Rocky Horror Heads to the Wild Wild West

A yearly staple for the Montclair State University Players, “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” is not your typical live performance. Instead, it’s a choreographed lip-sync to the 1975 film, more commonly known as “shadow-casting.” A staple of midnight moviegoing in the nearly 50 years since its debut, audience members are encouraged to participate with their own interjections, which I learned when half the cast shouted “Eat s**t! And die!” to the rhythm of “Hot Patootie, Bless My Soul” the number sang by Meat Loaf in the film.

The love for the production is absolutely infectious, in no small part thanks to the enthusiastic leadership from director Zoe LeRose, a senior theatre studies major, and assistant director/choreographer Whitney Daniels, a sophomore theatre studies major, who are working together to bring their own spin on Rocky Horror to life in the form of “Wild West Rocky.”

“Every year there’s a different theme,” LeRose said. “I decided I want to see cowboys and saloon girls.”

She promised there will, in fact, be cowboys and saloon girls, as well as a pre-show set to Will Smith’s 1999 hit single “Wild Wild West.”

The titular Rocky Horror, the muscular, hyper-masculine creation of Dr. Frank-N-Furter will be played by none other than Zoe’s own twin, senior theater studies major Skylar LeRose, who is making her on-stage “Rocky Horror” debut after being the assistant director of the 2021 show. “I’ve seen [‘The Rocky Horror Picture Show’] far too many times [than] I could count, maybe times a Skylar said. “I’m a big fan. I really always wanted to audition, but my freshman year I was really scared. Then the coronavirus (COVID-19) happened. Then last year I was on box office so I couldn’t, but I was also more interested in being on the production team for last year. So this year, I knew I really wanted to audition.”

Freshman fear didn’t stop biology major Rylee Allen from auditioning and landing the role of Janet Weiss, the fiancé of Brad Majors who gets swept up in the wild schemes of Dr. Frank-N-Furter after the couple gets a flat tire. “I think it’s definitely really out of my comfort zone,” Allen said. “Because in my past theatre experience, it’s always been stuff that’s been very innocent and very tame and I really wanted to do something that was not that.”

Returning cast members include sophomore theatre studies major Jenna Wilkinson, playing the role of Magenta, a maid played by Patricia Quinn in the film. “It’s the best time of the year for me, I adore it,” Wilkinson said. They also compared their character, Magenta, to themselves. “I just kind of realized she’s just like me,” Wilkinson said. “I’m also a crazy b**ch.”

The creative team hopes to bring to life a fresh, new version of the well-worn production for experienced viewers of “Rocky Horror” and hopes to have fun terrifying and confusing those who have never seen it, referred to by fans of shadow-cast productions as “virgins.” Those seated in the virgin section have a chance of being pulled into the performance to experience all the oddities of “Rocky Horror” up close and personal. There will be four performances of “Wild West Rocky” with the show running at 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 28 and Saturday, Oct. 29. Tickets are five dollars and typically sell out very quickly, so be sure to lace up your cowboy boots, straighten your 10-gallon hats and make your way to the Student Center Ballrooms for a rootin’, tootin’ good time.
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HSA: Showcasing the Beauty of Haitian Culture

The Haitian Student Organization (HSA) brought Haitian culture to Montclair State University on Sunday, Oct. 16 to celebrate Carnaval des Fleurs (Carnival of Flowers).

The goal of the event was to honor Haitian culture and educate people about its significance.

Different organizations of Montclair State, including the Black Student Union (BSU), Native African Student Organization (NASO), The Brotherhood/La Hermandad, cosponsored the event. Students from other universities were also in attendance to honor Haiti.

The night started off with Maquerley Previlon, the host of the night and former e-board member of HSA, introducing the new 2022-2023 e-board as they walked down in front of the crowd.

People then stood for the Haitian National Anthem, followed by a moment of silence for Haitian artist Michael Benjamin, better known as Mikaben, who recently died over the weekend after going into cardiac arrest.

Rose Saint Juste, a junior biology major and the president of HSA, expressed that people usually have a negative connotation when it comes to Haiti and wanted to erase that ideal with this event.

"People say it’s the poorest country, people have negative connotations on Haiti,” Saint Juste said. “So we wanted to showcase how beautiful Haiti is and how beautiful our culture is.”

Five men and ladies then participated in a best-dressed segment, walking down in pairs, leaving Katrina Charles, a junior biology major and HSA vice president, the winner by popular demand of the crowd. People who had a Haitian flag under their chairs were placed in a trivia game to test their knowledge of Haitian historic events, heritage, and the HSA organization.

Some were knowledgeable about Haiti, while others, some of who weren’t Haitian, were informed about notable facts about the country after the game. Toward the end of the night, the dancers of HSA, performed two dances that bought the Carnival to Montclair State. The event was a success and students danced to afro-beats as it came to a close.

Ezechiel Collin, a freshman undecided, said the event was beyond what he imagined.

“Overall the event was really nice,” Collin said. “It was better than I expected and I did learn a lot even though I’m Haitian. It was my first time going to an event like this and dressing up so it exceeded my expectations.”

Nyron Mitchell, a junior family science major and the event coordinator of The Brotherhood/La Hermandad, thought the event was really inviting with neighboring organizations coming together to celebrate Haitian culture.

“I like to see all organizations coming together as one and creating bonds,” Mitchell said. Charles said this celebration served to show people some unique aspects of the Haitian culture.

“Haiti is so much more than what people think and we want people to see that and that’s why we bought our theme of Carnaval des Fleurs,” Charles said. “So people can see what we celebrate and how we celebrate by dancing, the unique garb and just educating others of our culture.”

According to Charles, the aim for the night to be the perfect blend of entertaining yet educating others about Haitian culture was fulfilled.

“People got to see the beautiful dance moves within our Haitian culture, the lively atmosphere and ultimately getting an experience of our life,” Charles said. “Like there are people who haven’t tried Haitian food before until today.”
Latino and Hispanic organizations, faculty and students gathered at the Montclair State University Student Center quad to celebrate the second annual Hispanic Heritage Month Block Party on Wednesday, October 12.

At the event, there was food, music, painting and games such as dominoes. The block party was about having fun together while celebrating the Hispanic community.

The block party started with a few words from students and faculty of distinct Hispanic organizations on campus. Jazmin Mora-Amaya, a junior business administration major and vice president of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), shared a few words with the attendees.

"Being part of LASO, I love seeing all this representation whether you are Latino, whether you are not Latino, being Latino means we are [a] familia," Mora-Amaya said. "I love the community [here today], we are here to have a good time, to dance, to eat good comida [food] because Latino comida is the best comida. Thank you everyone for being here at the second annual Hispanic Block Party."

Marco Cordova, director of summer programs in the Office for Hispanic Initiatives who also helped to organize the block party, shared his thoughts on the celebration.

"Being a Hispanic serving institution, it is important for us to show that we care about our Latino students and show that we know the importance of events like this going on," Cordova said. "It’s also nice to see all of us out here, different faces, different people, coming together and having that sense of community."

Another aspect of the block party was the different tables that were set up representing distinct Latino/Hispanic organizations on campus. It helped introduce these organizations to both Hispanic and non-Hispanic students.

Sofia Gamez, a freshman nursing major, shared why she decided to attend the event and how significant cultural representation is in a campus setting.

"Being Hispanic and a freshman, I wanted to go to a school where I can see people like me and I feel like this is a good opportunity to meet those kinds of people and just celebrate our culture," Gamez said. "I like it, I love the food and the music and just meeting new people that are from different nationalities but Hispanic as well."

While students enjoyed their food and played games, DJ Brandon Leon kept the event entertained and lively as he played music warming the crowd up for the live band. Eventually, the Afro-Caribbean Ensemble from the John J. Cali School of Music performed. The band, made up of students on campus, was started by student and percussionist in the ensemble Vic Ortiz.

