Half a Million Dollars to Ice Arena

The sign leading to the Ice Arena on campus.

Aidan Ivers | The Montclarion

Andrew Mees, a spokesperson for the University, explains these fees are not an increase. “The amount you reference is not an increase,” Mees said. “It is the amount that was recently approved by the University Board of Trustees to extend the contract with the company that manages the ice arena on behalf of the University, Firland Management LLC. The University’s contract with Firland Management LLC was recently extended through March of 2025, so this figure will be paid over that period.”

These fees will be paid by the revenue from the ice arena and will be no extra cost for students.

Some students also brought ideas to mind regarding how the funs could specifically be used. Tanis Rivera Lepore, a sophomore undeclared major, said “incorporating the ice rink with student life and engagement could work toward bringing more attention to it.”

“One thing I like about ice skating is the music to go along with it,” Lepore said. “The ice skating rink currently has still white lights inside, so maybe having a live DJ and disco lights could work because I know other ice skating rinks have that. Theme nights could also be implemented and hosted by different clubs and organizations as well, like Latin night, Greek night or Italian night along with their types of music.”

Rivera Lepore also highlighted problems with paying for non-University students to be able to skate without prepaid money. “People complain that they can’t use their Red Hawk or Flex dollars to pay for their something from the vending machine, so maybe they could do something from the vending machine, so maybe they could implement a machine designated for that. Also, people are starving after ice skating, right now they have basic American foods like french fries, burgers and hot dogs. More authentic food like sushi, dumpings or Greek food could entice people to have a better time.”

Panos Stavridis, a sophomore justice studies major, brought accessibility for students with disabilities to the forefront of what could be done.

“My vision of more accessibility would be for newer versions of the older steel aspects of the skates that are not made of the plastic material because it is easy to slip,” Stavridis said. “There are many people that tend to ice skate, they slip and the next thing you know their ankle is broken. Maybe something like a four-dimensional protector which someone could be inside could prevent injury. If they aren’t going to spend $536,000 to fix Bohn or Williams Hall, the least they could do is focus on more accessibility.”

Cheyton Villaluz, a senior television and digital media production major, said the increased budget could help students interested in skating learn more about it.

“I think it’s kind of accessible, I’ve seen things that say there are free skate times, but I also feel like what kind of services are available to them,” Villaluz said. “For example, I’m not sure many people know they can take swimming lessons, so maybe if ice skating lessons was a thing, I know that would be interesting for me because I can skate but I can’t stop, so lessons would be helpful.”

In the big picture, though, Villaluz said security throughout campus should be targeted with such a high budget.

“I don’t see [how] $500,000 towards skating is a priority,” Villaluz said. “My biggest interest on campus is that there are no security cameras in any of the parking areas and I think that is a huge security risk because I know people do get abducted from college campuses or if someone’s car gets hit, there is nothing there to protect them. I just think that’s one of the places where there should be security cameras and is a bigger priority than the skating rink.”
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Red Hawk Pride, At a Discount

Victoria Ribarich
Guest Writer

Montclair State wants students to show off their Red Hawk Pride.

Montclair State University Bookstore offers a wide variety of Montclair State swag and gifts that can be bought at a 10% discount every Friday. All students have to do is wear a red shirt or any Montclair State University clothing item. Although the discount seems like a bargain, the bookstore hasn’t seen many students come in to claim their 10% off.

Bookstore manager Diane Pellegrino states that not many students come on Fridays for the discount.

“Years ago, we had more students come in,” Pellegrino said. “But not a lot come in now. It’s not the way it used to be.”

The University created Red Hawk Pride Fridays to encourage students to get into the Red Hawk spirit. However, with the lack of students in the bookstore, the promotion didn’t take off as anticipated.

Peter Guziejewski, a sophomore social media and public relations major, thinks it needs to be advertised better.

“I’ve vaguely heard about it,” Guziejewski said. “I think there should be more advertisements around campus.”

Frank Konze, a senior television and digital media major, has never heard about the 10% discount.

“I didn’t even know about it,” Konze said. “10% isn’t enough but it’s better than nothing.”

Michael Jutinico, a junior business administration major, thinks the discount would be more attractive if it was bigger.

“I’d go if the discount was better,” Jutinico said. “15% would be nice.”

But Jutinico likes the idea of Red Hawk Pride Fridays and thinks it could do with a little more advertising.

“10% isn’t enough but it’s better than nothing.”

Michael Jutinico

“10% isn’t enough but it’s better than nothing.”

Victoria Ribarich | The Montclarion

Frank Konze

“10% isn’t enough but it’s better than nothing.”

Victoria Ribarich | The Montclarion
Students Must Set Goals For Themselves In Order To Get Attendance

Kamill Santana
Assistant News Editor

Students must now verify attendance and set goals for their classes every semester. As of the fall 2022 semester, Montclair State University is requiring students to complete an Academic Engagement assignment for each of their courses within the first two weeks of the semester.

There are several reasons behind Montclair State’s decision to implement this requirement. “The Academic Engagement assignment in each of your Canvas courses asks you to set your intentions for your courses,” the university’s website states. “This assignment has been developed by the university to support your learning, encourage your engagement with the class and meet compliance requirements established by the U.S. Department of Education.”

The assignment has its own tab in the Modules section of a course on Canvas or can be located under Assignments. The assignment serves as a verification of student attendance and participation.

The assignment is not graded and does not affect a student’s overall course grade. The university is also using this assignment as a tool for data collection.

An email sent to students on Jan. 20, 2023 states, “The university uses this data for several purposes including student retention and tracking of courses. And, if you are receiving Financial Aid, this ensures that your Financial Aid will be processed to help pay your bill.”

The email gave instructions on how to complete the “Academic Engagement” assignment. It highlighted that if a student is not able to find the assignment or has any questions, they may contact the Information Technology department.

Students seem to be in support of the assignment and understand it may not be the burden others see it as. Chris Servellon, a senior communication and media arts major, thinks this is an important step to take. “I think it’s important,” Servellon said. “I know they do it for financial aid purposes and they also do it to see if people are actually in the class as well.”

Denilson Raez, a sophomore visual arts major, also thinks Academic Engagement is important. “Academic Engagement for when you’re beginning the class is going to be important because you’re going to let your professors know [if] you’re going to be interested in this class or [if] you are going to drop out,” Raez said.

Raez believes that Academic Engagement should be conducted in a different format. “In my opinion, professors can just ask the students to introduce themselves [rather] than typing it in Academic Engagement,” Raez said. “It may be easy, ‘Oh I’ll just answer this in two to three sentences,’ but you could just say that in person. You have the voice. You can use your voice. I think that they should not continue it [online] for a while.”

Eva Pruzan, a senior film and television major, finds the implementation of Academic Engagement a tad of a nuisance. “Honestly, I do it just because I hate seeing a notification symbol on Canvas,” Pruzan said. “It doesn’t hurt me to just complete an assignment or question. I read the email about it but I’m graduating so it doesn’t really matter to me.”

She doesn’t feel that the assignment applies to all the classes a student may take. “It doesn’t really make sense to ask me what I’m going to get out of the class if it’s not graded,” Pruzan said. “A lot of the classes that we have on our curriculum don’t really apply to exactly how you want to do things. You have to make it on your own.”

For more information, visit https://www.montclair.edu/redhawk-central/academic-engagement/.
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Former Red Hawk Finds Success in the 'Shark Tank'

Jenna Sundel
Managing Editor

One former Red Hawk has soared from the nest and into the "Shark Tank." Tog Samphel, who graduated from Montclair State University in 2005, recently appeared on the hit TV show to promote his business, "Anytongs."

Despite Samphel's success, his path to the tank was not linear. He originally attended Montclair State to follow in the footsteps of his siblings, but eventually dropped out to work at AOL. "I didn't get a chance to finish my degree at the time," Samphel said. "That was back in 2005. And I figured, 'You know what, I'm going to try to finish it,' but commuting to New York and going back didn't quite work out, so I ended up dropping out."

