How Did COVID-19 Funds Get Spent?

Soccer Star Aileen Cahill Wins NJAC Offensive Player of the Year

Matt Orth
Assistant Sports Editor

The Montclair State women’s soccer team had a phenomenal regular season that ended in heartbreak in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) semifinals versus Rowan University. This is similar to the early years of the Chicago Bulls when Michael Jordan first joined the team, Jordan as a young shooting guard carried the Bulls to the playoffs almost every year, but they would still always miss out on that championship gold.

Sophomore midfielder Aileen Cahill embodies the same spirit that Jordan carried in his early years of the Chicago Bulls when Michael Jordan first joined the team. Jordan as a young shooting guard carried the Bulls to the playoffs almost every year, but they would still always miss out on that championship gold.

Aileen Cahill continued on Page 28

The Montclair Investigation
pages 4-5

José Rodriguez Brings Tears of Laughter and Anguish to the Stage with ‘Metanoia’

Christopher Giacomini
Staff Writer

“Metanoia” means “change in one’s way of life resulting from penitence or spiritual conversion,” according to the Oxford Dictionary. To José Rodriguez, a senior theatre studies major at Montclair State University, who wrote and directed a show titled “Metanoia,” it means a lot more.

A collection of four shorter plays: “Friend,” “Skeletons,” “A Bag of Chips” and “Writer’s Mind,” “Metanoia” was shown at the White Eagle Hall in Jersey City, New Jersey, owned by the nonprofit Jersey City Theater Center. Rodriguez got the opportunity through the organization’s Producers’ Lab Program, which is made to support young artists as they transition into the professional field.

José Rodriguez continued on Page 20

Dining Services Holds Town Hall Event to Address Student Concerns

Paul Thomas
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Oct. 10, a student snapped a picture of a piece of undercooked chicken she was served at Sam’s Place. Within a few hours, two additional students also contacted dining services saying the same thing had happened to them.

Montclair State Dining hosted a town hall event in University Hall with a panel of speakers from dining services to address students regarding this situation and any other issues with campus dining on Nov. 16. The panel included Dora Lim, the district manager; James Stanridge, the senior executive campus chef, Renee Cetrulo, the director of operations, Bill Hedin, the senior director of residential dining and Lindsey Anderson, the marketing manager.

Dining Services continued on Page 3

My friends and I always joke that last year was the ‘forgotten year’ we managed to get through.

Kayla Mulligan
Staff Writer

Read more on Page 15
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 rape 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.

The first issue of The Montclarion, then named The Pelican, was published on Nov. 28, 1928.
Dining Services (continued from page 1)

Dining services wasted no time addressing the elephant in the room. Standridge began the meeting by explaining that undercooked chicken ended up on students’ plates because an employee did not follow proper protocols for food preparation.

“What I can tell you is that this occurred because one of our team members didn’t follow through on their training and the protocols that we have put in place and have put in place for years as an organization,” Standridge said.

Standridge continued by explaining the quality assurance procedures dining services carry out.

“We do quality assurance inspections from our team monthly [and] we also have third-party auditors that come in,” Standridge said. “At the moment, they are coming in every week. We also report to the health department of Clifton and Montclair, and they are directed by the [Food and Drug Administration].”

Despite the circumstances, Standridge made it clear there were no excuses.

“What I don’t want to do is tell you, ‘Gee that’s okay,’ because it’s not,” Standridge said. “One miss on a protocol is a significant issue and a significant challenge for us.”

Heslin continued the conversation by stressing the importance of students actively communicating with the dining services staff, as this was an important theme all the panel members continued to emphasize throughout the meeting.

“What we are trying to accomplish today and moving forward is to get that communication with you guys,” Heslin said. “[We want to] have you guys know our faces. Come in, [and if] you have a question [or] you have a concern, you come speak with us.”

The second half of the town hall was opened for students to voice their concerns.

Emmelis Perez, a freshman business administration major, took advantage of this opportunity and spoke about the various issues she was having at Sam’s Place. One of those issues included the fact that students aren’t allowed to bring their own containers for takeout and must resort to the plastic green containers Sam’s Place provides.

“I had a few specific concerns when it came to vegetables and fruits being added to our menus, the cleanliness of the plates and utensils used and also the Tupperware issue, [in which] we can’t bring in our own,” Perez said.

Following the town hall meeting, Perez said she felt better about things.

“I feel a little bit better now that I have the [phone numbers] of specific people who run the [dining hall],” Perez said. “Now, I know if there is an issue we just have to ask the manager while it is happening so that the manager knows about the situation and it doesn’t go unheard.”

Kristina Burr, a freshman social media and public relations major, was also one of the students who spoke up at the meeting. Burr said she was grateful that students were being given an opportunity to voice their concerns, but still felt skeptical about how much of what they said would actually be implemented.

“I really appreciate the changes and this platform to be able to talk out these things, but I still think there is some mistrust within the student community and [that] we need to see an audible and visual change for sure,” Burr said.
More than $50 million has gone to students so far. The data revealed the information was a singular email. Many students said they did not know if they were eligible for these funds. Another issue that has popped up is the matter of eligibility. Many students said they did not know if they were eligible for HEERF grants due to their financial status. Under new guidelines established by the federal government, any student enrolled at an institution that received COVID-19 relief funds is eligible to receive a grant. This is an expansion from previous bills, which limited grants to those who were eligible for Title IV grants or had already filled out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Alejandra Linares Martinez, a senior product design major, said she was relieved to receive funding through HEERF. “I thought I would have to work overtime at my job, but the HEERF aid will help me be able to pay my tuition for the spring semester.”

“Three months later, I got money in my account.” Linares Martinez said. “I filled out the form and I totally forgot about it,” Linares Martinez said. “I received an email about something like that,” Olanrewaju said. “I felt like it was too late because I already paid for my fall semester.”

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act first established the Education Stabilization Fund as part of its over $2 trillion budget in spending, so that emergency relief could be disbursed to schools and universities after shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the $30.75 billion initially allocated to the fund, $47.7 million was awarded to Montclair State, with a significant portion through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). An additional $92.8 million came in through other COVID-19 stimulus bills, which includes the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The Montclarion reached out to Montclair State administrators to request information regarding how much money has been dispersed to students so far. The data revealed the majority of funding has been spent, but there is still approximately $63 million remaining.

More than $50 million of the $140 million has gone directly to students or designated for students, the data shows. Most of the remaining funds were considered institutional aid used to cushion the blow from the initial COVID-19 pandemic. That money was put toward reimbursements to residential students who had to move home as a result of the shutdown. Funding was also used in the purchase of technology to support remote learning and funding for free winter and summer courses as well as for students who had their education disrupted in the first wave of the pandemic. Alexander Diaz, a freshman psychology major, said he was relieved to receive funding through HEERF. “I thought I would have to work overtime at my job, but the HEERF aid will help me be able to pay my tuition for my fall semester.” Diaz said.

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Alejandra Linares Martinez, a senior product design major, was granted $1,000 in aid to help cover the cost of design programs she had to purchase to continue with her studies. “I filled out the form and I totally forgot about it,” Linares Martinez said. “Three months later, I got money in my account.”

However, there were a number of students who felt the school needs to do a better job of getting the word out. Emily Nause, a senior public relations major, said the school is not doing enough to inform students about these funds. “I’ve never heard of it before,” Nause said. Donna McMonagle, the university’s vice president for finance, agreed that more could be done to inform students of this funding. However, she felt that overall, the university had been successful in distributing these funds.

“I think we have done a good job, and I think there are also other ways that help enhance that process and make funding available to students,” McMonagle said. A third bill, the ARP was passed in March of this year, bringing $55.7 million in HEERF funding, more than the previous acts combined. With this massive funding, HEERF III grants allow the university to make payments more substantial, both in the number given and the dollar amounts received, according to McMonagle.

[HEERF III] provides greater flexibility to potentially expand the eligibility and to try to help more students and provide bigger awards to students,” McMonagle said. “But with the HEERF III, there’s also a focus on making sure that we’re thinking about students who may not have gotten aid previously.”

McMonagle also stressed the importance of giving grants to students who had a change in financial circumstances due to the pandemic. She said the finance department was going to launch a campaign to inform students about the option to have their financial status reevaluated, while HEERF III grants are being distributed, as required by the ARP.

The question also remains as to what the university will do with over $30 million in institutional HEERF funding. McMonagle listed plans to give funding to University Health Services and the Office of Health Promotion for programs that promote
Montclair State Has Spent COVID-19 Stimulus

Students, but many are unaware of the funding

a healthy environment in the face of COVID-19, such as mask-wearing.

Also mentioned was the expansion of mental health counselors and tutors, to try and alleviate some of the mental health struggles and learning difficulties associated with the pandemic.

Emily Warren, a sophomore biology major, gave her view on what the university should use these funds for.

“Montclair [State] should use the money to reopen closed dining locations on campus,” Warren said. “They’ve been closed since the pandemic, and that money could help pay for higher salaries for the workers.”

When questioned as to whether there were plans for a mechanism for students to pitch ideas for use of the funds, McMonagle acknowledged that there weren’t, but said she would take that idea back to the department.

As it stands now, McMonagle said the decision on this remaining funding is a collective effort, between the provost’s office, the deans, the university president and the finance office.