Students and faculty began dancing along with the music of the band. Isabel Adorno, lead singer and senior music education major, along with pianist Lornaa Morales, a music therapy major, taught the audience an easy dance routine and managed to get a large group of people to dance together. They played classic songs such as "Oye Como Va" by Santana.

Adorno also shared a few thoughts on the performance.

"It was thrilling to be able to sing my people’s music on campus," Adorno said. "Events like this are important because as the Latin community we are often pushed to the side, but this gives us an opportunity to be not only accepted but appreciated, that the foundation that people set before us is accepted and respected."
Montclair State University’s Office for Social Justice and Diversity hosted a celebration of National Coming Out Day and the start of LGBTQIA+ History Month with the raising of the pride flag on Tuesday, Oct. 11.

Students, staff and faculty filled the student center flagpoles for this special event, ready to support the speakers of the evening.

Speakers included individuals from different organizations and departments on campus such as the gender, sexuality and women’s studies program, Office for Social Justice and Diversity and student development and campus life.

Each speech highlighted the importance of the flag raising, recognition of historical figures within the LGBTQ+ community and the acceptance and love each speaker has felt here at Montclair State.

Dawn Soufleris, vice president of student development and campus life, shared her own story, ending with a message for all Montclair State students.

“We love you, we see you, we value you, you belong here and you are safe,” Soufleris said.

The event saw a good turnout from students, as the crowd surrounding the flagpole began to expand as speeches went on.

Na’Dree Stewart, a senior anthropology major, said this event allowed everyone to embrace who they are.

“To me, this means a sense of authenticity,” Stewart said. “Allowing people to walk free within themselves without judgment and live this life in the happiest way possible.”

Max McFadden, a junior animation/illustration major who also spoke at the event, praised the campus’ inclusivity.

“It’s really great to have solidarity from the campus itself because so many people across the country are not lucky enough to have that,” McFadden said. “I’m so glad that Montclair [State] has been so supportive and welcoming. I’ve never felt really unsafe here being who I am.”

Ashlie, a senior justice studies major who asked for her last name not to be used, explained that the event meant a lot to her in terms of acceptance.

“To me, it means living in my truth and everyone living in their truth,” Ashlie said. “I feel like when you’re on a campus as accepting as this it kind of boggles my mind. When I go home the community isn’t that accepting, but Montclair State just feels like one big family.”

Montclair State has received national recognition across multiple outlets as a top school for LGBTQ+ members of the campus community and continues to exemplify its dedication through events like this.
Students Embrace the Season with Autumn Activities

Roxanne Gribbin
Guest Writer

S
ay goodbye to the hot humid weather and get snuggled up with a warm drink and a good movie. Even though autumn puts an end to sandy beaches and sunburns, it starts a new season of excitement and magic. When the apple cider is flowing and the leaves are an array of colors, the students of Montclair State University are thrown into a fall wonderland. Our campus is perfect for this time of year with coffee shops on every turn and gorgeous foliage that you can’t take your eyes off of. Gorgeous vivid red and autumn leaves can be seen scattered everywhere you look.

If you’re looking for a scenic fall view, the skyline viewpoint is one of the best places to be during this time of year. While looking off at New York City you can see all the leaves on the trees changing color at different rates. Bright orange, red and green can all be seen. At night, the view is transformed into a beautiful sea of lights.

Another stunning part of campus during this time of year is the amphitheater by Alexander Kasser Theater. By climbing up the stairs to the top, you can get an amazing view of Cole Hall and the surrounding trees. Make sure to take a trip to Panera after that to treat yourself to a warm beverage.

Jay Lewis, an undeclared sophomore is among the students at Montclair State that are in love with the scenic, warm sights of the season. “My favorite part about fall is the scenery,” Lewis said. “[I love it when] the greens become oranges and reds.” Fall at Montclair State has so much to offer. From events to autumn field trips off campus. It is a beautiful time for students to gather, meet new people and participate in fun traditions like Rocky the Red Hawk’s birthday.

Ariana Ortiz, a junior English major, said one of her favorite things about the fall was pumpkins, as she has a vivid memory of going pumpkin picking when she was younger. “I went to a pumpkin patch with my mom and her coworker and her daughters,” Ortiz said. “There was a tractor and I remember sitting inside the tractor wheel, and that was really fun.”

Our best spots on campus for a warm beverage include Venture Cafe, Cafe Diem, and the two Dunkin’ locations. You could even enjoy a hot pumpkin spice latte while watching the football game if that’s your thing. Montclair State’s homecoming game will be against Christopher Newport University on Saturday, Oct. 29, and kick-off is at 1 p.m.

What sounds better than sitting next to a crackling fire and watching the October stars on a chilly night? The Recreation Center lights its fire pit every Friday. Students can enjoy the warmth with some complementry s’mores, iced tea and fun activities. This is a great way to meet new friends or converse with the old.

If that isn’t your speed, the Recreation Center and other campus organizations are also coming together to host “Nightmare on Clove Road,” a haunted walk that takes you behind Hawks Crossings for a spooky good time. Henna artists, palm readers and physics will also be in attendance. This event will take place on Oct. 25 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and light refreshments will be available.

And on Halloween, the big day itself, the Office of Commuter Life is hosting a “Reverse Trick or Treat.” Held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., staff will be giving out candy treats to commuters at random times of the day. Students will also be decked out in their creative costumes as they roam the campus.

Joshua Fernandez, a sophomore mathematics major, was happy to learn what Montclair State has to offer during the fall season. “Montclair [State] has so much to offer when it comes to fall and their activities,” Fernandez said. Overall, fall is a very exciting time here at Montclair State. There are so many opportunities to go to events and chances to meet lifelong friends. The trees are rapidly changing color and there is a sense of ambition in the air, so why not go and take advantage of this wonderful time of the year?
Complete the survey for a chance to win $100 Flex Dollars!
A Chilling Classic: "And Then There Were None"

Rebecca Bienskie Jackson | Staff Writer

With Halloween right around the corner, it can be hard to find books to set the mood. My advice, when in doubt, pick a mystery book. And who better to read than the one and only Agatha Christie? "And Then There Were None" is an Agatha Christie classic showcasing a closed mystery where anyone can be a suspect.

Christie was born in Sept. 1890 in England. She grew up around stories and at age five she taught herself how to read. She continued to write throughout her life, publishing a total of at least 68 books and many short stories. Some of her biggest sellers include "Murder on the Orient Express," "Death on the Nile" and, of course, "And Then There Were None."

Soldier Island, our setting, is known to the public as an island of mystery and wonder. Rumored to be occupied by celebrities and wealthy people alike, the average citizen is unaware of what really happens inside the walls of the ominous mansion on the island. One summer day, 10 strangers are invited to gather on Soldier Island all under different circumstances. They are unaware of the sinister truth: the host plans to murder all the guests invited.

As guests are murdered one by one, they wonder if the host even exists, making every single one of them a suspect. There are multiple moments where it is perceived to be impossible. It is a closed mystery where anyone can be a suspect.

Were they? There are clues sprinkled throughout the book that don't seem important until the very end. The reveal was satisfying and worth the wait. I loved the setting as well, a creepy mansion on a secluded island was so fun to read. Especially during the fall time, reading books with creepy settings helps me get into the Halloween spirit.

I do have a few critiques about the book. To begin with, I felt I was several steps ahead of the characters. I had that realization pages ago. How could they have died? Everyone was in the room.

I'd recommend this book to any fan of mystery, especially people who love the board game "Clue." It is not only a story written by one of the most classic mystery authors, but the premise is the basis of many movies and books written today. The dinner party trope is so ingrained in our culture it's hard to imagine a world without it.

"And Then There Were None" is also a standalone, so it can be read without any prior knowledge of Christie's books. It is a great introduction to her writing style and a spooky read for the Halloween and fall seasons.
Boys, Beans, "Bones and All": A Book Review

Beneath the piles of flesh and blood, Camille DeAngelis’ “Bones and All” is a coming-of-age story about a young girl, Maren, learning to navigate life as a teenage cannibal.