Samphel decided to go back to school and finished his degree 17 years later. "I'm in Clifton now. Montclair State's looking back at me and I decided to just finish it because it's just staring at me every day," Samphel said. "And also [for] my kids, I kind of want to give them an example to just finish things that they started and I don't want to be a hypocrite."

One professor who inspired Samphel throughout his time at Montclair State was filmmaking professor Anthony Pemberton. "He was always creating solutions to everyday problem. "When I saw the email, I thought it was just some kind of scam," Samphel said. "And then outside of that is the marketing, like learning how to create all this content around that, learning about logistics and shipping costs and getting it to customers."

After launching a Kickstarter campaign that garnered positive results, Samphel received an email asking if he'd like to appear on "Shark Tank." "As much as I loved what I did professionally, my normal day job, I just had this really, really strong itch just to do something that I created [on my own] and have [my own] business," Samphel said. "And what does that business plan to be? And if it was [making] a useful product that people really enjoyed and thought was actually useful for them in their life, that would be cloud nine for me."

His invention, a plastic handle that allows users to make their own tongs out of any two utensils, is modeled after his mother's crafty solution to an everyday problem. "She would have family parties and there would be a lot of different types of foods she would make and people would bring," Samphel said. "These trays always need tongs and there's just never enough. We had like, seven or eight trays or more. And you don't want the tongs touching different things and all that kind of stuff. So what she used to do is she'd take clothesline pins and she would just tape the plastic utensils to them."

As he explored this new business venture, Samphel faced some challenges. He had an idea, but he struggled with making it into a reality. He had to learn about sales and marketing, and he jokes that he isn't really a "numbers guy."

"No matter how good your ideas, no matter how great it looks in concept, it is going to change massively once you get into manufacturing, because you've got to worry about costs," Samphel said. "And then outside of that is the marketing, like learning how to create all this content around that, learning about logistics and shipping costs and getting it to customers."

He made the most of his opportunities at [Montclair State], and his hustle, enthusiasm and friendliness, always left a good impression. Atkinson said. Samphel spent many years working in product design in the technology industry, but he felt like there was something missing.

"As much as I loved what I did professionally, my normal day job, I just had this really, really strong itch just to do something that I created [on my own] and have [my own] business," Samphel said. "And what does that business plan to be? And if it was [making] a useful product that people really enjoyed and thought was actually useful for them in their life, that would be cloud nine for me."

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After doing some research, he realized that the offer was real and he began the intensive casting process for the show. He completed several rounds of interviews and video auditions, and each time he was unsure if he would advance to the next round. Finally, he got the offer to fly out to California and appear on the show. "I was floored," Samphel said. "It
"Anytongs" is a plastic handle that allows users to make their own tongs out of any two utensils. Photo courtesy of Tog Samphel

I was floored. [Being on Shark Tank] was a mixture of just fear and excitement. I mean, it was very bizarre. I’ve never done anything close to this. Ever.”

-Tog Samphel

was a mixture of just fear and excitement. I mean, it was very bizarre. I’ve never done anything close to this.

Ever.”

Samphel said he did not have a preference for any of the sharks before entering the tank, but that he was just grateful for the opportunity.

“I would have been ecstatic to get a deal with any of the sharks,” Samphel said. “I’m a big fan of the show.”

The tank wasn’t all smooth sailing for him as one shark in particular went in for the attack.

“I was actually most concerned with Kevin [O’Leary], Mr. Wonderful, because I’ve actually seen past episodes with him [but it] turns out that he was actually very fair with me and he was very engaged as well,” Samphel said. “And, you know, Mark [Cu-ban] was the one, a little kind of the guy who came [from] out of nowhere, I wasn’t really expecting it and he was very very tough.”

However, Samphel said that all of the sharks were engaged and interested in the product.

“I think the biggest shock to me was just [how] engaged all of the sharks were, the amount of questions just firing at you, and [it’s] kind of like a cometion and it was just very, very fast,” Samphel said.

Samphel received an offer from Daymond John for a $150,000 investment in exchange for a 49% stake in the company. Even though it was higher than the 20% stake Samphel asked for originally and his counteroffer got rejected, he took the deal.

Samphel added that John has already been helpful in various ways.

“Since that pitch up until now, he’s a busy guy, and just the time that he’s already kind of given to me and just jumping on several calls, he’s been great and I’m just like, so ecstatic to just kind of like, go through this process with his team,” Samphel said.

One topic Samphel spoke passionately about during his pitch was grind culture. Samphel held jobs in product design while working on his business, which goes against the model some entrepreneurs see as necessary to get a business off the ground.

“All I was seeing, a lot of it was just [people] kind of just risking it all, putting it all on the line,” Samphel said. “And me with a family, two little kids, [a] wife, we’ve got bills to pay, and I just kept thinking, is this really the only way?”

Samphel has some advice for Montclair State students with an entrepreneurial spirit.

“I think [there are] ways to do this more methodically,” Samphel said. “It’s a little bit of a slow burn, and you stay patient and you stay consistent. And you will see the fruits of it.”

Samphel’s story is certainly one of patience and consistency, from finishing his degree to starting his business and making it to the ‘Shark Tank,’ he never gave up and has no plans of stopping anytime soon.

Tog Samphel, who graduated from Montclair State University in 2022, recently appeared on “Shark Tank” to promote his business.
Melissa De Almeida (center) is a freshman educational foundations major in the Red Hawks Rising program, which is directed by Danielle Epps (left) and Dr. Mayida Zaal (right).

Red Hawks Rising: How Montclair State is Aiding Newark's Next Teachers

Sal DiMaggio
Feature Editor

When Melissa De Almeida learned about the Red Hawks Rising program during her senior year of high school, she jumped at the opportunity to become a part of it. To her, this was her way to begin her dream career of teaching.

“[I was] with my guidance counselor every day trying to figure [the application process] out,” De Almeida said. “I was missing class trying to figure this out [because] I felt that it was so important that I got it done as soon as possible.”

De Almeida, a freshman educational foundations major at Montclair State University hailing from the Ironbound district of Newark, is one of the first students to enter the Red Hawks Rising program. Created three years ago, the teacher pipeline program at Montclair State aims to create a positive cycle of social mobility and improves education conditions in Newark.

Students at University High School and East Side High School in Newark take college-level classes that prepare them for Montclair State’s teacher education program. When those students graduate high school, they sign a contract that guarantees them a teaching job in Newark once they graduate from Montclair State with a teaching degree.

Montclair State partnered with the Newark Board of Education and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to help students go through the program, with the AFT giving students a $3,700 stipend to help with educational expenses. The “grow-your-own” program is the first of its kind, and in the future, its creators hope it can serve as a model for other districts to fill the need for teachers.

Danielle Epps, the co-director of the program and director of admissions, recruitment and diversity in the teacher education program, described the ways the program changes students’ mindsets about higher education, describing the dual enrollment classes and the on-campus summer program that students attend.

“They really get a feel for what it’s like to be a student,” Epps said. “So it really is preparing them for what college can look like, but it also is exposing them to [the reality] that college is an opportunity that could be for some of them. It’s changing their mindset that it’s not something [they] can do, but it’s something [they] belong or [they] can fit in.”

Dr. Mayida Zaal, co-director of the program and a professor in the teaching and learning department, spoke about the importance of inspiring students to go to college, especially when they come from backgrounds that have had struggles with education.

“There’s a lot of opportunity here for dispelling the myths that urban communities or urban school districts or children in urban schools need to be remediated in some way, or that they have some deficits,” Zaal said. “We’re trying to challenge those ideas that this isn’t about deficits in individual students or individual students’ lack of ability, but that it’s about systemic structures that have been in place for a long time that have created inequitable educational opportunities.”