As vaccination rates rise, and life slowly returns to a sense of normalcy, it remains to be seen if a fourth wave of COVID-19 stimulus will be created through the Build Back Better Act, which is currently awaiting a vote in the House of Representatives. If successful, this could give further funding to Montclair State as a minority-serving institution.

McMonagle stressed that the office of finance is diligent about watching bills such as this one.

“What we try to do is be prepared to act quickly, and identify what’s the funding that’s available and what are the different ways that it may be used at this stage,” McMonagle said.

“Last semester when we had online classes, they gave me a little amount of money, but compared to this year, I didn’t get [any] money at all. I got student loans and I’m paying out of pocket basically.”

Mateen Olanrewaju
Senior
Information Technology

“As a product design major, we use programs that were only on campus, so when we went remote, there were programs that I had to buy that I had never expected to buy and they’re not very cheap.”

Alejandra Linares Martinez
Senior
Product Design

“Students should take advantage of grants when they come up, any dollar amount comes to good use for education.”

Alexander Diaz
Freshman
Psychology
Weekend Trouble at Freeman Dining Hall Is a Thing of the Past

In returning back to the now in-person fall 2021 semester, Montclair State University students noticed a pattern in the way Freeman Dining Hall was serving food on the weekends — and they were not happy about it.

Before Oct. 16, the dining hall was serving food in a buffet-style manner on weekends. This was different than the regular kiosk system they were used to. Though the dining hall has now implemented both methods, prior to the shift, students shared their reactions to the weekend buffet.

Sophie Blanc, a junior English major, did not particularly mind the food on weekdays but felt the dining hall could have done better with what they served on weekends.

"[The food] is fine on weekdays," Blanc said. "You get what you're expecting: nothing more [and] nothing less. It's a hit or miss sometimes. [But on the weekends], I'm not even picky, but this is iffy," Lithgow said.

Students were not the only ones recognizing a growing problem. Lisa Larrow, 45, has been a worker at Freeman Dining Hall since July 2017. She knows the ins and outs of the building, including the things students say about the food there.

Larrow works four days out of the week: Fridays, Saturdays (where she takes double shifts), Sundays and Mondays, making it clear she knows what kinds of things go on during the weekends. She said the dining hall is severely understaffed on those days and has heard students complain about the lack of options on weekends.

"Some [students] have voiced their concerns to me," Larrow said. "Some of them don't like the limited food options. They're not happy with it." Andrix St. Jean, 33, the sous chef and supervisor at Freeman Dining Hall, has worked there for four years. He, as well as Larrow, is no stranger to what students have been saying about the food.

"Some like it, some don't," St. Jean said. "A few of them say we don't have burgers and french fries [on weekends], and they want it back."

Unlike Larrow, however, St. Jean believes weekends are more laidback and that the issue does not lie in understaffing or limited options, but the quality of the food itself.

"I think we need better food, really," St. Jean said. "Sometimes it's kind of dry, the rice has nothing in it, the pizza cheese doesn't even melt ... I think it's the food quality itself and not the buffet style."

Regardless of differing perspectives on the matter, there is recognition amongst students and workers alike that the weekends here at Freeman Dining Hall were problematic.

With the kiosk system back in use, however, and the changes made to the dining hall's method of serving food, students eating in Freeman Dining Hall now have more options to look forward to on the weekends. Students' reactions have been fairly positive so far.

"[With the buffet] it's like what you get is what you get," Lithgow said. "I feel like I have a lot more options now."

Nevaeh Corvington
Guest Writer

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E-mail: montclarionentertainment@gmail.com
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SAD Is That You?

Monica Fernandez-Prato
Guest Writer

As we are adjusting to daylight saving time, the sun feels further away and the couch feels closer. Engaging in activities requires a stronger will and the idea of being back in bed sounds more tempting.

This ‘nope’ feeling is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that takes place with the change of the seasons.

Not to worry, as this isn’t uncommon. According to the Mayo Clinic Health System, up to 10% of primary care patients will report SAD symptoms to their doctors. Experienced low energy and marked changes in their moods and behaviors from the beginning of fall throughout the beginning of spring.

Though some people might know this condition as the “winter blues,” SAD isn’t exclusively a condition that occurs in cold weather. Mayo Clinic warns. Productivity, appetite and even social life can be affected for some people with the arrival of warm weather and long days.

The causes of SAD aren’t quite clear yet. A study from The Jackson Laboratories suggests that irregular levels of serotonin and melatonin may affect the adaptation during seasonal changes. Another study published in PubMed Central links sunlight exposure directly to people’s mood. Nutrition studies are also being done on this matter.

What is known for sure is that symptoms vary depending on the individual. Symptoms may be mild, meaning wanting to spend more time in bed, or could also be intense, which in that case could require professional guidance. The key is to pay close attention to our seasonal routines in order to recognize if there are red flags in our behaviors. The most common signs of SAD are:

- Change in eating patterns
- Social isolation
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Difficulty to stay focused
- Feelings of hopelessness
- The start of shorter, gray, and colder days is already taking a toll on some Montclair State University’s students.

Mirri Fournier, a junior linguistics major, notes that she’s seen a drop in her productivity.

“I’ve noticed my motivation is usually less when it’s darker out because I usually do my homework outside,” Fournier said. “When the sun goes away at 4 p.m. or 5 p.m., it’s hard for me to want to do my homework.”

For John Josephsen, a junior computer science major, many activities are less tempting during this time of year.

“If it’s getting dark a lot earlier, and it makes it a lot harder to have the ambition to want to go out,” Josephsen said. “It feels so late, even though it’s not actually. It’s that feeling of darkness that makes you think, ‘Oh, OK, it’s late. I shouldn’t go out,’ — that kind of thing.”

Naomi Lemieux, a junior exchange student majoring in animation illustration, feels more nervous now that the days are shorter.

“The most jarring thing is that it’s dark at 5:30 p.m.,” Lemieux said. “That makes going out late more anxiety-inducing because, for me, I like to get [back] home at sunset because it’s safer.”

There are ways to cope with SAD, according to Medical News Today. Maintaining a balance between well-deserved time to rest and time to practice active self-love can improve the situation. Keeping the feel-good brain chemicals flowing by staying active and indulging in holiday sweet treats is another way. Planning out nutritious meals for the week is another great idea as well as getting outside to see loved ones to maintain a healthy social life and social support.

Without a doubt, the best treatment is prevention, says psychology professor and clinical specialist, Dr. Barbara A. Prempeh.

“Therapy is something you can [do] at any point in your life; you don’t have to wait to have certain symptoms,” Prempeh said. “We have to get comfortable with the idea of therapy because sometimes we may not recognize the mal-adaptive behaviors we’re engaging in.”

Prempeh explains that having a support system before there’s a crisis is a sign of strength and good health. She urges those who need help to reach out.

“If you’re a student of Montclair State University, please utilize [counseling] services,” Prempeh said. “It’s at your fingertips.”

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is available at Montclair State. This program assists and supports faculty and staff to promote wellness and positive experiences on campus.

It’s important to note that SAD can lead to distorted and depressive thoughts, which can get progressively worse and turn into suicidal behaviors. Professional help is strongly advised and shouldn’t be skipped.

Professional help combined with the helpful tips outlined can help you get through SAD, so you can enjoy the holiday season and winter months safely.
The Rise of MSU Skaters

Tommy Bavaro
Guest Writer

For many years, students at Montclair State University have ridden skateboards throughout campus. Students use them as means to get to classes, dining halls or their dorms, in a faster and more efficient way - as well as for recreational use.

In September 2021, a new organization at Montclair State was formed that was all about skateboarding, the Montclair State University (MSU) Skaters. The MSU Skaters organization was founded by junior communication studies major Lauren Bentivegna.

Bentivegna often saw students skateboarding throughout campus and she wanted to form a community to get to know everyone who skated.

Bentivegna was going through a depressive episode years ago, so she started skating as an escape.

“I started skateboarding about three years ago as a senior in high school,” Bentivegna said. “I went to my local park whenever I had time to go skateboarding on my own. I wanted to do something to clear my mind.”

Daniel Ospino, a sophomore music education major, started skateboarding when he was four years old. He was surprised to find a skateboarding club at Montclair State.

“I discovered this organization from Instagram,” Ospino said. “I was surprised at first because I did not know this club existed until it popped up on Instagram. I thought to myself, ‘A skaters club?’”

Ospino can be seen skating all over campus, even during the busiest times.

“I try to skate whenever I can, whether it be on campus or not,” Ospino said. “When I’m on campus, I usually skateboard to get to classes faster.”

Denton Moreland, a freshman music education student, has been skateboarding for two years. Moreland started skateboarding when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic broke out. At the beginning of the pandemic, Moreland didn’t have too much to do until he pulled out his old skateboard from his garage.

He has turned his pandemic hobby into an efficient way to get around campus.

“I skateboard every day because that’s how I get to classes, my dorm and dining halls,” Moreland said. “Even when I’m home, I skateboard all the time.”

Moreland discovered MSU Skaters in a similar manner to Ospino.

“I also discovered the MSU Skaters club on Instagram,” Moreland said. “I thought to myself, ‘Hey, why not?’”

Instagram does seem to be the main entry point for new members but there are still a few challenges that the MSU Skaters are facing right now. It’s hard for Bentivegna to find members that have enough availability to commit to the club. As of today, Bentivegna is the only person who oversees the MSU Skaters organization.