From infancy, Maren has been an “eater” and struggles with coming to terms with her inability to control her hunger around boys. Scared of what her daughter is capable of doing, her mother leaves Maren after her 16th birthday and for the first time in her life, Maren is alone. With only $600 in cash, a rucksack and great determination, Maren begins her cross-country journey to find her father.

While on her mission, Maren meets another “eater” Lee; and together they yearn to fit in while attempting to suppress their cannibalistic urges. Maren’s character is not easy to love, after being emotionally neglected her entire life by her mother and abandoned by her father before birth, her decision-making skills are not her strongest suit, making it very frustrating to support her. After readers learn about Maren’s many sexual encounters with boys at too young of an age, it becomes obvious this story is a commentary on reframing the man-eater trope, in a much more innocent and childlike way. Even after sixteen years of unhealthy eating habits, Maren chooses to literally devour her prepubescent prey alive, but beneath her hardened facade is a hurting child that only yearns for the comfort of a parent and a normal life.

Impulse control is not something Maren is familiar with, nor does she begin to attempt to control such urges. “Bones and All” portrays Maren as a volatile predator who eats her presubpensive prey alive, but beneath her hardened facade is a hurting child that only yearns for the comfort of a parent and a normal life. I devoured this book, pages and all. This story wasn’t exactly the make-sure-your-feet-aren’t-hanging-off-of-the-bed scary story I was expecting, but I was pleasantly surprised with the depth of the plot.

The book itself is very ambitious, but expecting readers to believe an infant is capable of devouring an entire person was a bit of a stretch, even for a fantasy novel. Its strengths are in character development, not believability. Oftentimes, readers are left wondering what just happened. I wouldn’t be aware that Maren actually did consume someone until many chapters later due to how vaguely the scene was written.

DeAngelis makes up for her lack of detail with an amazing job of expressing the grief Maren struggles with immediately after dining on her somewhat innocent victims. Readers really do feel like they’re blacking out alongside Maren and waking up with blood on their hands as well.

I picked up this book thinking I would need a nightlight to sleep, but I ended up wiping away more tears than expected. Maybe too many years of unsupervised access to the internet as a child has rotten my perception of horror, but the scariest thing about this book was the constant eating of beans straight out of the can.

Despite my grievances, I have to conclude this book was very enjoyable to read and I would recommend it to anyone looking for an excuse to cry uncontrollably and loudly in front of their roommates. This book has it all: mommy and daddy issues, half-eaten corpses, intrusive men and lots of unmanaged hormones.

Anna McCabe
Guest Writer

Anna McCabe, poses with the book, "Bones and All."
HAWK TALK
What are you singing at karaoke night?
By Lynise Olivacce
Photo Editor

“For karaoke night I would sing 'Late Night Talking,' by Harry Styles because it's my favorite song right now.”

Taylor Taveira
Sophomore
English

“So I would be singing 'Iris,' by the Goo Goo Dolls because I really love that song and I think that was one of the best songs.”

Bailey Winkler
Freshman
Psychology
“The first thing that came to mind is, 'Don't Speak,' by No Doubt because I've been listening to that song recently, and I feel like you can get into it because it's like a passionate song.”

Caitlyn McManus
Freshman
Psychology

“I would sing the 'Real Slim Shady,' by Eminem because it’s my song and I go hard when it goes on.”

Lynise Olivacce | The Montclarion

“‘I would pick 'From the Bottom of my Broken Heart,' by Britney Spears because I feel like a lot of people don’t appreciate pop music. Because they say it’s corny or not deep. But I feel like Britany Spears is surprisingly pretty deep. So yeah I rock with that one.”

Ire Triplin
Sophomore
Business Administration

“There is a song by Sting called 'Dessert Rose,' it's like Algerian and English which I find pretty cool. I just like the rhythm and everything about it.”

Selma Hajhassan
Junior
Business Administration

Marley Holston
Sophomore
Visual Arts
Horoscope

Capricorn
Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
Have you ever had the urge to abandon your life in the real world and move to Colorado, this is the week to do it! Don’t be afraid to ignore every red flag your partner begins exhibiting upon arrival, the two little ghosts get in the hallway, and the REDRUM’s written on the door in lipstick. It’ll be fine!

Aquarius
Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
Do you think it’s possible to make a good dirty movie? If so, grab an acoustic guitar, your significant other, two of your closest friends, and a couple of random college students, because we have work to do baby! Just make sure you pick up any loose nails lying around and that all pets alligators are fed prior to your arrival.

Pisces
Feb. 19 – Mar. 20
You will make a new friend this week! Beware! He might ask you to film him for a day and make you watch him do very obscure things and admit his deepest darkest secrets and then keep you from leaving while wearing a wolf mask, named Peachfluffy, then sneak you in your home for the next couple of weeks! He will send gifts though!

Aries
Mar. 21 – Apr. 19
Film majors! Spooky season is the perfect time to make a documentary on some scary urban legends! Now get out in those woods, cheap camcorder in hand, and explore! I’m willing to bet that those creepy stick dolls were just put there by boy scouts. Hey, what’s Michael doing in the corner?

Taurus
Apr. 20 – May 20
Hey! If there’s a creepy hidden dungeon in the basement of an Airbnb you share with Bill Skarsgard, don’t go in lol! I know Bill Skarsgard was really hot in “Carribean”, but don’t do it!

Gemini
May 21 – Jun. 20
Are you one of the unlucky who was born June 6th and now has to be reminded about the kid from “The Omen” also being born on June 6th at 6 a.m.? Well my brother is and my dad said if he came out at 6 a.m. he was going to have to take things into his own hands. He ended up being an emergency c-section at 5:40 a.m.

Cancer
Jun. 21 – Jul. 22
In mourning? The best way to grieve is with a Swedish getaway. Forget how rocky your relationship with your medicare boyfriend is, pack your bags, hop a plane, and meet some cool locals! Have you heard about the ceremony for 72-year-olds? And at the end of the trip, the ladies get a LOVELY flower dress, and the men get a nice, heated bear costume!

Leo
Jul. 23 – Aug. 22
This week surround yourself with places that inspire you. Maybe a beach, some mountains, or a house like in “Sisterhood” where a whole family was murdered and is now being haunted and your wife knows you’re writing a book about it but she doesn’t know you’re living where it happened and now your family is being terrorized.

Virgo
Aug. 23 – Sep. 22
This week, take a lesson from Jennifer's book and be consistent! Steal your best friend's best Pour Lemonade on their bed! Eat their boyfriend! Anyways, hope you all have the best week since, like, Jesus invented the calendar.

Libra
Sep. 23 – Oct. 22
Listen, I know your older new boyfriend is a Libra Moon and that says a lot about him, but maybe bringing him to meet your six closest friends at their parents’ secluded house in the woods isn’t the best idea. If you don’t want to heed my warning, just don’t try to make any tiki-toks, or eat any of the cake in the house, or bring zucchini bread as a gift like a weirdo.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 – Nov. 21
Go for a weekend getaway with four of your grooviest friends to the creepiest cabin you can find! Do some light reading that book with the face seems nice! If you find some old tapes with demonic incantations, be sure to play those too, even if a tree branch bursts through a window to attack!

Sagittarius
Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
Make some money as a babysitter this Halloween! Just keep an eye out for some guy who is either your brother or just really, really crazy and has a consistent, 40-year-long beef with you. Really just depends on which sequel you like.
Across
3. This candy's tagline is “sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don’t.”
4. This brand is best known for their gummy bears.
5. This candy has jokes on the wrapper and comes in flavors such as banana, strawberry, green apple and grape.
6. This candy dates back to 1932 and is named after a novel by Alexandre Dumas.
8. This candy had a fictional breakup for an ad campaign in 2012.

Down
1. This candy is called “pastellfiskar” (pastel fish) in Sweden.
2. This candy’s tagline is “first they’re sour, then they’re sweet.”
7. This candy’s ads feature people debating over left and right versions of the candy.