De Almeida talked about how her family’s experience as immigrants from Brazil made education difficult and unenjoyable. Although De Almeida enjoyed her time in school, her sister faced many issues when it came to English being her second language.

“There were no aids, no bilingual teachers, no ESL classes, nothing to help [my sister] understand the language a little bit better,” De Almeida said. “So, basic things like ‘where’s the bathroom? When are gym days? When is picture day?’ [My sister] never understood.”

These language barrier issues are what inspired De Almeida to pursue a career as an ESL teacher so that children like her and her sister wouldn’t be voiceless.

“I always wanted to become a teacher, but that kind of pushed me a little bit forward,” De Almeida said. “I need to be the better teacher. I need to be what my sister never had, and I want to be a bilingual teacher so I would be helping the kids who don’t speak English.”

De Almeida said that opportunities like the Red Hawks Rising program give students like her the chance to flip the script for their communities.

“My parents are immigrants. My parents never got degrees [and] never went to school, but I can do it.” De Almeida said. “I didn’t immigrate here, but [for] the other kids that did immigrate to the United States and came to Newark and go to East Side [High School], they now feel like they have a chance to go to [college].”

Zaal emphasized the importance of the program helping students give back to their communities.

“I think there’s real strength and power in being able to be part of [and contribute] to solutions in your own community that allow for, in this case, young people’s agency, to really shine and [for] the knowledge that’s already existing right within a community to be tapped into as sources of growth,” Zaal said.

Speaking of solutions, the program will allow De Almeida to fix a problem that she and many others faced while in school.

“Everybody in the Ironbound is bilingual,” De Almeida said. “Everybody either speaks Portuguese or Spanish. It was a bunch of different cultures, different ethnicities, so I was exposed to a lot, but the teachers didn’t always have the same ethnicity as us, so there wasn’t really such a big connection in the beginning.”

This made learning difficult for students in Newark, as teachers couldn’t properly relate to their students.

“It’s a lot easier to connect to someone when you know what they’ve been through when you grew up the way that they did,” De Almeida said. “It’s not like a rich teacher coming into a poor community, teaching poor kids how to do things. It’s like, ‘You don’t understand our struggles. You don’t know what we’ve been through.’”

Once she graduates, De Almeida hopes to be an ESL teacher for kids like her and bond over shared experiences. She plans on going back to Newark to teach at the middle school where she once roamed the halls, “like [the] good old days.”

“I see myself connecting with a bunch of children, whether they all are from Brazil or Portugal,” De Almeida said. “I see myself not only being their teacher but their mentor, their role model, someone that they can look up to.”
"One Dark Window" is a fantasy novel that is sure to keep you glued to the pages all the way through.

Olivia Yayla

We all have a monster within us. It’s trapped in the dungeon of our mind and tapping its claws behind our kind eyes. It whispers dark thoughts that we do our best to ignore until we realize that they are all true. And that’s not always what we want to hear, but it’s what we desperately need to.

In Rachel Gillig’s “One Dark Window,” we enter the kingdom of Blunder through the eyes of Elspeth Spindle. Elspeth is a common girl who has a monster of her own called the Nightmare, who resides in her head, and she speaks to him constantly.

In this kingdom, unregistered magic is illegal, but traded amongst royals like cards—Providence Cards to be exact. Similar to JK Rowling’s depiction of Horcruxes in “Harry Potter,” Providence cards harness specific forms of magic trapped within a leather deck of cards.

The King of Blunder’s undying mission? Other than ensuring the death of every infected, unregistered magic user, his goal is to find the last card and complete the deck. This specific card, the Twin Alders Card, is hidden by the mysterious Shepherd King and is the last card to be found. With it, magic can be permanently expelled from Blunder.

As the reader, you might be thinking, “If there’s a card in my pocket that can make me the most powerful, the most intelligent or the most beautiful person in the entire kingdom, then why give it up?”

A theme reoccurs through every chapter, “With great power comes even greater consequences.” The theme shows that the concept of overindulgence is extremely human and that we often take more than we need for our own selfish gain. The cards, if used too often, lead to degeneration; a sickness with no cure. Unluckily for Elspeth, her magic is trapped within her head. It is inescapable, like many of us can understand and even relate to.

Throughout the story we follow Elspeth as she covers behind closed doors, doing her best to hide the powerful affliction many have been killed for. During Blunder’s Equinox celebration, she catches the attention of the King’s Head Guard and Captain of the Destriers, Ravyn Yew. Pulled into an elaborate scheme to collect the Deck of Alders before the King, Elspeth and Ravyn must face a courtship. Their time with each other slowly drags them together, despite the Nightmare’s dark warnings and sharp claws holding her back.

From the very first chapter, Gillig takes you through a metaphorical window, landing in a dark misty forest with only the long winding roads and dark oak trees to keep you company. If you’re a fan of the Dark Academia aesthetic, then this book is perfect for you. Every scene is painted perfectly, leaving nothing to the imagination. Poetry and riddles are intertwined between the descriptions, adding that Poe-like eeriness that’s so hard to find in today’s fiction. And finally, we have a female protagonist who can not only fend for herself but not waste chapters on self-pity.

If sappy love stories bore you, then you’re in luck. “One Dark Window” heavily relies on the plot rather than the intense slow-burning romance between the characters. The thick tension between Ravyn and Elspeth would have been enough to push me through chapter by chapter. But in truth, it was the suspense alone that drove me to pull out this book and hide it under the desk of one of my longer classes. Thanks to Gillig’s immersive world-building and unique character arcs, I wasn’t able to put the book down. Even her battle scene descriptions are accurate, proving that word choice is definitely one of Gillig’s strong suits.

With other dark fantasy books, there seems to be a lot of unnecessary fluff which stalls you to get to the juicier parts. But in “One Dark Window,” every sentence has a purpose, and I genuinely believe this book is perfect. Even writing this review makes me envy the next person who gets to experience it for the first time, especially since the cliffhanger devastated me in the best way.

If you’re a fan of Sarah J. Maas, J.K. Rowling, or Sabaa Tahir, you will adore “One Dark Window.” And if you hate cliffhangers as much as I do, then you’re in luck. The next book in the Shepherd King series, “Two Twisted Crowns,” is coming out in October of this year.

As a fellow procrastinator, I must warn you: if you’re not prepared to daydream endlessly throughout your work day, deeply consider skipping classes, or spend every minute of spare time in your schedule drooling over a book, then brace yourself for “One Dark Window.”
What show are you binging right now?
By Lynise Olivacce and Karsten Englander
Photo Editor and Assistant Photo Editor

"I've been re-watching ‘King Of Queens,’ since I haven't seen it since I was little."

Sibel Doko
Second Year Graduate
Social Work

"I've been binging ‘Gilmore Girls’ and ‘New Girl.’ ‘Gilmore Girls’ reminds me of the fall and winter times and I like ‘New Girl’ for the comedy aspect."

Bathsheba Arteaga
Junior
English

"I'm watching ‘The Sopranos,’ which I love because it takes place right here [in New Jersey], so there are references to the school too."

Aidan Smith
Freshman
English Major
“Right now, I'm rewatching ‘Friends.’ I just have it on in the background. I'm just lying in bed or whatever.”

Valeria Pico
Sophomore
Psychology

“I like to watch ‘Grey's Anatomy’ a lot. Whenever I could, [I] just put it on. I have watched it three times already.”

Christina Vivo
Sophomore
Family Science and Human Development

"I'm currently binging ‘The Last of Us,’ but since the new season of ‘Outer Banks’ is coming out next week, I'll be watching that. I really watch it for the characters."

Kyle Woltmann
Freshman
Undecided
Capricorn
Dec. 22 – Jan. 19

Good morning to my beautiful Capricorns out there. I hope you had a good Valentine’s Day filled with heart-shaped things and questionable movie choices. Anyways, is Gone Girl a Valentine’s Day movie? I think I might be getting Nick Dunne-ed. I found a few questionable notes strategically placed around my apartment, along with a box of hair dye and a mallet. Someone please let me know.