The organization is not yet fully affiliated with the school, which means any events must take place off-campus.

One of Bentivegna’s biggest goals is to get MSU Skaters recognized by Montclair State.

“I want to make this organization a real club in the future so that way we get funds from the school,” Bentivegna said. “I would use the funds to buy skateboards and skate tools for beginners.”

Bentivegna hopes to get more students involved as the school year progresses. To learn more about the MSU Skaters organization, you can follow their Instagram account, @msuskaters.
HAWK TALK

What’s the weirdest thing you’ve bought on the internet?

By John LaRosa, Photo Editor

“I bought a gumball machine from Amazon and it didn’t even work. I was just buying stupid stuff with my unemployment money. It was one of the most useless buys in my life.”

John Marrero
Junior
Business Administration Major

“One of my friends really wanted to get these custom designed sneakers. They looked really, really cute and pink. They were supposed to be custom Nike’s off of an Etsy seller. What she got was a doll shoe that was plastic and sized at, like, an inch. She called the bank asking for the money back, and the artist was [mad], but Esty ended up shutting down their account.”

Ishtar Bernal
Freshman
Biochemistry Major
“I bought a frog through someone’s Instagram account as a pet.”

Christina Giordano
Senior
English Major

“I did buy an anime figure. It’s Enmu from Demon Slayer. He has a mouth on his hand and traps people in nightmares so he’s pretty weird.”

Ramatulai Senghor
Senior
Jurisprudence Major

“I mean, I paid for things in really weird ways. I like to be annoying and I like to pay in enrolled change. I have paid for gift cards in enrolled change. I have paid for tolls in enrolled change. Sometimes, I like to spice it up and use nickel sleeves.”

Becca Kobik
Sophomore
TVDM Major
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 dezmill12@comcast.net if interested.
The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

Disney Princess Edition

By Kayla Carlamere

Across
5. “As your wonderful princess I hereby decree that everyone who was ever mean to me shall be... executed.”
6. “How dare you? All of you! Standing around deciding my future? I am not a prize to be won!”
8. “Sometimes our strengths lie beneath the surface... Far beneath, in some cases.”

Down
1. “I want adventure in the great wide somewhere. I want it more than I can tell.”
2. “Find your humanity! Haven't any of you ever had a dream?”
3. “He wants me to be steady, like the river. But it's not steady at all.”
4. “There are those who say fate is something beyond our command. That destiny is not our own, but I know better.”
7. “I'm a damsel, I'm in distress, I can handle this. Have a nice day.”

Word Search

Sudoku

Word Search

*For answers to the puzzles, please check The Montclarion Facebook page every Thursday.*
Did Montclair State Show Students it ‘CARES?’

T he Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law by Congress on March 27, 2020, which might as well be an eternity ago given how much time has passed since then.

Most notable for the financial assistance it offered small businesses and educational institutions, the CARES Act has been a boon for public schools in particular.

Montclair State University was one of many institutions to receive funding through the CARES Act and Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II) and American Rescue Plan (HEERF III). Of the original CARES Act grants given in Essex County, Montclair State received one of the largest amounts overall at $19,911,482.

But did this money benefit as many students as it could have? There appears to have been no small amount of confusion over Montclair State’s level of communication when it comes to notifying students of the CARES Act funding.

Students who applied for assistance seem to have received it. The CARES Act and HEERF Grant application processes consisted of a Google form sent via Montclair State’s email list.

Multiple opportunities to apply for aid have been made available since the COVID-19 pandemic began, yet many students say they were unaware of the money in the first place.

Considering that the notifications regarding availability consisted of just one email per funding opportunity, this is understandable. Only the HEERF III email, which was the last one sent to students, sent a follow-up for any students who did not apply within a few days.

For such an important, widespread student issue, a single email amidst a sea of other communications seems insufficient.

Others were uncertain as to whether they were actually eligible for the grants at all and did not apply for that reason.

The CARES Act did come with some requirements which had to be met in order to receive aid, although Montclair State’s website states the only initial requirement is enrollment in classes at any time since March 2020. This can be said for the newly-updated HEERF grants under the American Rescue Plan, but not the original CARES Act.

Those who did get financial assistance were also unaware they were approved. With no notification as to whether their application had gone through, students were left uncertain of what their aid status was.

Many did not find out until they received their fall semester bill, which certainly provoked feelings of anxiety amongst those waiting to hear whether they would be able to afford another month of school.

According to an Instagram poll taken by The Montclarion, just 63% of students who applied for CARES Act assistance reported that they were approved and received tuition assistance. It is unclear whether this is due to the eligibility constraints in place at the time of the original CARES Act funding or other issues.

But with an initial federal grant larger than those given to Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, Brown University or Dartmouth College, it is strange and deeply unfortunate that so many students who applied said they didn’t receive funding, based on the results of the poll.

There were 24,200 students eligible for HEERF II and III funding, and with so much money to go around, one can only hope that Montclair State continues its expeditious distribution of emergency funds.

However, this can be a source of relief only if university communication is clearer and more emphasis is given to financial aid opportunities in the future.

In such inherently unstable times, certainty and clarity are necessities for all, especially when it comes to money. The Montclarion appreciates that many people did receive much-needed financial assistance and hopes to see even more students being given the resources and notice necessary to obtain said assistance in the future.
Sophomore or Second-Year Freshman?

For some, senior year of high school was cut short in March 2020. With sports seasons canceled, no prom and barely a graduation ceremony, many of the seniors from the class of 2020 can relate to the struggle of having to turn the page to college when it felt like we didn't even get to finish the last chapter.

Seven months of isolation and quarantining at home made me feel absolutely disconnected. During the summer of 2020, I knew I was attending Montclair State University in the fall, but the question was whether or not it would be worth it to dorm on campus. After deliberating, my family and I concluded that living on campus would help me turn to the next chapter and step into a somewhat normal college experience — or so we hoped.

September rolled around and I was all settled in my new college dorm. But I would soon find out that my dorm would be the only “normal” aspect of my freshman college experience.

When I think of college, the first image that comes to mind is the “Pitch Perfect” scene of Beca walking through her campus involvement fair, meeting new people and finding her fit. I would soon find out 2020 college freshmen would not get to experience that, or really much of anything.

My daily life consisted of sitting at my desk in my dorm, in front of a computer screen, with my camera off, listening to professors who probably did not even know I was there. After weeks, the loneliness of sitting in a dorm all day and attending online classes where I knew no one began to take a toll on me.

Why wouldn’t I go to a dining hall or a club meeting and try to meet people? Well, the dining hall was take-out only at the time, not allowing for any human interactions or exchanges. The entire Student Center would eventually close altogether in the spring semester. As for clubs, I had no idea where these took place, or even what was taking place.

Last year, I was lucky enough to meet two friends on campus. It may be hard to believe after this semester, but during the height of the pandemic, the campus was absolutely empty. Walking around campus, you would see maybe 50 people altogether. Car Parc Diem was never filled past the third floor, if that. Just when we were beginning to feel like we were breaking out of isolation and loneliness, residents were suddenly not allowed to visit other residence halls and we went right back to that feeling of isolation.

We felt like we were chickens without heads trying to learn how to be freshmen in college, with no guidelines or help.

This year, our eyes were wide at the flourishing of campus life and walking into Sam’s Place, I was stunned. To see tables filled, lines for food and people in general was a shock.

Last year, I had one in-person class, and I was one of five students who were actually in the classroom. So, walking into a classroom where I had to actively look for an open seat was surreal. Sports games, club meetings, in-person classes, a student-infested quad — these were all things I was not accustomed to.

It felt as though I had just moved into Montclair State and was now beginning my journey.

My friends and I always joke that last year was the “forgotten year” we managed to get through. We all can agree we are only now beginning to feel like college students, our second year in. I’m still learning how to adjust to a college life where I have to actually walk to my classes, and where it seems new clubs are emerging every week.

So, to anyone who feels like it’s their first year on campus, no matter if you’re an actual freshman, or if you’re a senior who is struggling to adjust back to “normal” college life, just know you are not alone.
How to Be Successful: Get Broken Up With, Get Spiteful, Get to Work

“Amy, my heart was pulverizing in my chest. The dial sounds seemed to last an eternity and a half while I waited for him to pick up. My first real boyfriend. My first love. The first person I ever wanted to share my life with. That person answers the phone in complete and utter silence.”

I wrote this, barely holding back tears.

Yes, that is a real passage from my first college writing assignment. And yes, I sat there and cried while I wrote about my boyfriend of three whole months. I know what you’re thinking, and I’m just as embarrassed as you think I am.

When I got broken up with over the phone, I thought my life was over. I was crushed. I wasn’t aware that it wasn’t over, but just beginning. I was stricken with not only extreme sadness but jealousy. I was jealous of the fact that he seemed fine while I was dying inside. My life became a Taylor Swift song, and as much as I adore Ms. Swift, I couldn’t let that continue.

Do you want to know my secret? I’ll have to admit, it may say something about my character that this was my method of choice, but it worked.

I have always dreamed about being a character that this was my method of choice, but others claimed the hijab was being fetishized and disrespected to fit a female character that has no qualities beyond the woman’s rights or something forced upon a young girl. This is untrue.

