What Has Caused Tuition To Rise to About 7%?

Kamil Santana
News Editor

In late July, the Board of Trustees approved a tuition increase of 7% for the next school year. The university has stated that despite the increase, tuition at Montclair State University remains the third-lowest in tuition and fees in the state.

In late July, the Board of Trustees approved a tuition increase of 7% for the next school year. The university has stated that despite the increase, tuition at Montclair State University remains the third-lowest in tuition and fees in the state.

The addition of a commuter dining deposit and the new dining contract were suspected of being the factors contributing to the increase in tuition. However, labor costs are the driving force behind the increase.

For a full-time undergraduate in-state student, tuition per semester for the 2023-2024 school year is $7,382.85. This is about a 7% jump from last fall's per-semester tuition costs.

Media Relations Director Andrew Mees spoke on behalf of the university clearing up any misunderstandings surrounding the cause of the tuition increase.

“The new dining vendor contract and commuter dining deposit do not impact tuition in any way,” Mees said. “The increase in tuition is driven primarily by an increase in labor costs. For example, the cost of employee salaries and wages will rise this year by 9.6%, or $22.7 million. Additionally, the cost of employee fringe benefits will rise this year by $10.3 million from the prior budget, or 15.5%.”

Increasing salaries is an incentive for potential future employees.

“To provide our students with an excellent experience, it is important that the University is able to attract and retain high-caliber faculty and staff,” Mees said. On July 1, Bloomfield College officially merged with Montclair State and is now named Bloomfield College of Montclair State University.

Mees said students at Bloomfield College will be paying the same tuition as students at Montclair State starting this semester.

“Bloomfield College of Montclair State University students now pay Montclair State University tuition and fees, which means their tuition and fees went down considerably,” Mees said. “This further demonstrates Montclair’s commitment to access to affordable educational excellence.”

The university has stated that they are committed to affordability for students. Mees weighed in on how that promise is being executed.

“The University remains committed to providing affordable access to exceptional quality. However, the cost of providing our students with an excellent education is rising,” Mees said. “We continually evaluate how we are using our resources in order to keep Montclair as affordable as possible.”

To help those who are struggling to pay their tuition, the University has awarded the largest total in university history, Mees said.

Damien Kirchner, a senior linguistics major, is disappointed after hearing about the tuition increase.

“I wish there was not an increase in tuition, but the increase in financial aid is also nice,” Kirchner said. “But some people don’t get financial aid so that’s hard. I got financial aid up until my senior year. So for me it was great because I used it but as of this year, I’m not eligible anymore. I have to pay out of pocket now. Now that tuition is going up too, it’s not the best.”

Kirchner is upset for students who face challenging circumstances and may not be able to receive the aid that is necessary to pay for their education.

“Not everyone gets financial aid and there’s always that middle ground where some people don’t make enough, but because of other things like kids and stuff they might not qualify for financial aid so it’s hard because they need the money but they can’t get it,” Kirchner said.

Gabriel Kremer is a sophomore physics major. He cites financial aid as a huge help for covering the cost of his tuition.

“So honestly, being that it is a [7]% increase, it does add up a little bit, but I’m not too concerned for it considering I did apply through FAFSA so I am sure most of us have access to FAFSA, so they really help out with that tuition,” Kremer said.

Jenna Marcy is a freshman communications and media studies major. She said tuition is steep despite receiving aid.

“I mean because it’s my first year, I feel like it hasn’t really affected me but going into it, my parents and I had to kind of plan a little more,” Marcy said. “We were expecting it to be a lot lower than it was. When I applied and got in, tuition was a lot higher than we thought it would be. I was able to get some financial aid. I was very thankful about that.”
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Full Time Commuter Students Given a Mandatory Meal Plan

Meagan Kane
Assistant News Editor

This semester, Montclair State University full-time commuter students are required to purchase a meal plan for on-campus dining. The fall semester has begun and Montclair State University students stepped onto campus to see a bunch of new changes in dining. Some of these changes include renovations to the dining halls, new dining options and a brand new dining partner, Eats by Gourmet Dining Services.

One of the most recognizable changes is the new meal plan catered to commuter students. The mandatory $250 Flex Bonus plan was issued to commuters on their student bill this semester.

The meal plan, titled the Commuter Dining Deposit Program, was explained in depth by Media Relations Director Andrew Mees.

"Commuter students pay $250 and receive $300 Flex Dollars per semester ($250 Flex Dining Deposit plus $50 on the University)," Mees said. "Flex dollars can be spent at all dining, convenience stores and vending locations on campus. Unspent flex dollars will roll over from fall to spring semester and will be refundable at the end of the academic year (for the Commuter Dining Deposit plan only)."

The dining plan is offered to full-time undergraduate commuter students taking at least one course on campus will participate in the Commuter Dining Deposit unless a higher level meal plan is selected," Mees said. While some commuters see the meal plan program as an advantage, others see it as something that should have been optional.

Aaron Katalbas, a junior exercise science major, was surprised at first but as a commuter who lives farther away from campus, he believes that the plan is beneficial.

"I was surprised that it was mandatory," Katalbas said. "For me personally, I commute and I’m a good 30 minutes away. So I think personally for me and other people in my situation, we appreciated it a little more."

Dawn Soufleris, Vice President of Student Development and Campus Life, says that the Commuter Deposit Program can benefit commuter students by the connection and encouragement of eating on campus.

"As we continue to strive for a community of Red Hawks that feels connected and a strong sense of belonging, we believe the Commuter Dining Deposit will enhance the experience of our commuters by encouraging them to eat on campus," said Soufleris. "We hope this plan brings our commuters to our dining areas, and builds for them a sense of connection even stronger than in the past."

The meal plan can be a plus, but it does mean more money out of pocket for some commuters in low-income situations.

Katalbas believes that an optional plan would allow commuter students to choose whether or not a meal plan is best for them.

"I think it should be optional because for some people, that $250 could be like everything to them," Katalbas said. "In terms of [commuters] in those financial situations, I feel like it shouldn’t be forced upon them."