Aquarius
Jan. 20 – Feb. 18

Happy Birthday Aquarius, may your week be filled with joy and celebration! If you can ignore the fact that the train you make your commute in somehow always threatens to derail and you sleep next to a life-sized version of the Pink Panther, you’re golden.

Pisces
Feb. 19 – Mar. 20

Valentine’s Day is over now, buy that half-priced candy and enjoy it.

Aries
Mar. 21 – Apr. 19

Hey Aries. I know revenge secretly runs through your veins but maybe don’t act on it this time. Take some advice from the Queen herself, Ms. Taylor Alison Swift, “your nemesis will defeat themselves before you get the chance to swing.” Just focus on staying for now.

Taurus
Apr. 20 – May 20

Had a happy Valentine’s Day? Good! Because the snail is coming your way. Fun.

Virgo
Aug. 23 – Sep. 22

Whether you’re a cat or a person, I hope you have a wonderful day. But maybe consider getting more sleep. I know your roommate is so cool but you don’t need to spend two hours talking to them every night.

Libra
Sep. 23 – Oct. 22

When you order a filet of fish from McDonald’s and call to a fish burger no one thinks it’s funny. We just think it’s weird that a grown adult orders 45 fish sandwiches and then says “fish for my friends.” Like we can see you park your car next door and scarf down all 45.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 – Nov. 21

Stop playing “I Hate U” by SZA on repeat. It won’t fix things between you guys.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22 – Dec. 21

Howdy, friends. Just a thought for the week, don’t attempt to cook frozen Costco chicken wings for your friend’s party if you’ve never made chicken before. Unless you decide to write-up liability waivers detailing that you’re not responsible for any food-poisoning related mishaps after consumption.
The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

Taylor Swift Edition

By Hannah Effinger

Across
2. The title of Swift’s 2020 documentary about her life.
4. The number of grammy wins Swift has.
5. The title of her first album, which was released in 2006.
6. Swift’s lucky number.
7. Swift’s middle name.

Down
1. The title of her most recent album.
3. The show Swift made her acting debut in.
4. The number of cats Taylor has.

Sudoku

Word Search

Benjamin Button
Lover
Olivia Benson

Evermore
Meredith Grey
Red
Midnights
Speak Now
Required Electives Stunt Your Education Rather Than Further It

EDITORIAL

In high school, required electives serve a real purpose in aiding students in finding out what sort of career they may want to pursue. Classes such as art, business, law, computer programming, etc. are a great way to expose students to a bunch of different fields to help them make one of the biggest decisions of their lives.

What purpose do they serve now after we have made that decision? By the time you head off to college, you should probably have what career you want to do with the rest of your life.

With that being said, why would someone who is trying to get a degree in English need to take a physical education class? Why would someone majoring in accounting or economics need to take a fine arts elective?

Sure, having the option to take all sorts of classes is a blessing. It gives people a chance to try out new things they have never done before. However, as a requirement, it is a total scam and a waste of students’ money.

There is no reason why there are so many required electives that don’t relate to our majors just so we can get a degree.

There are many reasons why having so many required electives is a complete waste of students’ education.

Many students will hardly use what they’ve learned in most of these required electives in their careers. If students are absolutely set on majoring in something like history, they should have the opportunity to take as many history-related classes as possible so they get more out of their education.

Half of students’ time spent in college is taken up by these required electives when students could have been taking more classes they would enjoy and find useful within their own major.

On top of that, students spend tens of thousands of dollars a year to get their degrees. Each class costs hundreds of dollars in itself. Those hundreds of dollars are metaphorically being lit on fire when they could’ve gone toward a class that would actually benefit your education and career later in life.

These required electives are also just more stress added to students’ already stressful life. Many students would probably say that taking a class in something you love and are passionate about is a lot easier and more enjoyable than the ones you have no interest in.

Why make a film and television major stress over a natural science laboratory elective when it will not help them when they leave college? Television and film majors should be focusing on classes that teach students audio, production, writing, filmmaking, etc.

Especially for students who struggled with math and science in high school and decided to take on a major and future career that involves none of that, why should they struggle in a class that won’t matter in the long run? Those poor grades will affect students’ opportunities and weaken their chances in the future by tainting their transcripts and GPAs.

Students will benefit greatly from the university loosening up on the required elective classes that they have to take. There are currently too many requirements for students and it limits students’ education for the career they aspire to have.

Obviously, we don’t ask that those classes be unable to take or eliminated. But rather, we give students an opportunity to choose if they want to take them as well as the opportunity to take more classes within their major.

Campus Voices

What percentage of your gen-eds do you think was crucial to your education?

By Katie Lawrence & Mila Spoljaric

“Actually 50/50. I’m taking all psych courses and I’m taking courses to get me by to graduate so I actually don’t think it’s that much of a struggle.”

- Leonard Wimbush

Psychology

Senior

“Maybe like 20%, a really low percentage I would say... I’m a chemistry major and the only gen-eds I think I’ve taken that actually pertain to that are probably my math classes and my business classes but everything else is very humanities, like creative writing sort of stuff which is interesting it just has nothing to do with what I’m studying.”

-Maria Tveitidés

Chemistry

Senior

“About 10-20% I’d say. I’m an exercise science major so yeah a lot of the sciences pertain and I felt that they helped me out but like history and the humanity courses didn’t really add anything to my college experience. They just seemed unnecessary.”

-Luisa Davila

Exercise Science

Senior
Avoid Participating In Performative Activism

Chloe Lawrence
Staff Writer

Activism is a necessary factor in the progress of social and political movements. There are several ways we can participate in it, including social media, which can be an effective and valuable tool for change.

However, when a user’s intentions are misguided, this tool can be harmful and counterproductive. With the popularity of social and political movements on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, it can be difficult to decipher whether one’s motives are fueled by a wish to enact change or for purposes of performativity.

Many users can attest to posting something because they saw others post it. It can make people feel good to join in the “activism” when much of what is done is for performance purposes.

We lose sight of the issue by giving the impression that we are activists. This superficial activism is the root of many social media trends. For instance, the black square.

During the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement after the murder of George Floyd, many Instagram users posted a black square to their feeds to signify solidarity. It became a symbol of allyship but, in reality, it was a symbol for achieving an activist-like appearance.

Many people who posted these squares had no genuine desire to support police reform, but in fear of looking postive and meaningless black square. This is the essence of performative activism. Posts like the black square no longer address the problem, and they morph into an unsettling trend that distorts the cause at its core.

Before we post something, we must ask ourselves, are we doing anything to encourage change? When we blindly repost without the intention to encourage change, we suggest that it is for our reputation and appearance rather than to be socially active and allied to the movement we are posting about.

Misinformation is the primary issue with performative activism on social media, and with the power of advanced technology, it can spread across platforms like wildfire. Since people are more concerned with their image than the message behind the post, they often fail to research and confirm that what they are sharing comes from a credible and reliable source.

We are acutely aware of many American adults who are impressionable beyond belief. Impressionism causes people to believe what they read without questioning the facts. So when performative activism reaches these people, it has the potential to cause significant damage at the expense of the movement.

In particular, the pro-choice and pro-life movements have been subjected to a plethora of misinformation and disinformation on social media, ultimately weakening both movements.

After the overturning of Roe v. Wade, at least 13 states have banned most abortions. In an era where many people’s reproductive rights have been stripped away, it is vital that we are aware of what we post. According to PBS News, “Pro-choice activists and people who believe in the right to federally protected abortion have turned to social media to try and spread tips for people on how to access abortion safely when in reality, it’s not actually always safe methods that they’re promoting.”