Sudoku

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Word Search

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c l c l e s s z o g r p y y o e b g z u o b
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Twizzlers    Reese's    Skittles
Hershey      Nerds      Airheads
PayDay       Kit Kat    Mounds
Baby Ruth    Rolo       Milky Way
Serial Killers Are Not Halloween Costumes

**EDITORIAL**

Every year, we follow the same media consumerism cycle. We get brand new TV shows, movies, books and media in general, whose characters are put on a pedestal and become so sensational that there is no way you won’t pass five Eddie Munson’s in a row while scrolling through your feed.

We are aware of what Halloween costumes fall under certain categories such as cultural appropriation or just downright inexcusable representations that even questioning the validity of our costume should be a sign to dress up as something else.

It’s all fun and games, even people that dress up as cult horror movie icons are celebrated for their ingenuity and smartly when it comes to their looks. However, it’s not long before someone takes it too far.

At this point, everyone has heard of “Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story” as it has become gossip talk virtually everywhere for being nothing short of unbelievable. For a lack of a better word, it’s a circus.

Teenagers have discovered actors like Evan Peters, famous for his role in “American Horror Story,” through the dramatized series and wish to recreate his role by dressing up as a serial killer for Halloween. Not a fictional serial killer, a real-life person.

The controversy surrounding the Netflix series comes from the families of the victims of Dahmer, who are in disbelief at the creation of such a crude piece of media. The fact that we should even think to acknowledge the victims as revolving around Dahmer’s existence is absolutely unacceptable.

Dahmer’s victims were young men, queer in some instances, that were finding themselves at a time where being gay was considered unseemingly and a sin. They were real people with families that miss them to this day and whose names are being degraded and dehumanized for everyone to see.

Dahmer is not the only one being romanticized, as “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile,” a dramatized film on serial killer Ted Bundy starring Zac Efron caused quite a stir years prior. John Wayne Gacy, sex offender and serial killer, also seems to be a favorite because of his alter ego, Pogo The Clown.

What do these three killers have in common? Their own Netflix true crime documentaries.

In Dahmer and Bundy’s case, the dramatized media portraying them purposely assigned conventionally attractive men to be the lead actors. For a young person, it could be easy to confuse attraction to their favorite actor versus the serial killer that they are playing.

As much as one would like to blame children not old enough to get their driver’s license or their parents for lack of supervision, adults are also succumbing to the brain-washed fanbase of serial killers.

These are people that genuinely idolize these sick people that have committed crimes against society and killed hundreds of individuals.

Thankfully, people have been waking up to the fact that it is almost impossible to consume true crime media ethically, as the individuals telling these stories do it for selfish reasons and ignore the pain and suffering of the victims and their families.

**Campus Voices:**

What goes through your mind when you see people dress up as real-life serial killers?

*By Katie Lawrence & Mila Spoljaric*

- **Kholilur Rahman**
  Biology
  Junior

- **Angela Sosa**
  Psychology
  Freshman

- **Faith Collier**
  Biology Pre-med
  Freshman

“It depends on the setting. A lot of people at first, they will think it’s a bad thing but then they’ll realize okay this is probably not their true intention they’re just doing it for an occasion or something. My issue is when it gets publicized on huge platforms like Instagram. There’s a lot of younger audiences. They will not know, they’ll think it’s cool, young minds are easily malleable.”

“When you joke about stuff that is supposed to be serious then you don’t really know when to take situations seriously. So at a party or frat party or something in a college setting, for example, you don’t know who has a bad intent on a person and who is just joking so I feel like that could cause a real issue later on in the future cause if you take it as a joke and if you take lightly what he’s done, then things like that will not be taken seriously.”

“I think it’s really weird and it’s insensitive to the families and the people who had to go through those traumatizing times and I feel like there’s a lot of other things we could bring positivity to in this world and we should not be trying to revive serial killers and things like that.”
The realization dawns on you…

“I just want you for my own, more than you could ever know…”

You freeze in your tracks.

“There is just one thing I need…”

The end times have begun.

Yes, Christmas is one of the biggest holidays in the world, but there are a ton of people who like Halloween too. Personally, Halloween is more fun, but that's not the point.

The only things that can explain this phenomenon is that there are a ton of Christmas movies and songs, it's a massive shopping season, Christmas decorations are pleasing to the eye and Christmas cookies are delicious.

No, it can't be any of those, because Halloween has its own counterparts. Maybe there aren't many Halloween songs. That much is true. But have you seen how many Halloween movies there are?

Halloween, popularly known as spooky season, is a great time for watching horror movies because the genre is so wide-ranging and it all fits into the spooky theme. Halloween has a ton of shopping involved too. The store Spirit Halloween opens only for Halloween, and it keeps coming back year after year. Every year, the majority of kids and even adults buy candy, costumes and decorations. They must make a good profit, or else they wouldn't be open.

I refuse to believe that the reason people keep extending Christmas is because of the decorations. People go nuts for Halloween decorations, some even more so than Christmas decorations.

And let’s be real, Halloween absolutely destroys Christmas in terms of food; the whole point of the holiday is getting candy. I'm sorry, I really don't get it. I can't wrap my brain around it. Just think, there are so many holidays that just come and go with out much fanfare. Saint Patrick’s Day, Thanksgiving, Easter and even Valentine's Day. All of them mind their own business and stick to their one day.

When have you ever seen people celebrating Saint Patrick's Day starting in February? Never. Christmas just has to take up at least three full months. This isn't even a slight against Christmas, I hope you understand. Christmas is great. But it is causing a problem.

Perhaps the worst, the absolute worst offender of this is Black Friday, which, may I remind you, isn't even a real holiday. It's supposed to be one day a year. Now, there are “unofficial” Black Friday sales starting as far back as early October. Amazon Prime started offering steeply discounted prices back on Oct. 11.

Is there a solution to this problem? I am not sure but all I want is to enjoy my Halloween in peace. Holidays have to stick to their own months and seasons. This is spooky season, then comes Thanksgiving, then Christmas. Wait your turn, Mariah Carey. All I want for Christmas is to not hear that song until December.

Danny Kratsek, a freshman film and television major, is in his first year as a staff writer and illustrator for The Montclarion.

Sofia Acevedo Valencia, a sophomore political science major, is in her first year as assistant opinion editor for The Montclarion.
DeSantis has taken credit for kidnapping immigrants off a state he doesn’t govern and relocating $12 million to get the hardest of jobs and working yourself to the bone does not ensure you will ascend in society. But it will put food on your table, get you a decent place to live and give your children a chance to live in peace and start wondering if they have a chance if any at all.

It’s time conservatives start openly admitting that they’re racist because, in my view, the racial profiling done to the Latino and Hispanic communities by Republican governors is becoming more and more apparent.

Do you expect me to have to see incompetent of a man as DeSantis on the 2024 presidential ballot? Give me a damn break. If you saw the textbook through a prejudiced lens. Americans profit off the products produced by underpaid workers in third-world countries and ship them across borders. But when a human being asks to be let into this country, they are denied entry because they’re suspected of being a criminal that’s going to steal American jobs.

Again and again, immigrants are limited to their legal status and labeled as these malicious entities from a horror story. In reality, they are just people searching for a better life. My community isn’t a stranger to hard work, but it feels sometimes as though we were born into this life to fight for a small chance if any at all.

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I fear I would be in that business for a very long time.

When I compose political pieces, I am not interested in creating a sect of incels. I have written about countless conservatives and uttered enough lies, but I believe that I have never had to say something that I didn’t believe. That is the only way I can live with myself.

I got a penny every time a bigoted message was sent to my inbox, and unfortunately for Republicans, I fear I would be in that business for a very long time.