The dining plan will be mandatory due to the value to commuter students that comes with it.

"The intention is for this to become a permanent offering because of the value we know it will bring to commuter students," Mees said.

Dana Lozada, a sophomore animation major, found it easier to purchase food using the deposit program due to their financial situation.

"I honestly felt pleasantly surprised," Lozada said. "I was getting lunch paycheck to paycheck from work, so [the dining plan] made it easier."

They believe the dining plan should continue to be included in the tuition bill if the price could be lower.

"I do think it should be really included in tuition," Lozada said. "[But] it would be better if the prices dropped a little bit."

Soufleris hopes that the meal plan helps to reduce the issue of food insecurity on campus.

"We also hope this will assist in reducing the issue of food insecurity for some of our students," Soufleris said. "By having the convenience of flex bonus dollars on your ID, a student can use this allotment (especially with the extra $50 each semester the university is contributing) as a way of eating healthy and having the resources to eat while they are on our campus."

Gaby Rodriguez, a sophomore animation major, found relief in the new plan as they no longer have to carry lunch with them to campus.

"It was more of a benefit for me more than anything because it’s kind of annoying having to bring my lunch [to campus] all the time," Rodriguez said.

The overall point of the Commuter Deposit Program is to bring commuter students together and indulge in on-campus dining.

"Food brings people together," Soufleris said. "Sharing a meal, grabbing a coffee with a classmate, experiencing more cultural food on campus rather than just chicken fingers and fries, heading to a place for a fresh milkshake or meeting up with friends at the Red Hawk Diner late at night all in our view contribute to a positive campus experience and bring life to our community."
Montclair State University students gathered around campus to celebrate the annual Red Hawk Day on Tuesday, Aug. 29. The day commenced with a student involvement fair, which consisted of different organizations and clubs. Montclair State University students gathered around campus to celebrate the annual Red Hawk Day on Tuesday, Aug. 29. The day commenced with a student involvement fair, which consisted of different organizations and clubs. Before the festivities began, President Johnathan Koppell gave a motivational speech to the Class of 2027. Students dispersed after hearing inspirational words from President Koppell and lined up in front of tables to sign up to get more involved around campus. People danced to music, had food and went on a range of attractions. From a Ferris wheel, the Round-Up ride, the Roll-a-Ball game, Bean Bag Tosses, the Fun Slide, Water Gun Game, Hoop Shot, family games and more.
Diogo Correia, a sophomore business administration major, jumps to hit a Volleyball at Red Hawk Day.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion

Students play Volleyball in the Student Center Quad on Red Hawk Day.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion

Mia Pedalino holds up a rugby ball behind the Montclair State Club Rugby table at Red Hawk Day.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion

Two students watch people dance.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

Photo Essay: Red Hawk Day (cont.)
Students have thoughts on topics from Greek Life to keeping Bloomfield College’s culture alive.

"Small But Mighty": Bloomfield College Students' Thoughts on Historic Merger

Roxanne Gribbin
Assistant Feature Editor

During a beautiful sunny day on Monday, Aug. 28, Bloomfield College students dispersed across the green as they socialized and became accustomed for the upcoming year. A massive blow-up waterslide and an ice cream truck set the exciting atmosphere. Upcoming freshmen could be seen adjusting to the new setting while fun music blasted from the speakers.

Bloomfield College recently merged with Montclair State University, creating new opportunities for students from both schools. Founded in 1868, Bloomfield is ranked as one of the most diverse liberal arts colleges. The College was designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI).

Before merging with Montclair State, it was a private liberal arts college with a rich history and tradition, which the merger aims to preserve.

The campus life at The Bloomfield College of Montclair State is small and close-knit. The students take great pride in their community and plan to uphold it long after the merger. They plan on keeping campus life alive by continuing to host events and encouraging student involvement.

Nana Essell is a Bloomfield College alumnus who is visiting the campus for a back-to-school event. He sat at a table talking with his friends who were in the same fraternity he was. While sitting at a table with his fraternity brothers, he talked about how he planned on keeping the culture of Bloomfield alive after the merger as an alumnum.

“By being here today, I am here to support the event,” Essell said. “Let's just keep the momentum going.”

In the future, Essell hopes to see students from both campuses interact. He feels that joint events are a great idea for participation.

“I would love to see a sports competition or tournament between Bloomfield and Montclair [State],” Essell said. “We could involve commuters because they do not come out as much.”

He went on to talk about how a shuttle between campuses would be convenient for all students.

“I would like if there was a shuttle bus and if students [from the Montclair campus] had the option to dorm here [at the Bloomfield campus],” Essell said.

Bloomfield alumni and students are grateful to Montclair State for helping keep their college thriving. They feel thankful that the merger could help them continue their education journey. Dulce Meneses, a senior biology major, feels that Greek life at each campus should be kept separate to preserve the history and tradition of each chapter.

For Meneses, that's Lambda Theta Alpha.

Meneses would love to experience combined campus life but said she would like to keep certain aspects separate for their own good.

“Combining [our sorority chapter] with the Montclair [State] chapter could alter our history,” Meneses said. “Each chapter has its own established past and it wouldn’t be fair to combine them.”

Kay Patterson is the coordinator for the Center for Student Leadership Engagement and is a recent Montclair State alumnus. She works with clubs and Greek organizations on campus.

“Each chapter has its own established past and it wouldn’t be fair to combine them,” Patterson said. “We are small but we are mighty, our students keep very fast track.”

"Small But Mighty": Bloomfield College Students' Thoughts on Historic Merger

Dulce Meneses, a senior biology major, feels that Greek life at each campus should be kept separate to preserve the history and tradition of each chapter.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion

Dulce Meneses, a senior biology major, feels that Greek life at each campus should be kept separate to preserve the history and tradition of each chapter.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion
Exciting Eats: A Look at Montclair State's New Dining Options

Sal DiMaggio
Feature Editor

When the news came that we would be getting new dining options last semester, there was a noticeable buzz around campus. Let's face it, this campus has struggled with food issues in the past, and that is part of the reason why we have a new dining vendor.