When social media users lack caution with what they are posting it grants the opposition an opportunity to discredit the movement and implies that activists have been careless with the information they spread. Due to performativity, dangerous information may be dispersed to social media, creating a cycle of incorrect information.

This is not to say that social media is a harmful way to raise awareness. It provides a platform for people who may not be physically able to participate in activism, such as sit-ins, rallies and marches. Busy parents, people with demanding jobs and people with disabilities can use social media to participate, which makes it a crucial instrument in social movements.

Therefore, we must be mindful about what we post and avoid posting from a place of performativity, which can spread misinformation and be counterproductive to the movement at hand.

It is necessary to take the time to research what we are posting about, assure its credibility and work to spark real change in a country where human protection and rights are at stake.

Chloe Lawrence, a senior English major, is in her second year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.

Grammys: It’s Time We Stand Up For the People It Actually Doesn’t Happen to

Emma Caughlan
Editor-In-Chief

It’s been over a week since the 65th Grammys aired on Feb. 5 and despite the distraction of this past weekend’s big game, I am still not over it. Specifically, I cannot stop thinking about the biggest award in music: Album of the Year.

As so many others, the Grammys have left a bad taste in my mouth since I cared about music. Now, one could argue that you can’t be a true music lover and care about the Grammys. A lover and care about the Grammys. A

I’ve cared about music. Now, one could argue that you can’t be a true music lover and care about the Grammys. A

Before I get into that, let’s talk about this year’s awards. Album of the Year has been a subject of controversy for quite a few years now. My earliest memory being the 59th Grammy Awards where Adele’s “25” beat Beyonce’s “Lemonade,” a mistake so obvious that even Adele herself denounced it.

The next year a similar smut happened when Bruno Mars’ “24K Magic” beat Kendrick Lamar’s “DAMN.” It doesn’t take much thought to recognize the problematic nature of these deci-

sions. The 65th Grammys had the set-up for a redo of sorts with Lamar’s “Beyonce’s and Adele’s albums all being nominated. Many suspected Beyonce’s “Renaissance” to take home the big award. I can say personally I was pretty hopeful, especially considering that the Grammys seemed to know they messed up last year.

Unfortunately, neither Beyonce nor Lamar won. Adele didn’t either, the award went to British super-star Harry Styles’ “Harry’s House.”

I want to state first that I like Styles. I think he is a talented musician and he makes pretty good music. If it wasn’t for his most recent album, the one that won album of the year, I would say that he makes great music.

Styles was not alone in releasing an album that wasn’t quite up to par for former artists, I would say that Beyonce and Lamar were both guilty of that too. But I say with complete confidence that both were significantly better crafted than Styles’ “Harry’s House.”

Obviously this was frustrating for me, as it was for many other music lovers. But it wasn’t worth writing an article over it.

The Grammy being the most prestigious accolade in music is not going to change. But the voting pool and process clearly needs a bit of an overhaul. Yes, the United States is the main player in the music industry but it is not the whitewashed cesspool it used to be or at least to the listeners it isn’t and the Recording Academy needs to represent that.

Music has become more accessible, popular and inclusive as ever with the advances of social media. Now it’s time for us to use it to push back against the bias. Challenging something as big as the Recording Academy is daunting but I believe it is necessary. It’s much more productive than hooting the artists who do win, even if undeserving.

Artists deserve to be recognized for their work and with an award that actually does hold prestigious value, and a few more streams to go along with it. That can’t happen without our voices. So get ready to defend SZA with our other favorite artists of color and process clearly needs a bit of an overhaul. Yes, the United States is the main player in the music industry but it is not the whitewashed cesspool it used to be or at least to the listeners it isn’t and the Recording Academy needs to represent that.

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Avery Nixon | The Montclarion

Stop Letting The Rich Make Movies About How Awful The Rich Are

Avery Nixon
Opinion Editor

Movies such as “The Menu,” “Triangle of Sadness” and the newly released “Infinity Pool” all have a similar theme, which is the rich and powerful suck. And for everyone who isn’t living in a mansion and is unable to go to luxury resorts every year for vacation, these movies seem like something we would enjoy. If you’re like me, you’re a hater of many things. One of those things would be rich people. And there are numerous reasons as to why. I am extremely jealous of them for never having to worry about affording $80 in groceries. But on the other hand, I could never be a millionaire and keep all that money to myself while people are starving and homeless.

With that being said, whenever one of these “hate the rich” movies come out, you know I’m seeing it opening night. Even if they’re horror, I think they’re hilarious and I quite enjoy the demise of the greedy and wealthy. I even enjoyed “Infinity Pool” a lot. Even if they didn’t quite get what was coming to them, I still thought it was creative, innovative, beautifully shot and had great acting. But after seeing it, something didn’t sit right with me.

I noticed a trend in these kinds of movies: A-list actors, notable production studios and millions of dollars to produce. It all started to become incredibly frustrating. These rich people are producing and creating movies that are all about hating the rich, who would in reality be themselves.

Brandon Cronenberg wrote and directed “Infinity Pool,” a film that entails the antics of the wealthy who realize they can torture the third-world country locals and get off totally scot-free. Brandon Cronenberg is the son of David Cronenberg. David Cronenberg is a successful director and writer of films such as “The Fly” and “Crimes of the Future.” It is estimated that he has a net worth of $15 million.

Brandon Cronenberg is also estimated to be worth millions of dollars. It begs the question, who does Brandon Cronenberg think he is and why does he think he’s the person to tell us stories about how awful the upper class is when you yourselves are those people you portray so negatively?

I have two guesses as to why. I believe they are exploiting the pain of the lower class to make a story that will entertain and relate to them just to make themselves millions of dollars.

In “The Menu,” we all feel for Anya Taylor-Joy’s character who is destined for death for the wrongdoings of the rich while she herself has done nothing wrong. We sympathize with her and we root for her. The movie made $73 million worldwide with a budget of $30 million, making a $43 million profit off the angst of the lower to the middle class.

I also believe these movies are made primarily to score an Oscar nomination. “Parasite” was praised and loved by many and scored the Best Picture prize. Esquire describes “Parasite” as “a jet black satire of class conflict and wealth inequality.”

I believe these new films are merely just made to be viewed similarly to “Parasite” and have everyone praise it for being “great social commentary” and “thought-provoking.” These stories of the rich being awful or crazy are completely out of touch considering the people who made them are only going to be richer after all is said and done.

Making a movie about snobby elites and showcasing how twisted they truly are is just a cheap money grab, and to make the filmmakers seem like they are socially conscious and edgy for going against the 1%.

So to all the movies that will come out and be social commentary about social class, I am sorry but I will not be there opening night or any night. I’d rather just rewatch “This Is The End” with Seth Rogen and Jay Baruchel because they are at least honest about how selfish the upper class is by having everyone play themselves.
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“Burn Out”  
by Steph Sangillo | Contributor

Her fire once burned as large as this world could contain
Engulfed in flames,
Untouchable by all men.

Tears melted down her face.
A seemingly endless stream,
As salt water burned like acid dripping down her cheeks
Her thoughts built up so high;
What should have been a mountain

Became a wall.
Nothing but emptiness hollowed her,
As she stood behind the wall
Clawing and screaming,
In a vain attempt to break free.
Falling to her knees,
As her tears filled the room
Pulling her below the undertow

Until her motionless limbs began to float.
No one warned her about the riptide
How was she supposed to keep her head above water for so long
If she didn’t even know how to swim
Every gasp of air she attempted to take
Her lungs filled with water
Suffocating her
She could no longer feel the endless veil of pain.

Suffocating her
She could no longer feel the endless veil of pain.
She was  absorbed by the burning salt water,

She could no longer feel the endless veil of pain.

Who could have thought?
Oh but remember she is lost,

and with tired eyes fraught beneath some sour blood moon,
The fire came flying from the chasms of this lunar monsoon

Is it all too soon?
Desires which loom no longer than those in a distraught and manic zoo.