In non-Muslim countries, it is not mandatory to wear a hijab. A Muslim woman who chooses to wear the hijab may be wearing it for many different reasons, including personal preference.

For Muslim women, hijabs represent something to be celebrated, as long as it is not for the sole purpose of being monetized. The design and campaign of hijabs for a brand should be done with a purpose beyond profit.

On a daily basis, I see women who wear different hijabs to coordinate with their outfits, as well as style their hijabs by either adding a brooch or a hat. Some women even dye their hijab and add designs or braid them. Hijabs do have a place in the fashion industry as something to be celebrated, not a frown on his face, not a frown on his face.

I am aware it sounds toxic to just try and “win” a breakup to make the other person miserable. But eventually, I got to the point where it made me so incredibly happy it wasn’t even about him anymore. I was doing these things just to put a smile on my face, not a frown on his.

Life got too busy to think about being sad and mildly toxic. Misery was conquered by clubs, photoshoots and most importantly, writing. Pushing myself to try and “win” this breakup actually made me find happiness again.

My sadness became fleeting as I wrote my cares away and opportuni- ties started to arise. All of this made me take a long look at my past.

As a girl from a small town with only a few places to explore my infatu- ation for film and writing, not much lied ahead of me. No wonder I was miserable. Now, going to a college near New York City, I feel as alive as ever.

You can listen to “Liability” by Lorde, entertain yourself with the same old pick up lines on Tinder, watch “You” and think, “Man, I wish someone loved me like that,” or whatever else you have to do to fill the void, but I promise you, nothing feels more fulfilling than living the life you dreamed of.

You can always indulge in your guilty pleasures and listen to a heart- wrenching masterpiece of an album, say one of Taylor Swift’s, our queen (also the queen of getting dumped over the phone) — but you could also indulge in your dreams.

I hope every broken-hearted person finds their way back to what they love. Whether you chose to do this for yourself or do it out of spite because you’re a Virgo moon, like me, just know you’re not alone.

If you’re willing to be spiteful enough, it has just begun.

Avery Nixon, a freshman television and film major with a minor in creative writing, is in her first year as the assistant opinion editor for The Montclarion.

Zack Spangler | The Montclarion

Sophia Caparros | The Montclarion

Should Hijabs Be Considered Fashion?

The hijab is a veil worn by Muslim women in the presence of any male outside of their immediate family. In media, the hijab gained a lot of attention through a handful of Muslim women creating platforms in which they spread awareness and educate others about their culture.

In the past few years, there has been a global rise in effort to have diverse rep- resentation across multiple industries. The fashion industry in particular has suffered from a lack of diversity within brands when it comes to who works for them and who they represent.

During New York Fashion Week of 2016, history was made when Indonesia- nian designer Annessa Hasibuan sent all her models down the runway wear- ing hijabs that matched their garments.

Some brands have attempted to match that inclusiveness. In 2017, Nike announced their creation of the “Pro Hijab,” and in 2016, Dolce & Gabbana debuted a line of high-fashion hijabs. To some, this was a positive breakthrough, but others claimed the hijab was being fetishized and disrespected to fit modern culture without acknowledging what it stands for.

Hijabs do have a place in the fashion industry as something to be celebrated, and it is important that not just the idea of the hijab is celebrated, but the women who choose to wear it.

The fashion industry in particular has been known to lack diversity for a long time. As society moves toward equality, it is important that the fashion industry must be ever-evolving. If brands want to be successful and household names want to stay relevant, they have to think about what their message is and who is creating it.

If they fail to do so, they must receive constructive criticism and be held accountable.

For Muslim women, hijabs represent more than just a headpiece. Muslim designers know what their community needs because they are im- mersed in it. The hijab’s place in fash- ion should be curated by women who are a part of the culture. Otherwise, it’s similar to when you read a book with a female character that has no qualities besides her body. Lack of representa- tion breeds ignorance.

As society moves toward equality and accessibility for all, the fashion in- dustry must be ever-evolving. If brands want to be successful and household names want to stay relevant, they have to think about what their message is and who is creating it.

If they fail to do so, they must receive constructive criticism and be held accountable.

For Muslim women, hijabs represent much more than just a headpiece sys- tem. It doesn’t limit their style but in- stead enhances it.

Brianna Dejesus, a sophomore fashion studies major at Montclair State University, is the fashion editor for The Montclarion.
Could an Extra Bus Stop Solve Our Transit Problems?

I am studying sustainability sciences at Montclair State University as a Fulbright student from Germany for one year. I was really excited when I realized the train stop is just across the street from my apartment in the Village and provides direct access to New York City. But when I discovered the train does not operate on weekends, I was disappointed.

I, along with most of the international students I know, don’t have a car. It took me a while to figure out that there is a New Jersey Transit bus that can take you to New York City on the weekends. The bus passes the bridge north of the campus, which goes across Route 46. However, there is no bus stop near Montclair State.

Adding an additional bus stop near the bridge would be an easy solution to make New York City more accessible on the weekends. There is even a crosswalk already installed to ensure students can safely get to and from the stop.

This bus stop would allow Montclair State students to spend time in the city on the weekends without having to rely on a car. The potential new bus stop would be just a six-minute walk away from the shuttle service bus stop in Lot 60, making it accessible for all students that live on campus.

The closest bus stop to access these lines today is located at Notch Road and Rustic Ridge Road. This bus stop is a 20-minute away walk from the Village and Lot 60 — when you know how to get there.

Google Maps doesn’t know the walkway my friends and I usually take, so it navigates you to a road with no sidewalks. I have walked this way once, and can’t recommend it at all since it’s extremely dangerous. The whole time I was walking, I felt like a car could hit me at any moment.

On my way back from New York City, I usually ask the bus driver whether they can drop me off at the bridge. Some do, but some don’t because they consider it too dangerous since it is not an official bus stop. I am also aware it takes a bit of courage to talk to a bus driver, and not every student can see themselves doing this.

I was happy to read that Montclair State President Jonathan Koppell is interested in finding a solution. The addition of another bus stop would have to be negotiated with New Jersey Transit, but I believe it would be a simple and mutually beneficial arrangement.

This bus stop could be used by 5,200 residential students, which is a boon for New Jersey Transit as well as those wanting weekend access to the city.

From what I’ve found, the bus is much more reliable than the trains. When the trains are often delayed, this is a point to consider for those feeling reluctant about taking the bus. And at just $7 each way, the bus tickets also come at a reasonable price.

For students who do have a car but are not willing to spend a fortune on parking fees in the city, the bus stops Allwood Park & Ride and Willowbrook Park & Ride provide enough parking space, and a good bus connection to the city.

As for the rest of us, we want the full extent of what we were promised at Montclair State. Access to New York City doesn’t mean much if it’s only available during the week when most people are busy, so I hope this proposal can be considered as a possible solution to an all-too-common problem.
“The Swamp” — Chloe Lawrence

The little boy walked across a bridge, waking snapping turtles. They sprang from the water, clacking their jaws. He lifted the soles of his feet quickly and squinted at the thick smog; it covered the ferns like a fuzzed filter.

He didn’t like the smell. It attacked his nostril hairs until he felt he could only breathe with his mouth.

He left to play hours ago, but it was time to go home.

Lunch was soon; the little boy’s mother would stand at the back door and yell for her son to come inside. His stomach gurgled as he imagined hot pot roast and fingerling potatoes, steam dissipating in the air above.

Movement lurked in the distance; the little boy quickened his pace. Tangled spider plants bounced off the water as he proceeded down the path. His eardrums began to ring, lightheaded from unfamiliar surroundings. His face lost color except for his left cheek, a pale green, the sunlight reflecting foliage on his skin. The long thin reeds that lined the swamp were no longer visible. This area of the swamp was vast and loud.

He knew he was far from home.

Defeated, the little boy held his tiny face in his palms and cried; something bumped the floating wooden path. The little boy fell to his hands and held on, splintering a finger.

Another bump.

His heart jumped.

There was a disturbance next to him, ripples on the blanketed water. Black shapes peeking from the moss.

Then he saw its scales. They kissed the surface and disappeared. The little boy froze and held on tighter.

The gator was hungry and glided through the water, swimming by his side. The gator lifted its head effortlessly, biting at the little boy’s ankle, missing his flesh by a thimble.

“Timothy! Lunch.” He heard his mother’s voice.

“Winter’s Touch” — Kayla Carlamer

White blankets of snow in every direction I turn. Every path I take leads me back to the middle, a field of white. At first, I was captivated by the beauty of the forest, but with every failed attempt to make my way out of this maze, I grow more frustrated. I always wanted to see snow, but I need to get back home. But wait … is it even snow? I know what snow is supposed to be from the stories, from the Elders. I remember their old tales of snowball fights and snowmen, stories of little kids opening their mouths wide up at the sky, in hopes a snowflake would fall from above and melt on their tongue.

From those stories, I doubt this is snow. There’s a chemical smell in the air, and an unnerving crunch as I walk across the field. As I reach down to grab a handful, I feel the piercing pain of a thousand tiny daggers. I pull my hand back up and glance at it, a thousand tiny cuts under the crimson color now covering my hand.

I attempt to remove the remaining shards, but before I touch them they move themselves, almost flying back to the ground, as though attracted to the rest of the swarm. I wonder if these minuscule daggers, these fiendish faux flakes, are alive.

I look around, in every direction, only seeing white. How many are there?