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“You Will Bloom Once Again”
by Erica McDonald

My body shakes with grief as I stumble through the doorway of my cold and lonely home. A home that used to be shared. I slam the door behind me and feel its support as I rest my back against it. Sliding down the wall, everything falls away from me. It’s as if I’m Alice falling down the rabbit hole, swirling through chaos only to land hard on the ground. When I was with him my happiness flourished like perfectly watered flowers. But now he is gone and my petals have begun to wilt. And he’s here in front of me suddenly, like he never left.

“You know I love you,” he says. “But I can’t stay here forever.” Tears stream down my cheeks as I reach for him, but can’t quite get myself to touch him.

“I know, but I couldn’t stop this. No one could. This isn’t my fault or yours. This was simply what was meant to happen. And I know this changes things, and change scares you but change can make you grow.” He drops my hand. My head is shaking.

“But my petals have wilted and I can’t make them grow.”

“You should bloom again.”

“I want to bloom. But it won’t be the same. Not like before.”

“Your flowers will bloom once again. Plant new seeds in the soil and watch.”

I open my eyes and he is gone. Just as he has left me each night before. And I have to remind myself that he was never really here. It isn’t right, but this unhealthy hallucination is all that keeps me going. Tomorrow will be different. I feel in my soul that he is not coming back. So I will plant new seeds and I will watch them grow. These seeds will be mine and mine alone. The seeds other people plant in my garden never last, they wilt and I am a garden of dead petals until the next person comes along to plant more. I have to plant my own seeds now. For him, for me, for us. The sun will rise and my flowers will bloom once more.

“An Ode To The Jersey Diner”
by Robyn Platz

Cracked, coral-painted lips, a name tag—MARIETTE. She bustles between vinyl booths as though there aren’t only three people here.

A hunched man with a white wispy neckbeard only three people here. As she sets it down, some spills on my hand.

Mariette brings me my coffee.

“I order. Taylor ham, egg, and cheese, steel-toed boots kicking the rusty counter stool. Like an undercooked piece of bacon, oily homefries, buttered toast) 6 eggs scrambled, 8 slices of bacon, Every mouthful is a reminder of how things once were. The crafted love spells Wanting love bites that eat away at dignity From his facade of a gentleman Of that post car crash adrenaline Thinking...”

“Can’t Stop”
by Rosemary Rodriguez

I want to forget The crafted love spells that spelled nothing but the word ‘stupid’ on my forehead I want you I understand Plath

And you’re no key You’re just as bolted up as me

If I give you only what I’m willing to? Would you not be happier? I would be.

I want my freedom and you would deny it to me. Others might say I’m selfish, I’m happy to admit I am. I’m selfish because I want what’s mine. What I deserve. What you would deny, but they’re selfish, too. For pushing you on me, but to me, you might just be the most selfish one of all.

I order. (Taylor ham, egg, and cheese, salt, pepper, ketchup)

Greasy tile floors caked from endless breakfast with the sounds of the interstate out my window.

The old man is waving down the waitress, her hair is dusty like the white chipped ceramic cups. I wonder who’s been here longer, sun-faded, tacky, and unchangeable, with vinyl and paper menus and ancient waitresses irreplaceable.

“A Selfish Choice”
by Anexis Matos

I love you like I love very few. There are moments when you irritate me, but I’m sure I do the same to you.

There are moments when I hate you. Despise you. Wonder why people push you on me. Question why I would want you.

You cry. Scream. Whine. Complain. Irritate me. Exhaust me. Deafen me. Make you hate you. You want connection. A bond. I can give you that, but not when you’re so close. When you’re so easy to break. When I know the messed up world will hurt you. Destroy you. When I know I’ll hurt you. Unintentionally, but I’ll hurt you. When I know I can’t protect you.

It’s implied I’m wrong. They say having you is a beautiful act. A blessing. Some kind of miracle. For them, maybe, but while I love you, I don’t want you close. I want to scratch at their eyes, force them to see. Look! I want to scream. Look what others have done. What you want to force on someone else. On me.

And you’re just as bolted up as me

I spend the days on my own pedestal Riding my high horse Till the night takes me off course And I fall Left stranded by my stallion

Wanting those memories to leave Since they’ve taught me nothing, only that Hope is naive But I can’t stop

In my ears I hear: ‘Wonder if it’s all for you?”

The tears I could mop Falling like Guinevere’s at the cliffs Or the joys of a simple coffee shop

I do wonder If it’s all for me
Blood squirted out of the wound. “I hit something!” Vera said excitedly. “You see how dark the blood is? That’s from a vein.” The person screamed, clawing at the knife. Vera didn’t alter her grip, looking with delight at her student.

“How did we ever get here? Where were the police? Anyone? Please. I’ll do the time, just help me get this person to safety. Help me get away from this woman.”

“Don’t you want to try, Ekk?”

I shook my head. All I could do was shake my head and try not to throw up. “This isn’t right, V.” My words were practically air, so soft I wasn’t sure they were audible. But I know I said them. I will testify at every court, I said those words.

Vera smiled, that beautiful smile that drew me to her in the first place. “Okay.” she said softly. I couldn’t help but sigh in relief. This was a mistake, but we were going to do the right thing. We were going to fix our mistakes. And it would be alright. And we were going to move past this and be fine.

All air was robbed from me as I gasped when she yanked the knife out of the body.

The person’s voice was raw, but the pain stopped me in the face. “What the Hell?” I said, running over and pushing her. “Now they’re gonna bleed out.”

“Isn’t that the point?”

“No!”

The body slumped to the ground without the knife (and Vera’s hand when she felt like it) to prop it up. Blood was still squirting out. I would say it was comical if it wasn’t so real. If I wasn’t seeing it with my own eyes.

“Help me.” It came out as a whisper. I went to the body, trying to pick it up and drag it to the entrance of the alley, to the hospital, to somewhere that wasn’t real. “Help me,” I screamed, “Somebody please. Help me.”

Vera had gotten up. I hadn’t noticed. She was leaning against the alley wall, watching me struggle like a cat does a mouse. I didn’t care. I didn’t care. I don’t care.

If she had any problem with me, they weren’t voiced. All she did was watch. Watch me shuddingly move the body. Watch my crying turn to sobs. Watch. Watch.

My voice had gone hoarse. I shouldn’t have trusted her. She said she wanted to show me something interesting, and my idolization of someone who used to be my friend blinded me. How could I have been so stupid? Yeah, making the mental jump from something cool to murder wasn’t natural, but I just stood there and let it happen.

I did nothing.

The streetlights flooded our bodies. The person had to be dead at this point. Too much blood had been lost. But I couldn’t stop. Nothing would erase what has been done.

The knife was cold.

It was a rather quick thing. In and out. Vera walked around me, an easy thing since I had frozen to look at the blood gushing out of me. It was gushing. Gushing! Oh, I was going to die and there was nothing anyone was going to do about it!

“I really liked you,” Vera said, tilting my chin to meet her gaze. I sank to my knees. Yesterday, I would say that I would willingly die to be in this position. How stupid is that? I really really liked you. Why didn’t you just do as you were told?”

I couldn’t help but fight her grip in an attempt to look around. Nothing. No one. This was the end. There was truly nothing I could do. I could say that over and over again, and each time would feel like the first. I was going to die like this.

“It wasn’t right,” I heard myself say. I was too far from my body to hear it right.

“No. You weren’t right.”

I’m sorry for forgetting the rest. It’s all my fault, really. She’s to blame, but I’m the one who didn’t move fast enough. I’m sorry for everything.

“No. You weren’t right.”

I’m sorry for forgetting the rest. It’s all my fault, really. She’s to blame, but I’m the one who didn’t move fast enough. I’m sorry for everything.

“The Call On Howard St.”

by Keirah Miles

“We have a 10-16 over on 13 Howard St. Is there anyone who can take the call?”

“This is Officer Connolly, responding to the 10-16. On the way.” 13 Howard St, why does it sound so familiar?

I’ve lived in Verona, NJ all my life. It was a fairly small town and everyone knew everyone there. We were a tight-knit community and always tried to stay positive. We were a very peaceful neighborhood, except for what happened at Jenson’s house.