Now, a summer later, students have several new places to eat from. Here’s a look into each one of them, starting at the Student Center.

Will Social Grill Get Likes?

More sandwiches arrive at the burger station in the Student Center with the opening of Social Grill. The menu items have names that have last with social media culture, such as the "I LIKE this Burger" (a classic cheeseburger) and the "SOCIAL Burger" (a bacon cheeseburger). There are also more interesting menu options like the "BYTE into SAMMYBURGER" (a blackened salmon sandwich).

Social Grill also has an extensive breakfast menu with chicken and waffles and a banana foster French toast sandwich. So if you need something to fill you up before your morning class or after your afternoon one, Social Grill is a great option to consider.

Halal Shack Replaces California Tortilla

Red Hawks get a taste of Halal street food with this new addition. Finally, an option for Muslim students that they can trust 100% of the time. Halal Shack has locations at college campuses across the nation, and Montclair State University’s diverse student body will quickly see why it’s so popular. With menu options ranging from fries bowls and “naanaritos” to salads, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Freshens Offers Students Smoothies, Sandwiches and More

- Freshens is a chain restaurant offering a variety of healthy options for students. Replacing Smoothie Lab and the Dunkin in the Student Center, Freshens offers smoothies, acai bowls, rice bowls, flatbreads, sandwiches, wraps and much more. This is a great option for the student trying to eat healthy, and there is plenty to choose from as well.

1908 Pizzeria Serving Fresh Slices

Say goodbye to The Pizzeria, the average pizza option that was the first dining option in the Rafikibell since the COVID-19 pandemic. In comes 1908 Pizzeria, completely changing the pizza game at Montclair State. Instead of personal pies, students now get slices that look like they are from your local Italian pizzeria.

Students can choose slice options such as plain, pepperoni, white and meatball. 1908 also serves sandwiches, wings, mozzarella sticks and more. And as was the case with The Pizzeria, 1908 requires students to order via Grubhub.

Virtual Kitchen Comes to Blanton Hall

The food court in Blanton Hall also underwent a massive makeover this past summer. With updated flooring and greenery in the center of the food court, Blanton now has a fresh look. But the new food vendors inside are an even bigger change.

Replacing Chili’s is something completely different in Blanton Hall. All in the same kitchen will be three different restaurants: an American cuisine place named the Virtual Kitchen with burgers and sandwiches; Sono, which features Latin cuisine; and Jersey Mike’s, which students already know and love.

- How do they manage to fit three restaurants in one kitchen? With food lockers, of course. Where Chili’s once was is now a wall of plastic boxes where your food is put when it is ready. You then type in a number code that you receive from Grubhub that tells you which locker your food is in.

It will be interesting to see how students will react to this new concept. The absence of human contact altogether might turn off some students but could draw the more introverted ones in.

"Chick n Bap" Cooks up Korean Street Food

A similar concept to Halal Shack, Chick n Bap is also serving bowls, but with Korean ingredients rather than Middle Eastern ones. Yet another chain brand, Chick n Bap finds its fifth location at Montclair State. Offering Korean barbeque chicken, spicy Korean pork and more, the Korean street food restaurant is bound to get some traffic. Housed where Jersey Mike’s used to be, this is also another new option students have been excited for.

Bye Bye Bistro, Hello Yellas

A new late-night option comes to campus! Machuga Heights is now the home of Yellas, which boasts the motto “Food Worth Screaming About.” Students can get burgers and fries, subs and cheesesteaks, and wings and milkshakes. The seating area features a raised bar seating area along one wall, while tables are lined against the back wall. A local New Jersey restaurant based in Hawthorne, Yellas has been around for 90 years. Now students have a great option if want something reminiscent of Shake Shack without leaving campus.

There are also some places that are still to come! As of this writing, it has yet to open, but the highly-anticipated Starbucks is opening this semester. While Cafe Diem goes under renovations, students can get Starbucks products from a Starbucks Truck in front of Sprague Library. The arrival of this megabrand has been long anticipated, so expect long lines when it finally does open.

Additionally, Java Love will be coming to the Student Center in the C-Store. Until the shop is completed, students can still get the Montclair-based shop’s coffee.

The Montclarion will be publishing reviews and articles on all of these locations, so stay tuned in the coming weeks. For now, go try these new options and see for yourself if they are worth the hype.
Students commemorated the first week of school with Montclair State University’s campus carnival on Sunday, Aug. 27, Red Hawk Day on Tuesday, Aug. 29, the first week of classes and more.

The campus carnival featured amusement rides, temporary tattoos, music and other activities. Students from Bloomfield College of Montclair State University were bused in from the Bloomfield campus so they could enjoy the festivities as well.

Red Hawk Day and the first day of classes were filled with their usual excitement, with events such as the Student Involvement Fair and a welcome message from President Koppell.

Students laughing and playing at the Montclair State University Carnival.

Lynise Olivacce, Dani Mazariegos, Karsten Englander, and Sal DiMaggio

Students enjoying a ride at the Carnival.

Students laughing and playing at the Montclair State University Carnival.

First Week of School in Photos

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

Sal DiMaggio | The Montclarion

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion
Students chatting in between classes.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

People laughing and smiling while on a ride at the Montclair State University Carnival.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

Student sitting on a rock on their phone.

Karsten Englander | The Montclarion

Person winning a toy prize at the Montclair State University Carnival.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion
Students pose in their back-to-school attire.

Claudia Martillos  Staff Writer

Let’s face it. The best part of going back to school has always been getting ready for that first week full of new outfits. It’s essentially a fashion show for a week straight with a hint of classes. This is nothing we didn’t already know; we have been doing this since elementary school when we got a chance to show off our new light-up sneakers and a tourist gift shop t-shirt from our summer vacations.

Everyone is excited to make good impressions and express themselves through their creative styles. Many fashion trends have entered the scene since the summer break, and Montclair State University students are approaching their fall semester with that in mind.