I suddenly realize I don’t know how I got here. Or… maybe I did. Do I forge? Wait. How long have I been here? How many times have I walked through the paths of the trees only to end up in the same place, over and over and over?

I stumble and hold my head in my hands, trying to ease my dizzying mind. Where was I before this? What was I doing? I glance at the wounds on my hand. They are burning now. Wait. How did I get those cuts, again?

I look around at the endless white once more. Then, all I see is black.

“Tears” — Julie Shields

Every night tears cloud my eyes. Picking their moments Yet never to fly. Down my cheeks, soft and slow. Memories I’m letting go. Do I know why they cloud my eyes? No, but maybe I haven’t tried. To let them be free, yet they stay. Haunting me like their prey. Maybe it’s my sadness Washing to the surface. Or a deep fear. Waiting for its moment. Either way, I lay in darkness. The tears still sit in the corners. I stare at the ceiling, begging for no more sorrow. Wishing and waiting for it to be tomorrow.
Thankful Table

Thanksgiving Table • Grateful Wall • Live DJ • Swipe Out Hunger Table • Photobooth • Prizes

Don’t forget your Donation for the Food Pantry
*Bring a donation item to help stock the shelves of the Campus Red Hawk Food Pantry and spin the wheel to win a giveaway!!
  • peanut butter • jelly • cereal • canned fruit • fruit cups • pudding cups • canned tuna or salmon •
  • canned proteins • healthy snacks • toothpaste • shampoo • laundry detergent •

Use your Unlimited Meal Plan or 1 Block Swipe for entry.
Non-Meal Plan holders pay $10.70 for all-you-care-to-eat Thanksgiving meal! Use Flex, Red Hawk Dollars, Cash or Credit Card to pay.

Community Give Backs
Thanksgiving Favorites
Giving Thanks

Food Hall at Sam’s Place | Nov 18 | Noon
Dineoncampus.com/montclair
“Metanoia” (continued from pg. 1)

Rodriguez revealed how he felt sharing “Metanoia” with others.

“I had so many mixed emotions putting ‘Metanoia’ up,” Rodriguez said. “I think mostly because I was afraid to feel vulnerable and show people this side of me. The plays all came to me at various emotional points in my life. It felt like I was putting a piece of me on display for anyone to see.”

Each of the plays bordered on both drama and comedy. Throughout the show, the audience was stuck between bursting into laughter and devolving into tears.

Notably, the opening play, “Friend,” set the tone quite well. It was about a man having a sit down with his guardian angel, who was trying to get his life back on track. Though it had various comedic moments throughout, the story was heavy and dealt with topics such as depression and feelings of inadequacy from our protagonist.

Sofía Pastena, a sophomore acting major, enjoyed the combination of the genres. “It was really cool to see a show mix both drama and comedy,” Pastena said. “It created a real-life feel to the whole thing.”

That was a common theme in the show: a blend of comedy and drama in an almost Shakespearean sense that kept spectators on their toes.

“A Bag of Chips,” my personal favorite of the four, did this quite well. The story begins with an older man ready to take his own life in a park before a young child, played by Rodriguez, approaches and refuses to leave, asking to share a bag of chips. There are plenty of jokes and lighthearted playfulness throughout the scene, though we never stray too far from the original premise.

Rodriguez believes there’s humor happening everywhere around us, which impacted his work. “There isn’t a single day on earth that goes by where at least one human doesn’t laugh,” Rodriguez said. “That’s why I think it’s good to sprinkle some jokes here and there because it’s honest. Plus, laughing with each other while we experience something serious or scary helps remind us that we aren’t really alone.”

For actor Gabe Michelson, a sophomore theatre studies major at Montclair State, the opportunity to participate in “Metanoia” came at the perfect time. “At first I didn’t know [Rodriguez] or anyone part of this process acting-wise or behind the scenes,” Michelson said.

“However, after it, I never want to be apart from them, [Rodriguez] wrote four incredibly deep shows with rich characters. It was the first time I acted on a stage since the start of the pandemic; [Rodriguez’s] show reignited my dream of being on stage again. For that I am grateful.”

Though this showing of “Metanoia” has come and gone, Rodriguez insists he is not quite done with the material yet. “Currently, I’m going through that post-show sadness,” Rodriguez said. “I’m very pleased with how the show came out, but I’m already thinking of rewrites, as well as what my next step is in my career. Currently, I am in conversations with two theaters in New York. I hope all turns well with them, and we can work together.”

“Metanoia” is about a group of siblings who find their children infected by an illness while trapped inside during a hurricane. From Left to Right: Manny Marquez, Aly Michelle and Gabe Michelson.

“Friend” is about a man having a sit down with his guardian angel. Front to Back: Brandon Cortes and Dakota Lubreso.
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Left to right: Junior Maxine Stillwagon, freshman Elise Bednar, sophomore Isaiah Robinson and senior Joe Baer are part of the standout cast in "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot."

Kayla Carlamere
Staff Writer

Held over the span of six days in Life Hall’s Studio Theatre, a cast of Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) actors in Montclair State University’s Department of Theatre and Dance performed Stephen Adly Guirgis’ “The Last Days of Judas Iscariot,” played by senior acting major Fox Postier, 2,000 years after the incident.

Set in Purgatory, the play follows the trial of the infamous disciple known for betraying Jesus, Judas Iscariot, played by junior acting major Maxine Stillwagon, 2,000 years after the incident. It brings biblical history to life in a comedic and engaging way, complete with flashbacks, testimonies and more, as the characters speak and act like everyday people in the city.

Jake Williams, a junior acting major who portrays Satan, explains the ideas touched on in the play.

“Themes of greed, honor, integrity, truth and self-actualization are huge in this story,” Williams said. “Are we able to be honest with ourselves? Can we forgive ourselves? How do we let our actions and mistakes get the better of us? These questions tap into the basis of human nature, which is fascinating to explore.”

Director Frederick “Tommy” Schrider spoke about bringing the script and these ideas to life.

“I think the biggest challenge was figuring out how to lift what is essentially a courtroom dramedy, with the occasional saintly interlude, off the page and propel it into visceral, dynamic, theatrical life,” Schrider said. 

While there is much to take away from the play and how it was executed, Schrider reflects on the broader meaning of the piece.

“After [the play], I want [the audience] to be able to see themselves and others with a little more humility, understanding and compassion,” Schrider said. “And, hopefully [also] move through the world with a bit more grace and a softer heart.”

This message is delivered through a standout cast that will impact how you see their characters, leaving you unable to watch another version of the play in the same way.

Defense attorney Fabiana Cunningham, played by Elise Bednar, a freshman acting major, and her foil Yusef El-Fayoumy, the prosecutor played by sophomore acting major Isaiah Robinson, lead the narrative as they argue the case of Judas’ guilt during the trial and call in various biblical witnesses for testimonies.

Before the trial kicks into high gear, however, there was an amazing performance by Dale Harris, a senior acting major, as she introduces her character, Saint Monica. Her upbeat nature made for a humorous and priceless scene, but an emotional part that follows showed that Harris could do much more than bring laughter.

Bednar, as Fabiana, was also incredibly impressive in the way she delivers her lines with such emotional impact, unwavering during her character’s lengthy, quick-witted lines. Each person was perfectly cast and perfectly embodied their characters, from Satan and El-Fayoumy to Bailiff, played by junior acting major Maxine Stillwagon, and Caiaphas, played by senior acting major Jax Arzoff.

Eliana Valente, a freshman theatre studies major, says the cast seemed to have a special chemistry.

“Every actor had so much energy,” Valente said. “And they were never out of character for a second.”

Juliana Wolliver, an aspiring actor who is also a freshman theatre studies major, agreed.

“I am greatly impressed and deeply grateful to be a part of this production who gave it their all to make this show what it is. Everyone worked together, and we really feel like a family. I’m extremely grateful to be a part of it.”

Schrider notes the exceptional cast’s ability as well.

“I was so proud of the way these actors, all BFA students, jumped in the ring with this play; put themselves on the line and created something really special,” Schrider said.

According to Williams, “Working on this play has been the most rewarding experience of my life, in terms of getting to tell this beautiful story every night to a room full of people eager to dive in with us.” Williams said. “None of this could’ve been possible without the extraordinary cast and crew of this production who gave it their all to make this show what it is. Everyone worked together, and we really feel like a family. I’m extremely grateful to be a part of it.”

Interacting with the audience in order to tell a narrative as they performed “The Last Days of Judas Iscariot” impacted the actors themselves, according to Williams.

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‘Red (Taylor’s Version)’ Delivers All Too Well

Emma Caughlan
Managing Editor

Swifties, the time has come. Taylor Swift has finally released “Red (Taylor’s Version)” on Nov. 12, complete with new “Out Of The Vault” tracks, a 10-minute song and a short film to make any Swift fan shed a tear.

For those of you confused, as she already has an album called “Red,” or are wondering what “Taylor’s Version” means, let’s catch you up on one of the most important women in pop music today.

Swift’s music was unfortunately sold out from under her a couple of years ago by her former label, Big Machine Records, to music manager and arch-rival Scooter Braun, who undertook in the music industry, but which she would have the rights to. Swift’s resolution to this was to rerecord all her old albums, which she would have the rights to. This would normally be quite the undertaking in the music industry, but Swift has certainly made an exception, a feat that can only be credited to her loyal fanbase.