The old Jenson’s house has been around for years. It was built in the 1600s by Jacob Jenson. He lived in that house with his wife Lillian, three children Sarah, Tommy, and little Pete, along with his household workers Anthony and Betsy. Jacob was a domestic violence call! Is anyone here?”

“Hello!” I yelled once again. “This is Officer Nora Connolly! I’m responding to a domestic violence call! Is anyone here?”

“I’m sorry, Officer Connolly! I’m responding to a call at this residence!” I yelled again. No response.

“These pranks calls are annoying,” I mumbled. As I turned to walk away, the door creaked open. I looked in the doorway and saw darkness. I slowly walked in, grabbing my flashlight. The house had very little furniture in it. I saw a chair that was torn to shreds and a couch that’s peeling. The smell was horrid and there was water leaking from the top floor. It was dark.

“Hello!” I yelled once again. “This is Officer Nora Connolly! I’m responding to a domestic violence call! Is anyone here?”

“I am.” I turned around to see the same little girl. Her skin was very pale, her hair was matted severely. She wore no shoes but her dirty long dress covered her feet just a tad bit. She looked no older than 15 years old.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Sarah Jenson.”
“Crazy Doggg” - Nicky Vidal

“grey clOud” - Andy Cook

“The Octopus’ Garden Episode: 6” - Sophia Caparros
Students Share Their Favorite Halloween Movies

As a devoted celebrator of the month of Halloween, Oct. 1 found me searching through Letterboxd for holiday-appropriate movies to watch with my roommates. Imagine my disappointment when all that decorated the screen were thumbnails of things I had already watched.

Luckily, with the entire student body of Montclair State University at my disposal, I took to the streets to find some fun movies to truly get me into the Halloween spirit.

Sofia Cordoba, a freshman accounting major, said “Halloweentown” was their favorite Halloween movie and I can’t say I blame them.

“Halloweentown” follows 13-year-old Marnie Piper (Kimberly J. Brown) and her family as she finds out more about her heritage as a witch. Her grandmother, played by the one and only Debbie Reynolds, is a witch from the titular Halloweentown and is ecstatic for the young girl to embrace her powers on her 13th Halloween.

Obviously, as a 21-year-old, I am not the movie’s target audience, so I did find parts of it a little silly. That being said, “Halloweentown” is a classic. When you think of Halloween through the eyes of a child, this is undoubtedly what you would picture. If nothing else, for a first-time viewer like myself, the film was a nice excuse to curl up on the couch with my roommates and some hot cocoa for a calming movie night.

Autumn Weglinski, a freshman accounting major, stated she really loved Adam Sandler’s “Hubie Halloween.”

“Hubie Halloween” stars Hubie Dubois (Adam Sandler), about eight Disney kids and Steve Buscemi. It follows Hubie as he attempts to save his hometown of Salem from a killer who has been running rampant through the town.

Sandler is known for his silly, goofy comedies and this movie is no different. It is complete with a ridiculously out-of-his-league love interest and some adolescents who want him to suffer for no particular reason. If you enjoy Sandler movies, unlike me, you’ll enjoy this movie.

I didn’t hate it, but the character Sandler plays is a lot for me. I’m completely convinced he has some dirt on someone high up within Netflix because no sane person would allow him to keep the voice he adopts throughout the entire movie without some serious blackmail.

Senior visual communication design major Kaley Fitzpatrick and freshman musical theatre major Donny Nikola said their favorite Halloween movie was “Killer Klowns from Outer Space.”

The movie is a sci-fi horror comedy that follows Debbie Stone (Suzanne Snyder), her boyfriend Mike Tobacco (Grant Cramer) and her ex-boyfriend Dave Hanson (John Allen Nelson) as they try to fight off the Killer Klowns and put a stop to their deadly gags.

Out of the four movies I watched following these interviews, I have concluded there is simply nothing like this movie. No words in the English language could ever be powerful enough to convey exactly what this film is and how it exists in the canon of popular culture.

The Klowns themselves aren’t exactly scary in looks, but the sheer gruesomeness of their crimes – hidden by the unassuming nature of clowns – keeps the viewer on their toes throughout its 88-minute runtime. It’s not a particularly well-done movie. The dialogue sounds like a “Riverdale” episode at times and the computer-generated imagery (CGI) is questionable at best as it appears that the entire almost two-million dollar budget went into the costumes for the Klowns. But it’s definitely a movie you need to see at least once in your life.

Whether or not you have plans this Halloween – if you need a quick refresher to get yourself into the spirit, consider taking a look at these films. But don’t blame me if “Killer Klowns from Outer Space” changes your life for the worse.
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‘Black Snow’ Is a Comedic Approach to One’s World of Despair

Sekhena Sembenu
Assistant Entertainment Editor

Montclair State University’s department of theatre and dance assembled to perform their first gig of the year, “Black Snow.”

Valentina Cannano, a sophomore theatre: design, technology and management major, was one of the assistant set designers.

Sofia Dietze, who’s also a sophomore theatre: design, technology and management major, was sitting front row and happened to have special access as she was the assistant costume designer.

“I got to work with a professional designer, so it was really cool getting to know his ways of designing a show,” Dietze said. “In the beginning, we were trying to have no color really, but then throughout the show, we wanted to add more color to truly showcase the theatre world.”

There’s no doubt everyone involved in this production did an incredible job to create such an intense, scary and comedic world. It’s a show that will raise many questions, but that’s what makes it unique.

If you haven’t seen it yet, you still have a chance to purchase tickets. So if I were you, don’t walk – run!

Montclair State University’s department of theatre and dance assembled to perform their first gig of the year, “Black Snow.”

Photo courtesy of John LaRosa
The Best Movies For Spooky Season

Danny Krastek
Staff Writer

Halloween is fast approaching and one of my favorite parts of the season is the movies. Horror movies, Halloween-themed spooky films— all of it, but there are so many. How do you know which ones to watch? Well, this list will give you a good place to start.

To read the full article, go to themontclarion.org


Based on the Stephen King novel of the same name, “The Shining” concerns the Torrance family. When father Jack (Jack Nicholson) moves the family to the Overlook Hotel, where he works as a groundskeeper, strange and inexplicable occurrences begin to plague the family which puts Jack’s sanity into question.

What can be said of director Stanley Kubrick’s most beloved film that hasn’t been said already? Everything about this works. It’s beautifully shot, impeccably acted, features an amazing script and a ton of iconic moments. It is honestly one of the best horror movies of all time.

2. “Psycho” (1960)

After Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) disappears, her sister Lila (Vera Miles) and boyfriend Sam (John Gavin) attempt to track her down. Their investigation leads to one man: motel manager Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), who has a strange relationship with his elderly mother.

Alfred Hitchcock’s “Psycho” redefined horror. Before this, it was all about monsters and people in makeup. “Psycho” took the horror and made it more grounded. Full of memorable characters and moments, it would be an achievement for any director, but for Hitchcock, it’s just par for the course. It’s a classic I love revisiting.


Who ya gonna call? Comedy legends Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis star as the titular team who suit up to take down and trap a legion of ghosts swarming New York City.

The brand of weird, screwball comedy that existed in the 1970s and 1980s always hits a sweet spot for me and this film is no exception. With a fantastic cast and a super smart, witty script, “Ghostbusters” really is a perfect Halloween movie for all ages.


“Young Frankenstein” is a send-up of the old black and white “Frankenstein” movies. Gene Wilder plays the grandson of the original Doctor Frankenstein who tries to continue his work.

This film takes the basic premise of a Frankenstein adaptation and turns it on its head. Every second is clever and hilarious and there are more jokes to pick up on every time you watch. Honestly, it’s a movie that’s worth watching just to see Wilder going absolutely insane the whole time.


A parody of zombie movies, the movie sets Shaun (Simon Pegg) and his incompetent friends during the zombie apocalypse with Shaun also dealing with issues in his personal life as everything goes down.