Anacia Sessoms, a junior visual arts major, defines her fashion style as “whimsical goth.”

“I have a very playful whimsical style, not too light, not too dark,” Sessoms said.

Her inspiration comes from “A lot of Wicca things.”

“I like to read archives of artists and how they used to dress in the ’50s, ’60s, and especially the ’70s. A lot of hippie stuff and ’90s grunge,” Sessoms said.

Sessoms explains that she alternates many pieces in her wardrobe, leading to an eclectic style that draws in multiple time periods. She loves to have fun with her style, including many unique features like the purple yarn in her hair and crystal jewelry from a local Montclair shop, Rocky’s Crystals and Minerals.

Arianna Joseph, a sophomore music education major, loves earth tones and emulates the fairycore style. She found her green patchwork-style overalls while scrolling through Pinterest for outfit inspiration.

“I love earth tones, mostly green. Green and brown forever. I’m starting to dabble in the jewel tones, the blues,” Joseph said.

Joseph’s vibrant and beautiful eyeliner ties in her all-green look.

“I really felt like a fairy princess today so I said let’s go crazy, why not,” Joseph said. “I tried matching the little flowers.”

When asked about what style she’d love to see more of around campus, Joseph mentioned a particular piece of clothing.

“I want to see more jorts,” Joseph said. “They’re so cute and fun. Jorts forever.”

Eliza Arnone, a senior music education major, goes for a business casual look with a feminine chic vibe.

“My style, I would say is simple yet chic,” Arnone said.

When planning her look, Arnone wanted her outfit to commemorate the end of summer and loves to coordinate colors.

“Every morning I say, ‘this is the color scheme I have in mind, this is the vibe I’m going for’,” Arnone said.

She explained that every element in her outfit matched, from the white in the pants and shirt, and the blue stripes to her silver evil eye ring.

“Summer is more about keeping a sense of whites, yellows, pinks, neon, pastels, purples,” Arnone said.

Arnone gets some outfit inspiration from social media but often prioritizes her style based on her student teaching job.

“What I wear is dependent on if people will take me seriously as well as my students,” Arnone said. “The more professional you dress the more people will take you seriously.”

Eliza Arnone, a senior music education major, throws her style back to the ’50s.

Maldonado draws inspiration from “Greasers and beatniks of the ’50s and ’60s.”

“I like their style,” Maldonado said. “The tucked-in boots, leather jackets, and ripped or messy clothing.”

He defines his style as a mix of different genres.

“Mostly, I’m trying to be a mix of greaser and country boy,” Maldonado said. “I really want cowboy boots eventually. I’d say probably a mix of country and city.”

His usual outfit includes jeans, a t-shirt, a flannel or overshirt of some kind, and whichever shoes he lays his eyes on first. Maldonado emphasized his love of boots and desire to see them around campus.

“I’d say we need more boots,” Maldonado said. “As we get into winter, I want to see more variety in boots.”

“Now I have like 3 to 4 jean jackets,” Shahzaib said. “I love the ’80s style puffy jean jackets.”

Shahzaib would love to see more colorful and tropical styles brought to campus but also appreciates his distinct sense of fashion.

“I kind of do like being the only person who wears Hawaiian outfits, because it feels unique,” Shahzaib said.

“I put beach necklaces before pearl necklaces or chains.”

Lorenzo Maldonado, a junior history major, throws his style back to the ’50s.

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“I’d say we need more boots,” Maldonado said. “As we get into winter, I want to see more variety in boots.”
Mohamed Shahzaib, freshman biochemistry major, goes for an all black and red look.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

Arianna Joseph, sophomore music education major, enjoys earth tones and fairy style of fashion.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion

Eliza Arnone, senior music education major, loves to spice up her outfits.

Dani Mazariegos | The Montclarion
**Hawk Talk**

**Freshman: What are you most looking forward to about freshman year?**

By Karsten Englander and Dani Mazariegos

Director of Photography and
Assistant Director of Photography

"I think I am most looking forward to events like this [referring to Red Hawk Day]... just going out and having fun, that kind of stuff."

---

Leah Ramratetan

Freshman

Elementary Education

"To come here and complete all my classes, be at the top of my classes basically make a mark here."

---

Carlos Galvet

Freshman

Film and Television

"Honestly...To figure out exactly who I am! I know who I am as a person, but I am really excited to find out like who Destiny is outside of being in her parents home, stuff like that so yeah I am really excited! And meeting new people, seeing new faces all that good stuff!"

---

Destiny Wyatt

Freshman

Psychology
Upperclassman: What was your favorite moment of freshman year?

"My favorite moment from freshman year was the first week of school where you have all these [events], the tropical bash, and the Red Hawk Day, and its nice weather outside and you go on walks at the end of the night; and you meet people you meet friends, you make connections and you start your year off with a group of people you love hanging out with.”

Malaurie Salvan
Graduate Student
Business Administration

"You know what's crazy? I didn't have a freshman year here! I just graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University, that's the crazy part. But my favorite moment from freshman year was meeting a bunch of my friends and building a small community with all of us around campus, stuff like that. There were so many fun activities, it was amazing.”

Brian Mcpherson
Graduate Student
Biology

“I'm an international student, so my first year here was an exchange year two years ago. I loved being in an American college because it's very different from a French university, and I just love how people interact with each other and how social everyone is here.”

