game, you know that Hodges is one of the fastest players on the court. Sutton believes that this has allowed for their offense and defense to thrive.

“We rely on Kendall’s speed to create our transition breaks [on offense] as well as on defense,” Sutton said. “The college level is a lot faster and she adjusted well to create [opportunities] for herself and her defense.”

Beyond the hardwood, Kendall brings life into the locker room. Between the long practices and games, she strives to keep the team in high spirits by getting an occasional laugh out of them.

“I’m the goofy one,” Hodges said. “The minute I walk in [the locker room], I’m dancing, I’m fooling around and [then] I’m playing around. I love to make Tik-Toks and all that.”

At the end of the season, the only person on the team who had more minutes played than Hodges was New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Player of the Year Taylor Brown. Not bad for a freshman.

Hodges’ stellar play was recognized across the NJAC. She took home three Rookie of the Week awards that season and was placed on the Second Team All-NJAC lineup.

Although she is honored to receive those awards, Hodges says it’s not enough for her. She still has the Red Hawks heart-breaking 64-60 NJAC Championship loss to New Jersey City University fresh in her memory. During the offseason, Hodges made it her mission to help end Montclair State women’s basketball’s three-year championship drought.

“We could say we’ve all been working in the gym,” Hodges said. “But, so has every other team in the conference. We really focused on our mental toughness [then]. Everyone’s pushing in sprints [or] finishing that layup. We all worked, especially myself, on having that ‘one more push’ when there’s two minutes left in a game.”

Overall, Hodges is just happy to finally be able to experience a season that is closer to normal than her previous season. There’s plenty to be excited about. The full season schedule returns and the restrictions on fans are gone. Not to mention, of course, the prospect of playing in the NCAA Tournament is enticing to Hodges.

“I’m a freshman again,” Hodges said. “[To me], this is my first year of college basketball. I’ve never really experienced the travel, the consistent practices and what it’s really like to be on a college basketball team. I’m excited for it and I’m ready.”

Kendall Hodges looks to lead Montclair State in the NJAC quarterfinal matchup against Rutgers-Camden.

Montclair Sports (Staff Writer)