But who could have knew?

“Amber”  
by Alex Pavljuk | Fiction Editor

Amber's lost,
Whilst dancing across the soft frost,
Her eyes saw what she wished she hadn’t sought.

Who could have thought?
Oh but remember she is lost,

and with tired eyes fraught beneath some sour blood moon,
The fire came flying from the chasms of this lunar monsoon

Is it all too soon?
Desires which loom no longer than those in a distraught and manic zoo.

But who could have knew?

“Muse”  
by Olivia Yayla | Contributor

For as long as I have been on this Earth I have favored books over people. And in time, I learned to associate people with the characters they remind me of. While genuinely believing they are original, humans reek of the character archetype they project. Whether or not they believe they are doing so, they come off as stereotypical; readable. Like ghosts roaming the planet in circles with stories caught in their throats or pasted onto their foreheads, never reaching their full potential, desperate to be understood—stuck in one place forever. Like frozen, unfinished sketches in a starving artist's portfolio.

I guess that's why I became a horror book illustrator. So I could use my judgmental powers to make a profit, while also having an excuse to “people-watch.” The park used to be my go-to place, but not anymore. Since my unknowing muses were beginning to catch onto my creative process.

There I would sit, haphazardly on the damp park bench overlooking the family picnic area. I'd set up my mini easel, adjacent to the lake and pebbled shores, littered with striped beach towels and waddling toddlers. Then I'd pull out my client's story outline from my leather satchel, and choose which scene to illustrate first, scanning the crowds for the perfect main victim.

She was nowhere to be found, my gaze darting from family to family, my eyebrows angled and disapproving of the lack of originality in the crowd. Every mother, suspected aunt, and cousin was styled as if in an Old Navy photoshoot—modestly blanketed with polka dot sweaters and light denim cargo shorts. The complete opposite archetype of what my victim would embody. I capped my pen, ready to move to a different section of the park, the playground perhaps when a blaze of auburn caught my eye. There she was, my victim, climbing onto the lifeguard tower for her next shift of “people-watching.” Her eyes, as forest green as her sweatshirt, danced upon the lake's surface, as mine danced on her bland smile. She was an uncanny resemblance to the book's main character, so I had convinced myself, regardless of her stark red hair when the author insisted on blonde.

"I can fix that," I mumbled, copying her likeness onto my sketchbook, and carving her cheeks into a horrified expression. Trying my best to imagine how wide her eyes would stretch when scared. Would she cry for mercy or stare blankly, frozen in fear? Her shift was almost over, and the illustration was simply wrong. Her eyes didn't scream for help, her frown didn't dip as low as I felt it should’ve. Would her hands cover her face? Or would she fall to the ground in defeat? As her flip-flops clashed against the pebbled sands, trudging past the traveling eyes and onto the secluded trail, I knew I had to find out.

"Anything for the craft," as I always say.

This would usually be the time when my therapist would stop me mid-fantasy and reflect on my urges, but this was different. This was for work, and heaven knows I'll do anything for my work.

Long story short, I made the deadline on time, and to my surprise, the author already hired me for the sequel's illustrations.

“Listen, Ben, I know I insisted on black and white graphics, but this red ink was an amazing choice. My God, the expression in her eyes. It’s so... raw,” he marvelled, unable to take his eyes off of my muse. “These red splatters, they were intentional?”

"Not at first," I mumbled, my hand reaching to rub the soreness on my neck. “But once I started I didn’t know how to stop. You know how it is.”

When I finally grew the courage to look him in the eye, his head was bobbing like a buoy in high tide, flicking the papers, saying, “Well whatever you’re doing, keep doing it.”

“Oh, I intend to.”
themontclarion.org

"PB&J, Episode 2" by Sophia Caparros

"Forgotten Flurries" - Alex Pavijuk

"Flower Power" - Sal DiMaggio

"Luna" - Avery Nixon
Hosts (left to right) Josh Carmona, Peter Di Prospero and Colin Luderitz did a great job putting on the festival with their charismatic personalities and appreciation of student film.

Avery Nixon
Opinion Editor

In the presentation hall of Montclair State University’s School of Communication and Media building, students gathered to watch each other’s works from the previous semesters and share their art with their peers.

Hosted by three sophomores: filmmaking majors Peter Di Prospero and Josh Carmona, as well as film and television major Colin Luderitz, the second Silver Slate Film Festival was held on Friday, Feb. 10.

What makes this film festival different than the others is the sense of community. Here, there is no competition - only support and admiration for one another.

With a great turnout for the entire five hours, the audience laughed and cheered during the duration of the festival. There was a lot of energy and support from the audience and never a dull moment. In addition to viewing their works, the audience even got exclusive Q&A sessions with the filmmakers themselves.

The films varied in genres, such as coming-of-age with “Teens” directed by Natalie Brangaccio, silent films like “Divorce, But Awesome!” directed by Alex Greaney and even horror such as “The Living Reanimator” directed by Robert Jackson.

The films were also exclusive Q&A sessions with the filmmakers themselves.

One of the audience members, sophomore film and television major Scott Ackerson, shared his thoughts on the event.

“The festival is one of the events I look forward to most on campus,” Ackerson said. “I’m so thankful for [Di Prospero, Luderitz and Carmona] for bringing us all together as a community to see these incredible films together.”

Ackerson continued to express his opinions about the films themselves.

“I personally loved ‘On Fire’ quite a bit,” Ackerson said. “It felt very cinematic and if I’m also a sucker for goody comedy so ‘FML FLATZ,’ ‘Groovy Rudy’ and ‘Gustav Spicy’ were all winners to me.”

Not only is the Silver Slate Film Festival a fun event for filmmakers and viewers to gather for the day, but it’s also very important for the filmmakers to show off their hard work.

Junior filmmaking major Kole Boyd wrote and directed the film “The Great American Screenplay,” which was shown first at the festival.

Boyd gave some insight into what the festival means to him.

“The Silver Slate Film Festival is an opportunity for young filmmakers to showcase the very best of their work,” Boyd said. “From the spark of inspiration that initiates the filmmaking process to seeing it come to life on the big screen, I think the festival is a great way for filmmakers to chronicle their work they can feel proud of."

Sophomore filmmaking major Paige Guski showcased her film “Orange Peels,” a coming-of-age teen short film based on a girl and her best friend getting ready for her mother’s wedding.

“Being able to screen your films as a film student is so important,” Jackson said. “You get real audience reactions, and I think that’s so important as a filmmaker because it helps you grow and see how your art affects others.”

Every film shown at the festival was spectacular and really shows how great the film program at Montclair State is. However, there was one in particular that seemed like a fan favorite.

Sophomore filmmaking major Paige Guski’s short film “FML FLATZ” made the audience erupt with laughter every few seconds.

Guski’s pairing of comedic actors, junior communication and media studies major Nick Najarian and sophomore environmental science major Ben Bratter, who was in many of the films shown, is what really tied this film together.

What is a spoof of “MTV Cribs,” Guski’s film follows the host, played by Najarian, and his venture through Rodney’s home, played by Bratter, which progressively gets weirder and weirder.

Bratter’s character playing with toy cars and his delivery of “Uh oh, fender bender” incited gut-wrenching laughter.

Najarian, who hosted the first Silver Slate Film Festival in Sept. 2022, was featured as an actor in two films showcased. One of the last films shown, “Grease Monkey” was directed by host Carmona and starred Najarian and sophomore theatre studies major Lucy Sturm.

As someone who is passionate about the art of film and an actor in many student-led projects, Najarian is thankful to have the Silver Slate Film Festival.

“It’s great exposure,” Najarian said. “I think it’s a very exciting way for students to show off and get some sort of closure for all the hard work they’ve done for an entire semester. I think it’s a great way for students to celebrate why we do this and why we love what we do.”