Stephanie Blais
Sophomore
Advertising

Malaurie Salvan
Graduate Student
Business Administration
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capricorn</td>
<td>Dec. 22 – Jan. 19</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Jun. 21 – Jul. 22</td>
<td>We’re so back, baby.</td>
<td>Hey Capricorn, are you pathetically in love with somebody who’s already spoken for? Don’t worry, it happens to the best of us. Just limit the number of confession accounts you send that to.</td>
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<td>But you know what’s not back? My ex-girlfriend. Good riddance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aquarius</td>
<td>Jan. 20 – Feb. 18</td>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>Jul. 23 – Aug. 22</td>
<td>Hey Leo! How was your summer? Good? That’s great! I bet it would’ve been better if you got those Eras Tour tickets. Don’t worry, I did and it was amazing. Maybe next tour!</td>
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<td>Feb. 19 – Mar. 20</td>
<td>Virgo</td>
<td>Aug. 23 – Sep. 22</td>
<td>How’s it going? Did you have a relaxing break? Did you see “Meg 2: The Trench”? No? Well, we can all have perfect summers.</td>
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<td>Oh how I’ve missed you. But you know what I didn’t miss? My neighbors blasting their speakers at 1 a.m. I hate you speaker people. I truly hate you.</td>
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<td>Taurus</td>
<td>Apr. 20 – May 20</td>
<td>Scorpio</td>
<td>Oct. 23 – Nov. 21</td>
<td>Hey there, Scorpio.</td>
<td>Welcome back Taurus! Had a great summer? Yeah, I bet it was. My summer? Not so great. Thanks for asking. What happened? Well I’ll tell you. I dated this insane chick and I spent 4 days out of my week working in retail. Really looking forward to the rest of this God forsaken year.</td>
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<td>Hope your summer went well. Now, onto business: why on Earth did you go see “The Flash” movie? Why not “Meg 2: The Trench”?</td>
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<td>Gemini</td>
<td>May 21 – Jun. 20</td>
<td>Sagittarius</td>
<td>Nov. 22 – Dec. 21</td>
<td>It’s five o’clock somewhere, Sagittarius. It’s been a hard week losing our lord and savior of good times and boat drinks, Jimmy Buffet. Take a moment for yourself and morn however you see fit, maybe go to the beach and look out into the ocean and contemplate life and its many mysteries, or maybe you just need a margarita. Who’s to say?</td>
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The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

Jalen Hurts: Football Season Begins!

By Lynise Olivacce and Sekhena Sembenu

Across
3. What is Jalen's typical touchdown dance?
4. What does Jalen's chain say?
5. What is Jalen's pre-game ritual?
6. What September magazine issue is Jalen on?
7. Who is Jalen's favorite artist?
8. What is Jalen's favorite dish that his mom cooks?
9. What record did Jalen break for quarterbacks last season?
10. Where did Jalen graduate with his masters in Human Relations?
11. Who is Jalen's favorite artist?
12. What sneaker and sportswear company did Jalen recently sign with?

Down
1. What did Jalen have before anyone had an opinion?
2. What is Jalen's pre-game ritual?
3. What streaming platform does Jalen have a partnership with?
4. What is Jalen's pre-game ritual?
5. Who does Jalen keep first in his heart?
6. What is Jalen's typical touchdown dance?
7. What is Jalen's pre-game ritual?
8. What is Jalen's favorite dish that his mom cooks?
9. What did Jalen have before anyone had an opinion?
10. Where did Jalen graduate with his masters in Human Relations?

Sudoku

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Word Search

J Q V T A Z H S P U G X Z K D Z B E X Q
V L H B O E A A S V B Z E Q H P R A N Z
V L H N A I T S I R H C B A X E S X R R
L K F L B E B S A K Z M R E J I U U K T
P R D W W M M P Y N Y T E U W S T Y T P
G J E O D H H I N N U O P Z G A O T N A
B V M C I Q E A Z Y K K R M M L E K R V
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E S H W Z W U G W N I A B L A R L M U D
C A P K N A S W D P P J M I I F Z M O N
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D B S T Y C Q Y W T O W H T J G C B Y W
B Q D H P K X W S P J K Y I L D H S S G
U I U E K F L K I T B W Z N L C I K X T
H E N H O J P P P Z I W G C P L B B S

Lips | Baseball | Christian
---|--------|--------
Captain | Weight Lifting | Leo
Nicole Lynn | Houston | Alexander
Bryce Harper | Crawfish | Untamed
More Students More Problems

EDITORIAL

We are a part of Montclair State University’s largest student body ever in our school’s 114-year history. It’s exciting to break the record for the largest student body this university has ever seen, but at what cost?

In 2022, Montclair State welcomed 4,065 students as the Class of 2026. This increased our total number of students to a whopping 21,671, making it the biggest body of students this school has ever seen, “a feat accomplished for the second consecutive year under President Jonathan Koppell.”

But what does that mean for us?

Naturally, one would assume it means more money for the university. And more money means more renovations and new experiences for us.

However, the large number of students being accepted into the freshman class also creates more problems for every student currently enrolled here.

Around 75% of Montclair State students are commuters. With the ever-growing number of freshmen being admitted, there doesn’t seem to be a growing number of parking spots on campus.

Finding a parking spot is hard enough already, but since the school continues admitting a high number of students, it’s nearly impossible to find a spot.

Not to mention, the traffic for students leaving campus can be a nightmare when there’s only one exit to drive off from school.

Montclair State’s website reads, “With 16 different parking locations, including an eight-story parking deck, commuters have a multitude of parking options when arriving to campus!”

The university claims to possess “a multitude of parking options,” but somehow students are constantly circling campus looking for a space to park before their classes and throughout the day.

Furthermore, the more crowded it is, the more difficult it is to find places to study, do homework or just relax. With the growing student population, there aren’t new study rooms or places to just sit and take the load off.

To top it off, dining places are also experiencing high wait times for food because of the quantity of orders they’re experiencing at once.

Arguably, one of the most controversial issues we as students face is dorming.

Each year, Montclair State admits more students than we can handle, and therefore a dorming crisis ensues.

Too many students are in need of dorming and there’s simply not enough dorms to accommodate the high demand.

Montclair State’s website states that “Montclair State University is home to 22 residence halls, capable of housing 5,200 individuals.”

This may seem like enough since our school is mostly commuters. However, many people had a terrible housing selection experience last semester.

Students had a hard time getting apartments in Hawks Crossing and The Village with their preferred suitemates, only finding apartments with one or two beds. Some students had a hard time finding housing in general.