“Red (Taylor’s Version)” is her second recording. The first was “Fearless (Taylor’s Version),” which was released in April of this year and was a huge success. This new recording is proving to be no different, as it’s even looking like streams and sales are surging that of “Fearless (Taylor’s Version).”

“Red” is one of Swift’s most iconic and experimental albums. It is also considered to be the start of her famous transition from country to pop, as there is a rise of both in the album. “Red (Taylor’s Version)” freshly delivers all of the old “Red” songs with a much more mature sound from Swift.

This mellow sound added depth to several of the contemporary ballads like “Teardrops On My Guitar” and “Sad Beautiful Tragic (Taylor’s Version).”

Sadly, it didn’t do much for some of the pop songs on the album like “I Knew You Were Trouble (Taylor’s Version)” “22 (Taylor’s Version)” and “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together (Taylor’s Version).” The mixing of her vocals seems a little sloppy, and it ends up almost sounding annoying.

The same does not apply for the “Out of Vault” songs; these are songs that Swift wrote for the album but ultimately didn’t make the cut upon the original release. These new releases are filled with all the variety Swift has to offer, from pop to her old country style and even to folk at some points. The highlight of this album is honestly not what I expected. “All Too Well (10-Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version) (From The Vault)” is a masterpiece that elegantly closes the album. Despite the cumbersome title, this song is deep and impactful and arguably could be her best song ever. “All Too Well.” Surprisingly, all 10 minutes of it were completely enjoyable.

Not only was the song phenomenal, but it was also joined by a short film of the same name. “All Too Well: The Short Film” stars Sadie Sink, Dylan O’Brien and Swift herself. The film visualizes the heavily descriptive song that chronicles Swift’s former relationship with Jake Gyllenhaal. It’s filled with all the details one would expect from Swift, featuring shots of the infamous scarf Swift left at the house of Gyllenhaal’s sister to match the lyrics.

And I left my scarf there at your sister’s house / And you’ve still got it in your drawer, even now,” Swift sings.

Both Sink and O’Brien give intense and emotional performances to the story, which is paired perfectly with stunning cinematography. It certainly is an emotional time to be a Swift fan, so even if you have no interest in listening to the art that is “Red (Taylor’s Version),” make sure to check on your Swiftie friends; they certainly need it.

‘An Evening With Silk Sonic’ is a Mastery Of Music

Trent Freeman
Staff Writer

Anderson .Paak and Bruno Mars wield a mastery of few others do. This is put on full display in their new, funky album, “An Evening With Silk Sonic.”

Hosted by music legend Bootsy Collins, this album is nine tracks (an intro and eight songs) of modern throwback RnB, funk and soul fusion. One can hear the inspiration of legends such as Earth, Wind & Fire, The Whispers and The Jackson 5 among others throughout the project.

Silk Sonic released their first single, “Leave the Door Open,” on March 5 of this year. The two teasing their fanbase by posting videos on their Instagram, claiming fans would never hear the full album. It wasn’t until eight months later that they released their masterpieces on Nov. 12.

This song features one of the best key changes of the entire album in a vocal run, reminiscent of the aforementioned legends Earth, Wind & Fire. Silk Sonic subverts the listeners’ expectations before jumping from the home base of C minor to the next step in G minor. The way in which this tandem climbs the G minor scale is nothing short of marvelous. It is truly a performance you have to hear to believe.

Though an excellent singer, .Paak is a Grammy Award-winning rapper in his own right. He won best melodic rap for his performance in the 2020 song, “Lockdown.”

This talent shines in the album’s third song, “Fly As Me,” where .Paak boasts his advanced abilities of articulation. Fans of the previously underground member of this duo were sure to be expecting a song like this to be on the album. But for those unfamiliar with .Paak, it could come as quite the surprise.

Silk Sonic released three singles before their album, each with top-tier music videos. In their third and final single, “Smokin Out The Window,” released one week prior to the album, the duo does their signature sun style, which debuted in their Grammy performance of “Leave the Door Open.”

One can only assume the two will be rocking the vintage silk suits for the entirety of their currently unannounced, but inevitable, upcoming tour.

“An Evening With Silk Sonic” is a testament to the creative human spirit and an absolute contender for album of the year.

The duo shows off their signature suit-style in the music video for “Smokin Out The Window.”

Photo courtesy of Republic Records

Annie Choy
‘GTA: The Trilogy - The Definitive Edition’ Doesn’t Feel So Definitive

Released by Rockstar Games on Nov. 11, “Grand Theft Auto: The Trilogy - The Definitive Edition,” is a remaster of three classic games. John LaRosa, Photo Editor

Released by Rockstar Games on Nov. 11, “Grand Theft Auto (GTA): The Trilogy - The Definitive Edition,” is a remaster of three classic games: “GTA 3,” “GTA: Vice City,” and “GTA: San Andreas,” which all originally released on the PlayStation 2 (PS2) back in 2001, 2002 and 2004, respectively.

The Grand Theft Auto series is an open world action-adventure game, parodying real life with its violence and stereotypes. These three games all revolve around a main character getting involved in gang-related violence while trying to stay one step ahead of the law.

Starting with the positives, as there are quite a few, perhaps the biggest improvement is the controls. Full camera rotation was added to “GTA 3” and “GTA: Vice City,” giving the player a full 360-degree view of the world during gameplay, instead of the locked-in look-forward view in the original version.

A weapon wheel was also added to the games, allowing players to easily change what gun or weapon is being used by selecting it from a pop-up circle, instead of cycling through weapons with one button in the original release.

Missions now have save checkpoints, meaning if you die during a mission, you have the option to try again at the checkpoint rather than having to restart the entire mission from the beginning like in the original games.

GPS navigation was also added. A mini GPS map of the world is always at the bottom left corner of the screen during gameplay. If you open up the map and select a destination, the GPS map will guide you through the fastest roads to get there. This is especially helpful during missions.

Other minor gameplay elements were improved. For example, in the original version of “GTA: Vice City,” if you pointed a gun at civilians, they would not start running unless you started shooting. In “The Definitive Edition,” civilians start screaming and begin to run as soon as a weapon is pointed in their direction.

Usually, the biggest selling point for a remaster of a video game is the enhanced graphics, but “GTA: The Trilogy - The Definitive Edition,” doesn’t always look that great.

Some areas certainly do; the neon lights all over Vice City’s boulevards really pop out and shine, looking less dull than they originally did on the PS2. But other games, like “GTA: San Andreas,” lost some of their charm due to the graphical enhancements.

“San Andreas” takes place in and mirrors Los Angeles, California. The original game had this sunbaked, sun-set tint that added a lot to the game’s atmosphere.

“The Definitive Edition” completely removes this sunset-style lighting, and what we are left with is a rather generic environment that lacks the charm of the original game. The very look of its art style is revolved as a result.

The same can be said about “GTA 3,” especially when it comes to the rain. The original game had a muggy, depressing, noir-style with a greenish-blue tint during rain, which swirled around in the wind, giving it a three-dimensional feel and atmosphere. But now in “The Definitive Edition,” it just falls vertically, and its effect doesn’t look all that appealing. The colors and their tints, like the sun in “San Andreas,” were also removed during the rain and replaced with darkness.

Another huge disappointment is the lack of certain music tracks. In the game, you can drive and steal cars. While in the cars, you can listen to the radio, which all have real songs.

Between the three games, over two dozen songs featured in the original version were cut for “The Definitive Edition.” Perhaps most notable is the removal of all Michael Jackson songs. “GTA: Vice City” takes place in the 1980s, and you can’t have the ‘80s without Jackson.

Other upsetting cuts were “Killing in the Name” by Rage Against the Machine, “Hellraiser” by Ozzy Osbourne and “Runnin’ Down a Dream” by Tom Petty.

This may not be a deal-breaker for most, but how can this be the “Definitive Edition” when key soundtrack pieces are not there?

Some character models somehow look far worse than the original as well. Many look silly and have completely different expressions than their PS2 originals.

Some examples include Asuka Kasen from “GTA 3” and the Hispanic gang members from “San Andreas.” Characters that once looked edgy and intimidating now just look goofy.

While the game does have updated character models and 4K textures on the PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and PC, Rockstar Games chose to keep the original character animations, along with all of the original voice clips.

So what we have here is new, high-resolution textured models with old animations, which were simple, cartoon-y and janky because they were based on limited hardware from nearly two decades ago. The two mixed together just end up feeling a little awkward.

“GTA: The Trilogy - The Definitive Edition” retails for $60. The price tag is not justified considering the amount of work Rockstar Games put into this remaster. All three games are still as fun as they were years ago, but this could have been so much more.

Rockstar Games chose to remove the digital copies of the original releases off of PC and consoles. This means new players who have never enjoyed these games before have no choice but to play, in my opinion, the inferior “Definitive Edition.”
Top Picks to Stream

Thanksgiving Edition

‘Gilmore Girls’ (Season 3, Episode 9) on Netflix

The iconic 2009 film, “The Blind Side,” is a perfect watch for this Thanksgiving. Not only does it provide an autumn-feel with its football theme and a scene centered around a Thanksgiving meal, but it leaves viewers feeling grateful for family, friends and the kindness of others.

Sandra Bullock plays Leigh Anne Tuohy, an unwavering mother who takes in Michael Oher, played by Quinton Aaron, a teenager who was not who he seemed to be.