The Silver Slate Film Festival was only created in 2022, and it was unsure if it would continue on and cement itself as an annual event. However, the audience turnout, amount of content shown, charismatic hosts and overall professional setup ensures we will likely see the tradition continue for years to come.
‘80 for Brady’ Is ‘The Avengers’ for the Girls

The script is a tiny bit corny, but the cast itself is phenomenal.

Hannah Effinger
Production Editor

Get your tissues and sacrificial chip bowls ready; the best film of 2023 has finally graced the silver screen. “80 for Brady” stars Jane Fonda as Trish, Sally Field as Betty, Rita Moreno as Maura and Lily Tomlin as Lou as they embark on an epic quest to see Tom Brady in Super Bowl LI. The four friends have kept up with Brady’s career since his debut – meeting up every game day to cheer on their quarterback and each other as they navigate love and loss and everything in between.

Though I strongly dislike Brady (Go Birds), I love this film. It truly has everything: Fonda as a fan-fiction writer, Field meeting Guy Fieri, Tomlin hallucinating and Moreno gambling with Billy Porter and Retta Sirleaf while high on edibles.

As the stars have talked about in the press tour for this movie, there is something about female friendships that are necessary for our existence, and this is a testament to that. At one point in the film, Betty says to the group, “Isn’t that what friendship is? That we face the unknown together?” A truer sentence has never been uttered.

The writers of the film, Emily Andeson and Sarah Haskins, brilliantly capture what it is to be a girlie with your girlies. To have a group of friends who have your back through everything is a kind of love like no other, and I am so grateful to this film for showing that. The pair has also written the script, and this is a testament to that. At one point in the film, Betty says to the group, “Isn’t that what friendship is? That we face the unknown together?”

A truer sentence has never been uttered.

The cast consists of many familiar faces, such as Ted Danson, who you can see in “Cheers” or Rhea Perlman from “The Mindy Project.” The cast also features Pixar’s “good luck charm” John Ratzenburger and one who needs no introduction - Woody Harrelson.

With 11 seasons running from 1982 until 1993, “Cheers” is one of the longest running multi-cam sitcoms out there. Despite some of its outdated concepts, it remains an example of what goes into making a successful sitcom. “Cheers” stands out through its ability to organize a space that is often realistic and entertaining, as well as through its ability to reinvent itself successfully, especially after being provoking to do so by two major cast changes.

Katie Lawrence
Video Editor

Editor’s Choice

‘This is Why’ on Spotify

‘Cheers’ on Peacock

After a long six years since their last release, Hayley Williams, Zac Farro and Tyler York are back with Paramore’s sixth studio album titled after their lead single, “This is Why.”

To preface, I spent many car rides in 2009 listening to their album “Brand New Eyes” and staring out the window dramatically, and randomly, much of 2020 letting “After Laughter” take over my life. This time was no different. For this record, their punk-rock emo roots remain while preventing a more mature sound, resembling much of William’s solo projects released during Paramore’s hiatus. The lyrics ‘This is why I don’t leave the house / You say the coast is clear but you won’t catch me out’ sets the mood for the entire album.

Some of my top picks from the album are “Thick Skull,” “Big Man, Little Dignity” and “Running Out of Time.” The album consists of 10 songs and has a runtime of 36 minutes and 16 seconds. This gives you enough time to listen from top to bottom twice while taking the shuttle during rush hour.

If you are into sitcoms like I am, you need to have witnessed “Cheers.” “Cheers” follows ex-Red Sox player, Sam Malone, the bar he owns in Boston and the workers and regulars that found a place where everybody knows their name. The show was largely influential in the “will they, won’t they” narrative in sitcoms, and for them you have to thank for all your Ross and Rachels.

The cast of many familiar faces, such as Ted Danson, who you can see in “The Good Place” or Rhea Perlman from “The Mindy Project.” The cast also features Pixar’s “good luck charm” John Ratzenburger and one who needs no introduction - Woody Harrelson.

With 11 seasons running from 1982 until 1993, “Cheers” is one of the longest running multi-cam sitcoms out there. Despite some of its outdated concepts, it remains an example of what goes into making a successful sitcom. “Cheers” stands out through its ability to organize a space that is often realistic and entertaining, as well as through its ability to reinvent itself successfully, especially after being provoked to do so by two major cast changes.
‘The Last of Us’ Ambitiously Shatters Video Game Adaptation Skepticism

Toan Le
Staff Writer

Video game adaptations tend to stumble during their creative process with many outputs that disgrace their respective beloved franchises. The likes of “Resident Evil,” “Assassin’s Creed” and “Mortal Kombat,” among many others, create undeniable doubts about whether a good adaptation would ever be possible.

“The Last of Us” not only exceeds the unbearable expectation but also proudly labels itself to be one of the best shows of all time.

Adapted with the same title, the story takes place 20 years after humankind has fallen fatal to a fungal infection called Cordyceps, turning a regular individual into a decaying yet deadly monster.

Joel Miller (Pedro Pascal), a smuggler in the Boston Quarantine Zone (QZ), embarks on a journey to search for his brother, Tommy (Gabriel Luna), with his love companion, Tess (Anna Torv). They soon cross paths with Marlene (Merle Dandridge), a leading member of the Fireflies, a freedom fighting militia group rebelling against the Federal Disaster Response Agency (PEDRA) who are one of the last remnants of the United States government.

The matter gets even more complicated when Marlene asks Joel and Tess to smuggle Ellie (Bella Ramsey), whose blood carries an immunity to the infection, out of Boston in exchange for goods when they reach the drop-off destination.

The translation to the series is admirably perplexing, packed with numerous faithful details from the game, all while extending on its own foundation. The base storyline of the game is still very much embedded, but the way the narrative dives deeper into the lore of its world is jaw-dropping. Side characters that Joel encounters along the way have a more vital emphasis on the story than just another plot device for the main protagonists to grow. Their backstories contribute a core emotional layer to the series’ overall theme of hope.

Most noticeably, Bill (Nick Offerman) and Frank (Murray Bartlett) give the most romantic and heartwarming storyline in the whole series. Their performances, along with the tight, emotional writing, elevate the quality of the show, demonstrating there is more to extract from the base materials than just what is given. Their well-crafted story arc speaks themes of love, perseverance and hope that are woven so miraculously with the main storyline; not only does it deliver a purpose for the main characters, but it also amazingly displays that deviation from the original materials can be done right. The episode even proves itself to be one of the best written in television history.

Some new elements are injected into the core narrative, but they are effective and important in making the world seem lived-in and desolate, overgrown with hopelessness and ruined landscapes. The creators really devote their efforts to recreating the world from the game that makes side-by-side comparisons more honest and immersive. From set designs to micro details such as where to place a line of moss, the series really does justice to how the visuals hook in the gamers as they do it again with viewers.

To top it off, the infected design models should truly be lauded as they retain the authenticity of the game’s models, right down to the sound mixing components. In other words, the show really captures the accurate representation of its source materials without compromising creative limitations.

Although, the series would not be as attractive and engaging without its two leads, whose chemistry beautifully expands through each episode. Pascal really taps into his dramatic instincts to bring out a morally-conflicted character with choices that might not be good. Some of his moments are just gut-wrenching and heartbreaking as if the audience is watching someone’s personal videos. His facial expressions often release a private tension that really demonstrates the actor’s range of emotions and behaviors, surpassing the game’s character.

Ramsey, on the other hand, leads with a grander purpose as she encapsulates the complex innocence of a teenager living in a post-apocalyptic world. Her wise-cracking candor expands extraordinarily well with Pascal’s, developing a love-hate dynamic in the story. Whenever they are on screen together, their interactions greatly fulfill the show’s ambition, not only satisfying the fan base but also producing something meaningful and inspiring.