This is one of the funniest movies I’ve ever seen. Everything fits together perfectly, including the charisma of the cast, the humor, the use of music and the visual gags. You’ve probably seen “Shaun of the Dead” already, but if you haven’t— make this year the year you watch it.
‘Halloween Ends’ Brings the Franchise to a Screeching Halt

Last year, I tortured myself by watching every single one of the Michael Myers “Halloween” movies. Of the dozen films, most fell between mediocre and absolutely horrible. The latest, and maybe final, installment in this 40-year franchise, “Halloween Ends,” falls toward the latter, being an easy contender for the worst of the films.

In “Halloween Ends,” set four years after we last saw Michael Myers, we see him face off against his arch-rival Laurie Strode in an “epic” showdown to bring their intertwining stories to a close.

“Halloween Ends” is a disappointment. Though it promises to be the dramatic final conclusion of the Michael Myers saga, it instead flops around with pointless plot lines and love triangles and hinges entire chunks of the movie on characters never met before.

In trying to be the “final” film in the series, it poses more questions than it gives answers. For example, Michael vanishes four years after the previous film. We are told this several times. But we are never told how he escapes nor why he lays low for so long. Why is he in the sewers? What’s he doing down there?

Michael himself is barely in this movie. In the first half of the two-hour movie, he only shows up for one scene, and even then it’s just a shot of him lurking in the shadows of a sewer as if he thinks he’s Pennywise the Dancing Clown from “It”.

If the movie isn’t focusing on Michael, then the obvious choice would be to focus on Laurie, who has been the protagonist of this trilogy, and of the fall series as well, debuting in the first film way back when. The movie doesn’t really do that either and actress Jamie Lee Curtis gives a pretty poor performance. It’s easily her weakest in the series, and it’s sad her final film in this franchise is such a letdown. Her character spends almost all of the movie being petty for little to no reason.

An entirely new character named Corey (Rohan Campbell) gets most of the focus instead, with his random love story with Laurie’s granddaughter getting a massive chunk of screen time. Dedicating your entire series finale to a new character is a bold move and it’s one that did not pay off in this case. It’s hard to talk about the problems this character causes in this film without spoilers, so all I’ll say is his entire persona is rendered essentially meaningless by the end. He distracts from Laurie and Michael, who should’ve been the focus of “Halloween Ends,” as it’s supposed to be the last film in their series.

Laurie and Michael’s rivalry is done after this, at least in this timeline, so why do we spend 90 percent of the movie on this new character who adds nothing to the overall story?

I’ll be going to see it. And yes, I will probably love to hate it, like I have all these other movies. That doesn’t mean I’m happy about it though. As Curtis has screamed in the films before, “Let it burn! Let it burn!”

Danny Krastek
Staff Writer

Michael Myers (Nick Castle) is barely in this movie.

Corey (Rohan Campbell) is a new character that adds nothing to the overall story.

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures
‘Hocus Pocus 2’ Will Win Hearts Old and New

Karina Florez
Staff Writer

When Disney announced in 2019 that a sequel was being made to the 1993 film “Hocus Pocus,” it was impossible not to leap for joy. People like me who grew up watching it every October on television wondered not only if it would live up to the original, but if the writers could tell another unique story about the Sanderson sisters.

In the opening scene of “Hocus Pocus 2,” the audience is taken back to 17th century Salem, Massachusetts when the Sanderson sisters, played by Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy, are orphaned children. Director Anne Fletcher said part of the reason she took on this project was to give the fans a “peek into the earlier years of our witches.” It’s discovered why the sisters were shunned by their community and their first encounter with witchcraft.

Then we’re taken to present-day Salem where we meet high school teens Becca (Whitney Peak), Izzy (Belissa Escobedo) and Cassie (Lilia Buckingham), whose friendship has hit a fork in the road. Becca and Izzy occupy the Sanderson house-turned-magic shop run by Gilbert (Sam Richardson), who very much believes in the folklore surrounding the witches. Cassie, on the other hand, opts to hang with her new boyfriend and his friends, who bully Becca and Izzy.

On Halloween, Gilbert tricks the two girls into lighting the Black Flame Candle, which brings the witches back for one night. Still relatively naive to the modern world, the sisters naturally cause chaos around Salem, vowing to get revenge on the town for being mistreated as teenagers.

While the film gives several nods to its predecessor with black cats, Madonna cone bra costumes and a spellbinding dance number, it stands just as powerful on its own. It even expands the story by revealing that Gilbert saw the Sanderson sisters on Halloween 1993 when he was a young boy-trick-or-treating. It explains why he kept many of their belongings in the shop for so long in hopes he would one day summon them.

The film also focuses on strong female friendships like Becca, Izzy and Cassie’s, Despite bumps along the way, they’re still fiercely loyal to one another, much like the Sanderson sisters. Even Winifred, one of the Sanderson sisters, who finds herself alone at one point, admires the girls’ bond saying, “How lucky [you are] to have each other.”

The theme of feeling like an outcast is also explored. At the beginning of the film, the Sandersons are ostracized in their community for refusing marriage and speaking out against religion and men. Becca and Izzy are also judged for their different interests. Both are able to find a smidgen of common ground despite a 300-plus year age difference.

The only time where the film falls short is in some of the production designs. Many of the outdoor present-day Salem sets look like sets, not real places. While it certainly adds to the campiness of the film, sometimes it makes the shots look cheap and overly saturated. It doesn’t fully capture much of the Halloween atmosphere New England towns are historically known for.

Nevertheless, the actresses of the witches bring their wit, banter and silliness in a refreshing way that’s fitting to the Sandersons. The Sandersons are portrayed as older and wiser but still as silly and mischievous as ever. They even go so far as to say “tell the world our picnic is being held” instead of “tell the world our picnic is about to take place.” It’s a small detail, but it makes the Sandersons much more relatable.

The Sanderson sisters are still the heart of the film. They have a deep sense of humor and are always willing to laugh at themselves. When Gilbert tries to explain their history to them, he says “This is all kind of complicated,” and they reply “Oh, well then.”

The Sanderson sisters are also more nuanced in this film. They are not just for one night but for one year. This brings a new depth to their character arcs. We see Becca and Izzy find their place in the world, and Cassie learns to stand up for herself.

The film also touches on themes of misfitting and feeling like an outsider. The Sanderson sisters are misfitting for much of the film, but they are also strong and independent. They are not defined by their past or their circumstances.

In the end, “Hocus Pocus 2” is a fun and entertaining film that pays homage to the original while also standing on its own. It’s a refreshing way to bring a beloved franchise back to the big screen.
Emily Carcich is Breaking Milestones
In Her First Year as a Red Hawk

Matteo Macolino
Staff Writer

The Montclair State University volleyball team had a historic night in their 3-2 victory against Ramapo College with the spotlight shining on freshman setter Emily Carcich. Carcich tallied 61 assists against the Roadrunners which is the third-highest in the program’s history. This milestone is also the first time a player has reached 60 or more assists in a game since alumna Raisa Silva had 62 assists against Stockton University in 2007.

Head coach Eddie Stawinski was in concussion protocol at that time. “She was getting the ball to the right people,” St. Pierre said. “I've never had that many assists. She’s been like a sponge and just collecting and does her job very impressive for sure.”

Stawinski noted that Carcich is a humble player but shows that she is in control when it matters. “She asks a lot of questions, she's not wondering anything like, ‘Is she in control, is the match getting too fast for her?’ She’s more that type of player.”

Carcich has been lucky to have a team and coaching staff so supportive in helping her be as successful as she can be. St. Pierre said, “I've always been there to give advice when she needed it.”

Caricich couldn’t have started the season any better than she has already. She is currently second on the team in assists with 159 and has already made the second on the team in assists with 332 assists, has always been there to give advice when she needed it.

"She asks a lot of questions, she's not shy about it," St. Pierre said. "I was there for the Rowan game that she started after that because I was still in concussion protocol. I just talked her through all the things she needed to do. She's been like a sponge and just soaking up all the information I've been giving her."