Now that the university is accepting more students than ever, more problems like this will arise and prevail in the future.

Overall, there are only so many resources available, reserved for a certain amount of students. Once we go over that limit, our institution becomes no longer sustainable. This can cause a threat to all students, freshmen or not.

That’s not to say the possibility of accepting more students doesn’t have its benefits, but should it be at the cost of the existing students’ livelihood?

At what point does the administration take a step back and realize they hit off more than they can chew?

It’s an irrefutable fact that we love our new Red Hawks like family, but the administration is clearly at fault of letting in more freshmen than they can handle.

With the Bloomfield College merger and the new admissions, how do you think that will affect student life here on campus?

By Sophia Lazaridis

“While I don’t know how many they actually accepted, when I came here on my first day of classes, it felt like there were four times more people, I couldn’t walk to class. It makes it a lot tougher for me to get to school. I think student life will improve though. More students participating in student life. Hopefully we’ll have more fun.”

- Julian Cerrone
Sophomore
Psychology

“Me being a commuter, I think what it affects the most would be the parking on campus and us being able to get to class on time. The parking already is crazy and very limited, so I just think it’s going to be worse now.”

- Gabriella Castillo
Senior
Public Relations and Social Media

“It’s gonna be a lot more crowded, as you can see, like there’s a ton more people walking by. It’s just a lot less opportunity for one-on-one with your professor. It’s a little more challenging to get more personable with your professor... So, with more people that would just make it a lot more difficult.”

- Nick Paredes
Junior
Exercise Science
Cutting Out the Artist from Our Lives Doesn’t Erase Their Mark

Cassandra Michalakis
Assistant Opinion Editor

Regular people made celebrities. Now, it seems we’ve shouldered this responsibility of judging what is deserving of our attention. It’s the art itself that concerns us, but now the creator, who has no real ties to us, takes center stage.

This is how art has evolved since the birth and evolution of celebrity status. I do not want to flat-out say we created this problem, but there was a time when you knew very little about artists, so art existed in a vacuum as it was meant to be.

Now, we live in a day and age where we can and do know about artists. Because we made them false idols with real human standards, we opened the door for potential emotional ties, a door that is, dare I say, an artificial thing.

Whether it is rational or not, the truth is that we feel it and we feel it strongly.

This is my stance. While the approach stated in the prior article may feel good, it doesn’t solve the bigger, overarching problem, which is the marked influence problematic artists had and will continue to have to go further. Attempting to devalue the financial reward of their work is short-term satisfaction. Their real reward was making a lasting impact on society, and no one can take that away from them.

The art was made. It had an impact and got “polluted” by something its creator did, whether or not their actions were directly correlated to the art’s creation or intent. Everyone is free to deal with their feelings as they wish. But consider that these reactions are emotional, and not necessarily rigid, ethical responses. We construct our reactions in a way to process hurt, anger and guilt, and to have something seemingly solid to live by. The sheer volatility of it all makes it hard to even consider the question, “Is the art’s only real, fundamental connection to artists the name-tag it bears?”

Our feelings may escalate beyond that question, pushing us to an emotional conclusion of removing the art from our lives and eradicating all of the artist’s presence. Even as I write this, it feels wrong to say this. I’m not saying ethics don’t matter. Rather, where, what and who the ethics concern and in what respect is what I’m trying to ask.

A boycott is an active protest, but a dispassionate reaction to the so-called “interconnectedness” of art and artist.

I am going to live and die, and the art will remain. It will still influence people.

The question of how we allow that connection to evolve is what bleeds through and stains everyone’s mind.

Cassandra Michalakis, a junior chemistry major, is in her first year as the associate Opinion editor for The Montclarion.
I was at my retail job, thanking the powers above for giving me 15 whole minutes without having to ring up a customer or clean out a dressing room with seven pairs of pants thrown onto the floor when a conversation arose between me and my boss about the hypocrisy between society's treatment of fangirls and fanboys.

Typically, you never even hear the term “fanboy” when speaking of adult men who are fans of something. My point already seems proven by the blatant sexism in the very language of fandoms.

This discussion was sparked by the term “fangirl” when speaking of young women who are fans of something. My point already seems proven by the blatant sexism in the very language of fandoms.

Typically, you never even hear the term “fanboy” when speaking of adult men who are fans of something. My point already seems proven by the blatant sexism in the very language of fandoms. Typically, you never even hear the term “fanboy” when speaking of adult men who are fans of something. My point already seems proven by the blatant sexism in the very language of fandoms.

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Have a thought about campus or off campus matters? Write for Opinion!

Email: montclarionopinion@gmail.com

Room 2035, School of Communication and Media in Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043
“Conversations on the A train”  
by Alexandra Campbell | Guest Writer

There is nothing to eat here.

I've been scouring the trash bins for days now, and no one seems to have a great-tasting rotisserie chicken. One that's freshly seasoned with golden brown skin. I'm not too sure what to give him now. A few days later, the woman next to me on the A train caught me speaking softly to myself. I could feel her gaze without having to look up, and she did not stop staring for a while. I found it amusing, so I let the story leak from my lips, and into her ears.

Well, I kept thinking that maybe my approach wasn't on the friendlier side but I did knock. The window was cracked open, so I told Lily to open the back door so I could come in but she didn't let me. It's odd not to let a guest in who clearly has food to share. She looked at my chicken, then at me, then at my chicken, then behind me, and then at me again. I couldn't keep a smile for no longer than two minutes. I've counted. Lily told me to throw the chicken out before coming in but I kept saying why. Why would I throw this perfectly made chicken out in the trash when I finally found it? “Go home.”

By this point, the woman's curiosity had her leaning closer to me, almost reaching down to hear me fully. So I cranked it up a notch.