“The Last of Us” bravely sets a new standard for video game adaptations as it crushes the curse of lackluster conversions. The collaboration between Home Box Office (HBO) and Naughty Dog is exemplarily appreciated as they stick to the core mechanics of the game while creatively branching off to keep things more entertaining and worthwhile. “The Last of Us” really dedicates itself to being the proof that a successful video game adaptation can exist with innovative creativity and zealous passion, one that will leave viewers with awe-inspiring adulation.
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Track and Field Is Making a Solid Run
Going Into the Home Stretch

Ryan White
Assistant Sports Editor

Montclair State University track & field is gearing up for the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) meet. It’s the most important time of the season for some members of the men’s and women’s indoor track teams as the NJAC Indoor Championships are right around the corner. The NJACs will take place on Feb. 20 at the Ocean Breeze Track and Field Athletic Complex in New York.

When getting ready for a big meet, it’s important to treat it and prepare like it’s any other while also understanding it’s on a completely different level, according to the head coach of both teams, Ian Carter.

“I think it’s really more so of, you know, treat it like a regular meet,” Carter said. “But you also have to understand the intensity that this comes with. That this one isn’t just another meet.”

For most of the Red Hawks, the conference meet will be their last meet or chance at qualifying for regionals this season and Carter wants to see everyone take it seriously and do their absolute best in New York.

“For a lot of them that haven’t qualified for regionals or things like that, this is their last meet until they go to the outdoor season so I want them to really take it seriously and really put their best foot forward,” Carter said.

“It’s been a grind of a season thus far but for the most part, Carter is very happy with the way things are going right now.

“I think we have made progress throughout the season,” Carter said. “We definitely are a young team, most of our athletes are freshmen and sophomores for the most part. So we’ve had our growing pains, we’ve gone through injuries, everything like that. Plus indoor season is always just kind of a grind because we don’t have an indoor facility to practice but overall I’m happy with it. I’m excited to get a good week of practice in before conference on Monday.”

Right off the bat for the 2022-2023 season, the team posted times worthy for regionals in the first big meet of the season like sophomore sprinter Samael Milevoix who broke his own school record at this event, and junior jumper John Griffith threw the shot put for just over 15 meters.

At the next big meet, sophomore jumper and sprinter Sidney Whetstone was the highest-placing student-athlete from Division III at the NYC Gotham Cup with a 5.21 meter long jump. And sophomore Kinari Carrington qualified for the finals of that event in the 60 meter hurdles event.

Following the NJACs, there will be one last meet before the AARTFC Indoor Regionals, the Fastrack Last Chance meet on Feb. 24.

Red Hawks who have officially qualified for regionals are Milevoix for the 200/400m event, Griffith for the shot put throw and weight throw, junior jumper Owen Fogarty, who recently broke a school record for the pole vault, Carrington in the 60HH event, senior thrower Na’im Kinsey and freshman thrower Taniya Giles for the shot put throw and Whetstone for the long jump.

Qualifying for regionals is a great accomplishment and Milevoix is grateful to have made it this far.

“It means a good bit for me to qualify for regionals as it’s my first time qualifying for regionals for an individual event as last year I only qualified in relay events,” Milevoix said. “Keeping this in mind, to me regionals are really only a stepping stone to nationals which is my biggest personal goal.”

Earlier this season, the speedy Milevoix broke his own school record he set as a freshman in the 300-yard dash by clocking in at a new low of 35.91. According to Milevoix, he is continuing to stay locked in so that his skill level never goes down.

“It is extremely important that I improve as the competition around us is always improving,” Milevoix said. “If you don’t improve, you will get left behind, quite literally. What personally pushes me the most on and off the track is the want to make those I love proud of me.”

With much of the indoor track season now in the rear-view, the Red Hawks’ sole focus is on qualifying for regionals and putting their best foot forward always.
PHOTO ESSAY: Women's Basketball Drops Another Game, Carter Drops 19 on Senior Day

As the Red Hawks head towards the end of the season, they lose another crucial game

Matt Orth
Sports Editor

After an exhilarating win by the Montclair State University men's basketball team against the Cougars of Kean University, it was time to see if the women's team could continue that momentum into their matchup. And the game had huge stakes behind it, with the Red Hawks still trying to find a way into the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) playoffs.

But unfortunately, scoring less than 55 points in four of their last five games, all ending up in losses including this game, will not get the Red Hawks what they need for a postseason push.

Montclair State lost the game 56-48, but for a day where senior guard Nickie Carter was honored prior to the game alongside her parents and coaching staff, she showed out once again on what may be her last game at the Panzer Athletic Center. Carter scored 19 points, three assists and two steals and led all scorers in the game.

With Montclair State knocked out of the playoffs after the loss, their final game of the season is against Rowan University in Glassboro on Wednesday, Feb. 15.
Men's Basketball Notches 20th Win and Breeman Earns 1,000th Point With Red Hawks

Wyatt Lardieri  
Staff Writer

With only two games left in what’s already been an incredible season, it’s easy to imagine that the Montclair State University men’s basketball team would take their foot off the gas and rest players before the playoffs, especially since there’s no chance the team can jump to first place in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC).

The Red Hawks did the exact opposite when they faced off against Kean University at the Panzer Athletic Center.

The day started off with a ceremony to honor forward Steve Breeman and guard Greg Eck, the two seniors on the team. When the game started, it was fast-paced and intense. No team jumped ahead by a significant margin and both teams traded baskets. Montclair State typically runs teams off the court, but Kean was able to keep up with the Red Hawks and neutralize the transitional game.

Kean went into halftime with a 37-33 lead. Poor shot choices, turnovers and forced shots prevented Montclair State from going ahead in the first half. The team shot 34% from the field and had nine turnovers in the first half.

Montclair State also struggled to find success from behind the arc in the first half only shooting a meager 23% from three. However, the team shot much better in the second half, shooting an impressive 50%. The better second-half shooting was key to closing out the game and securing the win, but senior guard Keyon Pryce insists that there weren’t any adjustments between halves.

“No adjustments at all,” Pryce said. “It’s how we play our style. We’re going to play fast and play with pace. Once you start going, shots are going to fall. We know it’s going to fall. We have a bunch of shooters on the court. Especially [sophomore guard] Mike Jackson and [Breeman] leading the team in scoring. They’re shooting the ball insanely well. And [Eck] who came out on his senior night and played a huge game.”

Montclair State came out of halftime with more energy, got better shot selections and shot significantly better. The Red Hawks shot a much improved 62% from the field in the second half.

The game was tight down the stretch, but some clutch baskets from Breeman eventually closed out the game. Breeman scored his 1,000th point with the Red Hawks during the game and put up 23 points on the day. Pryce spoke on Breeman’s play.

“[Breeman’s] the man, I love [Breeman],” Pryce said. “He’s been here since I got here and [Breeman has] been motivating me this whole time. That is a dog right there. Any time we need him, he’ll always show up.”

The final minutes of the game were tense. With three minutes left, Kean held a slim one-point lead. However, a Breeman dunk to give the Red Hawks a one-point lead would change the course of the game. The dunk ignited Panzer, and it was a spark the Red Hawks needed. Montclair State wouldn’t relinquish the lead for the rest of the game.

The Red Hawks would ice the game with ten seconds left on a pair of Pryce free throws and would eventually win by a score of 82-81.

This was the 20th win of the season for the Red Hawks, the first time they have reached this mark since the 2010-11 season.

The Red Hawks’ final regular season game is coming up against rival Rowan University. The Profs sit atop the NJAC standings and boast an impressive roster. Pryce spoke on the team’s mentality ahead of the big matchup.

“We’re going to go in with the same mentality we have every time,” Pryce said. “One game at a time. Every target gets bigger and bigger and this target is the biggest target that we have right now. It’s the last regular season game, right before playoffs so we’re trying to end it with a bang.”

Montclair State will play away in Glassboro against the Profs on Wednesday, Feb. 15.