As Michael becomes more and more integrated into the Tuohy family, he experiences highs and lows with his football career as well as encounters with his biological mother. The love Michael has for his family is not only shown through his football career, but also through his relationships with his friends and the kindness of others.

Kick Off Christmas Season With Netflix’s ‘Love Hard’

Vanessa Diaz
Guest Writer

It’s November, which means the beginning of the Christmas rom-com season has officially begun. Netflix kicked it off with the release of “Love Hard,” directed by Hernán Jiménez, on Nov. 5, 2021.

Nina Dobrev plays Natalie, a woman from Los Angeles, California who makes a career out of her failed love life by writing for a popular dating column. Even though people are only interested in hearing about her failures, Natalie is looking for more: her true love.

Finally, she has a perfect swipe on a dating app called “Flirt Alert,” where she matches with a chiseled, funny, charismatic guy. Though Natalie has never seen her long-distance match, she makes it work.

Desperate to get her happy ending, she flies to New York to surprise her match for Christmas. When she finds herself in his family’s living room, she meets Josh, played by Jimmy O. Yang, who was not who he seemed to be.

After Natalie coincidentally spots the man she thought her date actually was, she flies to New York to surprise her match for Christmas. When she finds herself in his family’s living room, she meets Josh, played by Jimmy O. Yang, who was not who she seemed to be.

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Not only is it a feel-good movie, but “Love Hard” also gets you into the Christmas spirit and is the perfect rom-com to watch as you are snuggling under a heap of blankets on a chilly day.

The warm tone in the movie adds to the likability of the film as well, by evoking a sense of comfort within viewers. Most Christmas movies use this warm tone, so it is no surprise that Jiménez decided to take this approach.

From what the characters wear, to the warm, orange tones that surround them, the film makes viewers feel right at home, with elements of humor, energy and enthusiasm.

“Love Hard” lives up to its label as a comedy with certain scenes, especially a certain one that takes place in a bar. Though some may think the lines are cheesy, they are what make the movie a rom-com after all.

As with most rom-coms, the plot is very predictable. But, that did not stop me from enjoying “Love Hard,” and it shouldn’t keep you from doing the same.

“Love Hard” is not just a cheesy film of its genre; it has a deeper meaning as well. It teaches the audience the importance of seeking connection rather than perfection when pursuing a relationship. People seem to view things from the outside instead of looking in, similar to Natalie. “Love Hard” shows that by forgetting the outside for a brief moment and truly looking inward, people might see more than they expect. By looking in, people can see others for who they truly, wholeheartedly are.

“Love Hard” does a great job of delivering this message; that there is no such thing as the “perfect person,” but that by being more open-minded, we allow ourselves to find the “perfect person” for us. This message is executed perfectly as the film does not shove it in viewers’ faces, but keeps them entertained as they see it unfold.

It is never too early to start celebrating the Christmas season, and Netflix has made that clear with “Love Hard,” Maybe you’ll even swipe and find that “perfect” match like Natalie this holiday season.

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With Thanksgiving peering its head around the corner, holiday junkies like myself may be looking to celebrate with more than turkey and pumpkin pie. Unlike Christmas and Halloween, which both have a wide catalog of films to choose from, Thanksgiving seems to be left out on the cinematic outskirts. However, that doesn’t go to say there’s nothing to watch. The iconic 1994 to 2004 sitcom, “Friends,” was sure to add a Thanksgiving episode to each season they aired, leaving fans with a 10-episode list filled with belly-aching laughter and holiday cheer.

Here are the top five “Friends” Thanksgiving episodes:

#5. “The One with the Late Thanksgiving” (Season 10, Episode 8)

As the final Thanksgiving episode of “Friends,” this one did not disappoint. After everyone convinces Monica and Chandler to host dinner, they all show up an hour late, prompting a situation involving a locked door and a stuck head.

Between Joey’s beady “weird eye-contact thing” he uses as a plea for forgiveness, Rachel entering her baby in a beauty pageant and Monica and Chandler receiving emotional news at the end of the episode, “The One with the Late Thanksgiving” is not one you want to skip over.

Photo courtesy of NBC

#4. “The One with the Rumor” (Season 8, Episode 9)

This Thanksgiving episode could not have been any better. Brad Pitt, who at the time was married to Aniston, guest stars as Will Colbert, Monica and Ross’ friend from high school. It turns out he despises Rachel, even admitting that he and Ross created an “I Hate Rachel Green” club in high school where they spread rumors about her.

Phoebe is the standout character in this episode as she does and says what any of us would if Pitt showed up at our Thanksgiving dinner, all starting with an over-exaggerated “wow” and ending with an extended impromptu hug.

Photo courtesy of NBC

#3. “The One with All the Thanksgivings” (Season 5, Episode 8)

Photo courtesy of NBC

#2. “The One Where Ross Got High” (Season 6, Episode 9)

Monica and Ross’ parents come to Thanksgiving dinner, though they are unaware of Chandler and Monica’s relationship and the fact that they had recently moved in together. It turns out, Jack and Judy dislike Chandler because Ross got high in college, and when they walked in and smelled it, he told them it was Chandler.

Between Rachel cooking beef into the trifle, the realization that Ross was actually the one who got high and the announcement of Monica and Chandler’s living arrangement, this episode delivers one of the best truth-realization scenes of all time.

Photo courtesy of NBC

#1. “The One With the Football” (Season 3, Episode 9)

This season three Thanksgiving episode is comedic perfection from start to finish and arguably the best episode in the show’s roster.

Despite Ross and Monica’s turbulent history of playing Thanksgiving Day football games, the six friends decide to go for it anyway, leaving each of their characters’ hilarity and quirks to shine through the holiday’s beloved sport. Be prepared for nonstop laughter as you watch the friends battle it out on the football field.
‘Spencer,’ a Striking Yet Superficial Biopic of Princess Diana

Denise Jugo
Staff Writer

“Spencer,” directed by Pablo Larraín, is a biopic about Diana Spencer, better known as Princess Diana. The film takes place at Sandringham Estate in 1991, where the royal family traditionally spends Christmas. At this point, the princess’ marriage with Prince Charles had endured many hardships for quite some time. The three-day stay was a pivotal moment for the princess; this was where she decided to leave Prince Charles, the royal family and the life that comes with them.

Kristen Stewart stars as and fully transforms into Princess Diana. When Stewart was first cast, some may have been surprised by the choice of having an American actress portray the princess. Despite this, Stewart’s posh English accent is convincing, but not as convincing as her interpretation of the princess’ mannerisms. Known for being a timid and introverted actress, Stewart’s attributes paid off as she managed to embody the princess’ shy, gentle nature.

Stewart’s chemistry with other supporting actors is undoubtedly cogent, most especially with Sally Hawkins, who plays Maggie the royal dresser, and Jack Nielsen and Freddie Spry, who play Prince William and Prince Harry, respectively. She is able to balance and display the many different emotions that the princess likely felt during her stay. Whether she was feeling safe and joyful in the presence of her two sons, faking a smile for the Christmas family photo or trying to keep herself together alone in the bathroom from enduring the pressure of fitting in with the rest of the family, Stewart is able to balance and transition all of these sentiments with great passion and polish.

The film has many symbolic elements that connect to the late princess’ rather unhappy time at the estate. One element that is quite chilling is the connection between Princess Diana and the former Queen of England, Anne Boleyn, who was the second wife of King Henry VIII and was beheaded. This connection serves as an omen to a similar fate she will eventually meet.

Another element is the film’s color grading, which is soft yet dull and evokes a sense of coldness. Not only does this symbolize the low temperatures of the winter season, but also the coldness of Princess Diana’s marriage and how isolated and alone she felt.

The film’s score by Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood includes discordant piano, unsettling jazz cellos, trumpets and classical strings, which evokes the depression of the princess’ mental state. The eerie soundtrack is likely to immerse audiences in the melancholic atmosphere of the film.

Underneath the layers of Larraín’s striking artistic choices lies the musue of inaccuracies for poetic license. The film touches on Princess Diana’s struggles with bulimia and self-harm. While it is known the princess faced difficulties with her eating disorder and mental health, according to some of her closest friends at this point in her life, she had already conquered these demons. A number of Princess Diana’s friends also feel she would be shocked by the recent portrayals of her in pop culture, as revealed in their interviews with The Telegraph.

Majesty Magazine editor Ingrid Seward feels she would be “horrified.” “They’ve piled every bad thing into one weekend, which is taking poetic license a little far,” Seward said.

Makeup artist Mary Greenwell, who worked closely with the princess, feels this portrayal is not the best way to understand her. “Princess Diana is now seen as this kind of martyr, which I think is wrong,” Greenwell said. “She did amazing things, but she’s misunderstood.”

Overall, “Spencer” illustrates a vivid and cerebral depiction of Princess Diana’s experience in Sandringham. The combination of Larraín’s symbolic artistic choices and Stewart’s striking transformative performance makes for a compelling film about a woman held captive.

However, with its strong images of eating disorders and self-harm combined with other unceasing elements, “Spencer” serves more as a psychological thriller than an accurate biopic. Going into the film having read what the princess’ inner-circle thought of her portrayal made me question the ethics of the creators as these strong images appeared on the screen.