How could Lily tell me to go home when she was in my home? This is my home! So, I stared at her and laughed. She took that as an opportunity to slightly close the door behind her while her body was hanging out the backdoor frame. But don't worry, I couldn't let Lily do this to me. I remember holding the chicken with a tighter grip and just storming right past her. She couldn't keep up anyway. So, I walked through the kitchen and said “hi” to Sloan, who was dumbfounded by my appearance. I heard the knife drop and footsteps behind me. I knew it was Sloan too. I yelled, “Everyone, food is ready!” Every head turned from the living room couch, I heard running from upstairs, and before anyone could stop me—

I dropped that insect-infested, covered in rat droppings, bottom of the dumpster rotisserie chicken onto the table, and let every ounce of filth spread all over that god-forsaken house.

Her face turned sour and she shifted herself upright to stare straight ahead. She refused to look at me.

Alright, just hear me out- Leon deserved what was coming to him. The look on his face was beyond words, and Lily was fuming. Oh, yeah, Leon was my ex. Did I mention how he's been roaming free after trying to kill me? Yeah, so that was my Thanksgiving.

The train had stopped at Hoyt-Schermerhorn Station, and the woman ran out of the cart with a clutched purse and no glance back. I'd expect her to sympathize with me. We were wearing the same Rag & Bone shirt, and I'd assume she admired my brown Jil Sander mules, but I guess there was a massive gap in our understanding.
“Something or other”
by Cassandra Michalakis | Staff Writer

Always complaining, if I’m being transparent
It’s like running into a wall
Partly because you’re frustrated
partly because there’s a little idea you have that if you slam into it with enough force, The little pre-existing cracks in the wall will grow and hopefully become large enough
Where you can shove your fist through.

Although... who is to say what brought on those small cracks?
If not the smaller nudes at the wall, silly attempts to shoulder it a couple inches... nudge, nudge, just to see if it would buckle. See if you could garner some distance
You didn’t know, you were a child
But tireless and tiresome persistence amasses
To the point where the effort from pushback becomes visible.

Further solidifying the foundation’s stability, and acting as small reminders
embedded each time, time stamps for both of us

Childish notions dwelled, keeping you company. They are simple and addictive, satisfying such as thinking you can tear away at the wall (with your bare hands that is). You think this will accomplish a hole big enough to climb through:
Imagine the triumph upheaving from the rubble you demolished yourself
When it’ll actually just make small ones at best.

Enough to see through them and witness what’s going on outside
Which might be even worse if you can poke your fingers through,

Fumbling at something so obviously far away.
And if someone passes by and knows you’re there
Hell, they might try to grab and pull you, urging you to squeeze through
But you’re too big for that

...maybe you can (make a bigger hole, that is) slamming into the wall with even greater force
As if you haven’t done that enough where you can’t feel anymore
and you find it hard to conceptualize the feeling of the surface buckling
When it’s your legs that buckle, like you’re the one stacked with layers of cement.

Withstanding forces from outside, and from within.

Maybe they’ll try to use tools to get you through
A serious effort...which excites you but scares you
Because it might actually work, and that’s confusing if someone else intervenes like that.

You know you could so easily do it, literally anyone wouldn’t think about it.
But you believe you’ve got to do it on your own, otherwise it doesn’t count.

Funny thing is, the more you think about it
You find yourself feeling a little guilty.
Partly because that wall has protected you from so many unwanted things.

things are there in our place unfortunately get into, be they have no protection like you do.
You feel sort of bad for constantly battering on the wall, realizing that while the rest of the world sees it as a wall, maybe it’s more a gate:
keeping the world away from you, not the other way around.

Selfish or protective? Protective or suffocating?
maybe the world doesn’t deserve someone like you? the world won’t cherish you the way you cherish it
As something ineffable and precious
A constant equilibrium that confounds, yet mulishly serves its purpose
making you question yourself and what you’re doing

Inducing grief, towards yourself no less, that you didn’t think you harbored all that deeply.
But respect for what it procures nonetheless.
(However diminishing, contemptible, and futile reality seems to stretch itself out to).

At some point there is bound to exist
small, periodic undulations
slamming against the wall, over-externality bleats your body
your head pulsing to the cadence of your repetitive strikes, aggravatingly enough

Exhausting
exhausting isn’t how you describe it
But it certainly is how people around you feel: Exhausted from hearing witness to countless failed attempts
A final dull “thump” against the wall, marking another defeat
Exasperated by its monotony, emptying cries that now hear as inept wailing piteless, insufferable.
And considerably pedestrian, clumping into the white noise of everyday sounds

So in conclusion
Making a window of any size, in reality
Is worse than not knowing, because if you don’t know, you don’t have an awareness of what you’re missing.
Since by that logic, you can’t really miss it, right?

“Kitchen Sink, Part One of Two”
by Olivia Yayla | Assistant Fiction Editor

That was the last straw for Dita. So she decided to add to her plan, and to hit them where it hurts. She decided to make a new flavor of artificial syrup.
Dita strongly dislikes sweet coffee.
And she could tell that she did not mix well with anyone who did.
She could sense the simplicity in their eyes, in their taste, in their lives.

People who soil and dilute their premium brewed espresso shots with half a truck load of artificial almond syrup and al- mond milk don’t deserve the finer things in life. They could bare- ly see the beauty in the cup of coffee on the saucer before them, let alone the glory of the watercolor sunset and the lush willow trees guarding the swamps on the opposing ends of every road in town.

She hated those people the same way she despised the sum- mer months, as that’s when the hordes of tourists terrorize and infiltrate her hometown of Somerton Outpost. It used to simply be “Somerton” but the town council decided that the additive of “Outpost” seemed more adventurous, more appealing for inland college students to rent in our once affordable and locally attain- able apartments.

But now every inhabitant of Somerton Outpost who didn’t live above ground in rent-stabilized apartments and lived on land was forced to turn to the dark side of Bed and Breakfasts just to get by. Along with their humble careers down by the docks, the collected rent from the whitewashed tourists was just enough to put food on their tables.

Dita was one of the lucky ones, she knew, as she was lucky enough to support herself with her palm reading business and humble job as a barista. But every friend she has invited into her life has suffered as the town gentrified into Halloweentown for the tame, simple-minded, sweet coffee drinkers.