Stawinski is also very happy that Carcich can learn from St. Pierre and take advantage of learning from the veteran setter. The former Division I, All-American and Player of the Year in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) has proved to be an exemplary role model for the young player.

"She's really taking advantage of this opportunity that she has [been] playing alongside [St. Pierre]," Stawinski said. "The fact that [Carcich] gets a season to learn from her, see her work ethic, see her practice is something that we might not see right now, but I think down the road we’re going to see all that come out."

Carcich couldn’t have started her college career any better than she has already. She is currently second on the team in assists with 159 and has already made the history books. She plans to keep working, better herself and be a valuable asset for the team, not only for the rest of the season but for the years to come.
Leah Higgins Becomes Seventh Player to Cross 1,000 Kills in Montclair State History

Matteo Macolino
Staff Writer

A feat achieved only six other times in Montclair State University volleyball history. Graduate student outside hitter Leah Higgins became the seventh volleyball player ever to reach 1,000 career kills.

It was a night to remember on Oct. 4 for Higgins and the team as she hit this milestone in a 3-0 sweep victory over New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) rival New Jersey City University (NJCU). Higgins reached 1,000 in the first set to put the Red Hawks up 24-16.

It came as quite a surprise as Higgins wasn’t even aware of that milestone. "I honestly didn’t know I got it in the moment," Higgins said. "The board didn’t change. I knew I needed six but it only said five. The first set ended and I was like, ‘Alright next set, I’m going to get it, first kill.’ Then [sports information coordinator] Pat [Duffy] was like, ‘[Higgins], 1,000th kill.’ I was like, ‘Oh cool, I did it!’"

Once the game ended, Higgins was able to take it all in and celebrate what she had finally accomplished. Her parent's presented her with a bouquet of flowers and head coach Eddie Stawinski handed her a ball with her name and "1,000 kills" written on it.

"It was just all smiles, all positive," Higgins said. "It was really nice to see my parents. I think my mom was more excited than I was, she had the time of her life that night. It felt just overwhelmingly good."

Stawinski was very proud to see Higgins achieve this milestone and was happy to share the moment with her.

"I’m very happy for her because of all the hard work that she has put in for four and a half years," Stawinski said. "I know it’s an individual goal that she had in mind and when an athlete is able to accomplish that, I think it’s only seven in our program, that’s obviously a very good individual achievement that I’m very happy we’re going to see her name there for years to come."

Higgins isn’t the only player on the team to reach this milestone. Carly Waterman, a graduate student outside hitter, reached the 1,000 career kills mark last season for the Red Hawks. The fact that this program has two players who accomplished such a feat is truly incredible.

Waterman is happy to share the experience with her long-time teammate.

"It’s awesome," Waterman said. "I think it shows something about our program here that we have two [graduate students] coming back for a fifth year, in the same position being able to hit that milestone. I think it shows a lot for Montclair [State] volleyball and that we’ve come a long way since we’ve started.”

Stawinski thinks these accomplishments are just results of what the program is capable of and the types of players they’ve brought to Montclair State.

"It’s awesome because it just shows the type of player that we’ve been able to bring into our program over the years and shows what they’ve done off the court, on the court and their leadership skills," Stawinski said. "Having two players back to back get those achievements is obviously really rewarding as a coach and I’m very happy to see them accomplish this year after year. It’s really rewarding to see where the program started 12 years ago and where it is now.”

Higgins came into the season with a total of 803 kills entering her fifth year. After she decided to come back, she had her sights set on reaching 1,000.

"When I was deciding last year if I was coming back for a fifth year or not, because of the shortened [coronavirus (COVID-19)] year, I would’ve gotten it I feel," Higgins said. "That’s what I was working for, and I knew I was capable of it. I’m happy I did it.”

At the start of each season, Higgins likes to set goals for herself. In her freshman year, she received an honorable mention for the All-NJAC. The next year she told herself she wanted to get the All-NJAC Second Team achievement, which she did.

In her junior year, she was able to keep improving and got selected for First Team All-NJAC and received another Second Team recognition her senior year. Her college career has exemplified nothing but greatness as she’s now put herself in the history books.

"I set that goal, and then the next year I can go that much further," Higgins said. "I knew I had to get about 250 kills each year to get that thousand and I was like, ‘I could do that.’"

With all that she’s accomplished in her college career, Higgins still has one goal in mind that she wants to hit, and that’s winning the NJAC Tournament.

“We’ve been close so many times," Higgins said. "Every year that I’ve been here we’ve gone to the playoffs and we’ve been in the semi-finals. That’s the biggest goal that we want. Going to the NCAA Tournament, that’d be awesome, it’d be fun.”

With the resume that Higgins brings to the team and with her experience, the Red Hawks have a chance at making it far. It’s a tough road ahead but will be a fun rest of the season to watch for Higgins and the volleyball team.
Senior defensive lineman Dimitri Pali has accumulated a lot of conference accolades with the Red Hawks. The Red Hawk Sports Network (RHSN) put its group of broadcast interns to the test on Investiture Day as they conducted interviews for their 2022 Fall Preview Show. This was their first big production of the semester, and with five new student interns, they started off with a bang.

One of the returning interns, junior sports communication major Matt Bruchez, is in his third year of being involved in the RHSN and has done social media work as well as calling volleyball, lacrosse and football games. His involvement in the show was akin to his role in helping to produce Inside the Nest.

"As a returning intern, it is crazy seeing how far I have come in a year’s span," Bruchez said. "I remember being so nervous for my first calls last year and not really having a connection with many of the athletes here. As of right now, I have made a lot of friends in the athletes here, and [I am] able to have conversations on the regular with the coaches. That has made my life so much easier."

RHSN certainly deserved to be shown off on this day. Among the group of new broadcast interns that were conducting interviews for the fall preview show were junior sports communication major Anthony Cafone and sophomore film and television major Gianna Daginis. Cafone highlighted how much time and effort went into presenting such a big production.

"[Investiture Day] was a very stressful day," Cafone said. "I wasn’t too involved in the planning of the show itself, but I had to write two separate scripts for two sports. Remembering your scripts with no visual aid was definitely something that didn’t come easy. Lots of repetition and practice was needed but overall I thought all of our interviews came out really good."

Along with interviewing athletes and putting out social media content on that day, Daginis has gotten a lot done with RHSN in such a short period. The network’s inaugural director of social media, Daginis got involved as quickly as she could.

"I got my start with RHSN during the fall semester of my freshman year," Daginis said. "I volunteered to spot a women’s soccer game and Jess [Liptzin] and Jon [Edmond], two of the broadcast interns at the time, recognized that I was knowledgeable about the sport, and said they’d keep me in mind for any future broadcasting opportunities. I was told I needed to take all these classes and go through the radio station if I wanted to become a broadcaster, but my next opportunity came a lot sooner than I expected."

After filling in on only one day’s notice to call a soccer game with Liptzin, Daginis was brought back multiple times to broadcast soccer and swimming for RHSN. She did not let the end of her first semester slow down her participation.

In regards to this semester overall, Cafone is highly pleased with how the broadcasts have been going.

"It’s been a great experience," Cafone said. "Our team is still getting to know each other but other than that we’ve heard some great things about our calls from family members of coaches so if they think we’re good then we must be doing something right.”

Daginis, who has been doing plenty of things right, hosted episode two of Inside the Nest this semester alongside senior sports communication major Teni Bello. Daginis has a lot more responsibilities this year.

"Leading up to the premiere of this season [of Inside the Nest], I had been working really hard to produce content for our social media pages to keep up with all the athletic events going on," Daginis said. "In addition to that, we’ve never promoted social media this much and there’s never been this sort of position or team before this semester, so it’s just been one big learning experience navigating this uncharted territory."

This group of students has accomplished so much already this semester, and with more sports to call and stories to tell, this year will be a special one for everyone involved.