Princess Diana did copious amounts of humanitarian work, including AIDS awareness and prevention, the plight against landmines, battling poverty and homelessness and opening up the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. She was so widely loved, she was given the nickname of “the People’s Princess.” Now 24 years since she died in a car accident while trying to escape the paparazzi, Princess Diana should be remembered for her empathy, charity work and for being a loving mother. Instead, works such as Netflix’s “The Crown” and “Diana: The Musical” focus on Princess Diana’s crumbling marriage and declining mental health. “Spencer” is no exception and piles up with other pieces that contribute to the recent obsession with the late princess. This proliferation of Princess Diana’s life mimics the routine of the obsessive documentation by media outlets, which was the very thing that took her life.
The Action, Humor and Twists in ‘Red Notice’ Leave You Wanting More

Kayla Carlamere
Staff Writer

“Red Notice,” an action-comedy film about an unlikely partnership between an FBI profiler and an infamous art thief, was released on Netflix on Friday, Nov. 12. The film follows the pair as they execute an elaborate heist and encounter a rival and recurring obstacle in the form of “the world’s greatest art thief.”

Starring Ryan Reynolds, Gal Gadot and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, the actors alone had the film in high anticipation and high expectations; needless to say, it did not disappoint. It runs for one hour and 55 minutes of pure entertainment, complete with humor and breathtaking action scenes.

The film has a steady beginning, unraveling the history of the treasure the characters are in search of throughout the movie: Cleopatra’s jeweled eggs. This introduction set a more serious tone for the film. Johnson makes the first appearance as special agent John Hartley, but it isn’t until Reynolds’ introduction that one sees the dynamic of “the world’s greatest art thief.”

Reynolds and Johnson had an immediate chemistry and worked off each other very well as a cop and a crook, an iconic duo in any type of media. Being forced to work with each other and become a team, it may remind some of the comedy and action are kicked into high gear. As the FBI agent tries to evade capture using forced to work with each other and encounter a rival and recurring obstacle in the form of “The Marriage of Convenience.” This is even referred to within the film later on, both by the special agent and Gadot’s character, The Bishop.

Another infamous criminal, The Bishop, is introduced in a way that propels the story forward. It is exciting to see Gadot apart from her well-known character as Wonder Woman, especially in a comedy, which she delivered well. Like her iconic role as the DC hero, she still dominates as a strong female lead and is able to successfully fight off both men in the film at one point.

Special agent John maintains a serious demeanor for most of the movie, which is a nice contrast to the other leading characters who are portrayed with a more light-hearted nature. Although Johnson’s character is more serious compared to the others, he still brings his fair share of laughs, and his interactions with Reynolds are priceless. The love/hate dynamic between the two is both humorous and touching.

Reynolds’ performance is the highlight, though Johnson and Gadot beautifully brought their characters to life as well. The interactions between all three were so entertaining, leaving me wishing there had been more. Each presented obstacles for one another in their opposing goals, and the way they change roles through time jumps and humorous moves taken by the two is both humorous and touching.

Johnson maintains a serious demeanor for most of the movie, which is a nice contrast to the comedy, which she delivered well. Like her iconic role as the DC hero, she still dominates as a strong female lead and is able to successfully fight off both men in the film at one point.

There are many twists. A quote said by Nolan early in the movie can be used to explain much of the plot. “Lots of twists and turns, hijinks. Who knew it’d end up this way?” Nolan said.

The film concludes with a twist ending that makes viewers rethink the whole movie, questioning what was real or if anything really mattered. The conclusion truly set the movie apart from others in the genre. It also seems to leave the film open for future possibilities, meaning viewers may see these characters again with new dynamics and relationships.

Left to right: Ryan Reynolds, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and Gal Gadot star in “Red Notice.”

Photo courtesy of Netflix

Kal Outlaw

Gal Gadot plays The Bishop, an infamous criminal.
Photo courtesy of Netflix

Reynolds plays Nolan Booth, an art thief.
Photo courtesy of Netflix
Aileen Cahill prepares to kick the ball deep during a 2021 contest against Ramapo College of New Jersey. Photo courtesy of David Venezia

Aileen Cahill (continued from page 1)

“I think before she got Rookie of the Year her freshman year, [we knew] she was going to be a key player [on the team],” DeGeyter said. “She’s really technical and works very hard, and that’s something I noticed and liked. Freshman year to sophomore year, she would stay true [to her game], no matter what game it is or who we are playing [against]. She always comes to practice [and] works hard.”

One of Cahill’s best moments this fall was early on in the second game of the season in the match against Marywood University, where the Red Hawks squeaked out a victory and won 2-1. Cahill scored early in the game, and right before the end of the half, Marywood tied it up. Head coach Patrick Naughter had to adjust the game plan if they wanted to win.

“I think that was one of the big moments of the year,” Naughter said. “[When Cahill] got that first goal, [it] felt like we were in control of the game, and then we had a defensive lapse. We had a corner kick late in the game, [which] was a great ball in, and she executed, [getting] in front of her marker. She doesn’t make a mistake when she has an opportunity to put the ball on target.”

While Cahill was fundamental in her methods of goal scoring, another sophomore shined this season as well, notching three goals and three assists, too. Defender Tara Lambert was named as an Honorable Mention by the NJAC, and as someone who is mainly focused on the other side of the ball, Cahill provides a huge relief for her and the rest of the defense.

“[Cahill] has been a big help because she comes back defensively and works really hard to get the ball back,” Lambert said. “So, I know that she’ll always be able to help me offensively and defensively.”

Going into the next season, Cahill is focused on becoming the best player she can possibly be.

“I want to try and get better in every aspect,” Cahill said. “[I want to] keep playing soccer all the time, get fit and go to the gym. I want to work on everything.”

One thing Naughter says Cahill does not do very often is verbally communicate. However, this isn’t necessarily a bad thing, as Cahill usually just lets her game do the talking. It may even be how she won this prestigious award from the conference.

“[Cahill] is a lead-by-example kid,” Naughter said. “She’s not the kid who’s going to make a [verbal] statement, but her work rate and her love of the game is contagious. She makes you want to coach harder, play harder and compete better. She’s [going to] show what we should be about.”

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Montclair State Football Focuses on 2022 Season After Disappointing Campaign

Red Hawks finish with their first losing record since 2017

By Trent Freeman
Staff Writer

After raising the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) North Division trophy last season, the Montclair State University football team found themselves in unfamiliar territory: losing.

The Red Hawks finished with a disappointing 3-7 record, their worst record since 1968, as the team never seemed to fully click all season long. It seemed like whenever this team looked to finally have it together, they would take a step back.

Though football is the ultimate team game, one side of the ball flew higher than the other. On defense, the Red Hawks were dominant. In the first game of the season, they scored all of the team’s 20 points through turnovers in a narrow one-point loss to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

However, the team’s struggles on offense were paramount as the Red Hawks finished toward the bottom of the NJAC in passing (1,282), rushing (948) and total yards per game (223). Despite failing to meet their high expectations from the preseason, the team game, one side of the ball flew higher than the other. On defense, the Red Hawks were dominant. In the first game of the season, they scored all of the team’s 20 points through turnovers in a narrow one-point loss to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

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Midseason Turnaround For Volleyball Team Leads To Another Great Playoff Run

After a 5-6 start, the women’s volleyball team rebounded to qualify for NJAC Title Game

Leah Higgins (left) and Kiara Polanco (right) embrace after advancing to the NJAC Championship game, defeating Stockton.

Senior outside hitter Carly Waterman says they owe their win to the bond they were able to build early on. “After about two weeks into the season, once we really started to trust each other on the court, I’d say that’s when our season was really able to turn around. And that’s [what] led us to the win streak,” Waterman said.

Senior setter Delaney St. Pierre talked about the challenges the team faced early on, and how that helped them. “I don’t think we would have made it as far as we did, especially with the injuries hitting us like they did this year if it wasn’t for our struggles early in the season,” St. Pierre said.

It wasn’t until they played New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) rival Kean University that their season turned around. Defeating Kean in three sets at home gave the Red Hawks the confidence they needed to get the season rolling.

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Despite all this, some fresh faces stepped up in the face of adversity and left their mark. Freshman outside hitter Kiara Polanco made her presence known every time she stepped on the court. With 279 digs and 128 kills on the season, it was clear Polanco was a force on this team.

Polanco explained how the upperclassman did a great job of receiving her and making her feel like an important contributor to the team. "At first, it was a little intimidating [joining the team]," Polanco said. "Being a freshman is nerve-wracking, but the upperclassmen [being] so welcoming made it much easier."

With tons of new faces, the leaders of the team still stood out. St. Pierre led the team with 835 assists along with 94 kills, 165 digs and 42 service aces, earning her a First Team All-Conference honor and the NJAC Player Of The Year award.

As for next year, the team will look vastly different with star players Leah Higgins, Victoria Tennon and Monaghan graduating. It is unclear if Waterman and St. Pierre will return for a fifth season.

In an interview with The Montclarion shortly after their NJAC Championship game, head coach Eddie Stawinski says he believes the program will be moving in a different direction. “We might be entering into a little bit of a rebuild after this season,” Stawinski said. "Obviously when you lose five seniors, some of the [younger] players on the team are [going to] step into new roles along with some of the newer recruits. We are always going to compete [for championships], but there might be one year where we need to get a little more experience under our belts.”