If Halloweentown was what Mayor Calhoun wanted, then Hal- loweentown was what he was going to get, whether he liked it or not.

As Dita savored a slow sip of her black souled coffee from her fire escape, her hair still coiled in her hot rollers from the night before, feet dangling over the ledge, she decided that someone had to take a stand.

And who better than the troublemaker of Somerton Outpost?

Her plan started out simple. A spoonful of swamp mud was spread into the coffee grounds before brewing for weeks, each day a spoonful more than the last. She would keep her contami- nated bag of coffee grounds behind the whole milk in the fridge to ensure that her coworkers weren’t affected. But the results were less than what she had hoped for. People began to rave about the freshness of Witches Brew Cafe, and soon it was the most popular shop in town, driving every hipster spring breaker through the saloon doors for a taste. They would ask how the espresso shots were so earthy, and wondered if they could buy bags straight from the shop. Dita would smile and turn them away, only to watch them soil it further with almond syrup and chocolate sauce.

That was the last straw for Dita. So she decided to add to her plan and hit them where it hurts. She decided to make a new flavor of artificial syrup.

After her shift, Dita hopped on her ruby trike and headed down to Dove Lake, the very lake that Mayor Calhoun deemed a chemical waste dump. Her fingers locked onto the fence as she hoisted herself over the “DANGER” and “NO TRESPASSING” signs. She dropped to her knees, not a care for how badly the dirt would stain her white skirt, and began to shovel the toxic mud into her mason jar. She dug deep into the earth, making sure to catch a few radioactive worms, beetles, or even a maggot if she was lucky. Climbing back over the fence and hopping onto her trike, the sun was about to set, meaning that the cafe would be sure to catch a few radioactive worms, beetles, or even a maggot if she was lucky. Climbing back over the fence and hopping onto her trike, the sun was about to set, meaning that the cafe would
"Cat City" by Angelique Perez
@kittiecomb

"Enemy of My Enemy" by Lindsey Scheier
@computerduster

"The Sal" by Avery Nixon
"We need to stomp out this bug before it spreads, otherwise our farmers and local businesses could face millions in damage and an unmanageable swarm."

"Kill On Sight" by Hannah Effinger
@han.svg
"The Waiter" by Nicholas Vidal
@nickyontheweb

"That Sun" by Nicholas Vidal
@nickyontheweb
"The Watcher" by Nicholas Vidal
@nickyontheweb
Summer 2023 was an unprecedented time for the film industry. It was home to some of the wildest box-office successes of all time and some of the biggest box-office bombs of all time (Looking at you, Flash). But this article is not about money; it is about quality. Out of the many, many films that were released this summer, what were the best? Now, that is all subjective - a couple of films on this list probably are not on many others - but in any sense, it gives credence to how there was really something for everyone in this historic summer. So without further ado, here are the top 10 films of summer 2023!


Set in the 90’s and fueled by a soundtrack of East Coast hip-hop classics, ‘Rise of the Beasts’ is a reboot that brings an element that the previous mainline ‘Transformers’ films have been sorely lacking: heart. While Caple lacks the same explosive panache as previous franchise director Michael Bay, the film’s solid script and well-paced action sequences still spring to life with a sense of undemanding fun. The film’s cast brings their A-game as well- Emmy nominees Anthony Ramos and Dominique Fishback lead the human cast, while veteran Optimus Prime voice actor Peter Cullen lends his gravelly tones to the Autobot leader once more. The film’s biggest surprise is SNL alum Pete Davidson as Mirage, who does far more than just cash a check- he ends up being the soul of the film. Overall, ‘Rise of the Beasts’ is a tight, wildly fun installment in this oft-bloated saga.

9. "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" (dir. James Mangold)

“It’s not the years, honey. It’s the mileage.” In this grand finale, our titular hero has both the years AND the mileage, but thanks to the efforts of the evergreen Harrison Ford and the delightful Phoebe Waller-Bridge, the story of Indiana Jones comes to a thrilling end that mostly sticks the landing. ‘Dial of Destiny’ is an entertaining journey across the world (and across time) that never reaches the highs of ‘Raiders of the Lost Ark,’ but never touches the lows of ‘Kingdom of the Crystal Skull’ either. And really, seeing Ford smack the kraut out of some Nazis never gets old. In fact, it might even get better with age.

8. "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem" (dir. Jeff Rowe)

‘Mutant Mayhem’ is the seventh film adaptation of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, but only the second good one, and maybe the first truly great one. With a visual style that evokes a more punk-rock version of ‘Spider-Verse,’ this iteration of the Turtles leans more into the “teen-age” aspect than ever before, thanks to a script co-written by ‘Superbad’ scribes Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, alongside Dan Hernandez, Benji Samit, and director Rowe. Instead of the nightmarish pseudo-Hulks of the most recent live-action installments, these Turtles are gangly, awkward kids that we get to see come into their own as heroes and members of society in a funny, emotionally satisfying way.

7. "Joy Ride" (dir. Adele Lim)

This side-splitting road comedy from first-time director Adele Lim assembles an impressive cast led by Ashley Park, Sherry Cola, Sabrina Wu, and Academy Award nominee Stephanie Hsu on a wildly raunchy journey across China that finds some serious emotion between its prolonged sequences of booting cocaine and tattooed vulvas. Park’s character, Audrey, goes on a journey of self-realization that is both culturally unique and universally relatable, and plays a brilliant straight man to the more wacky antics of her cohorts. ‘Joy Ride’ was criminally overlooked this summer and absolutely deserves a streaming renaissance.

6. "Talk To Me" (dir. Michael and Danny Phillipou)

This horror film, from YouTube filmmaking duo ‘RackaRacka,’ is undeniably the most unsettling film of the year. The fear generated by ‘Talk to Me’ doesn’t come from cheap jump scares or gratuitous gore. Instead, it takes a much more insidious approach of making you care deeply about each character and then raising the stakes in such a shocking way that even looking at the screen becomes a skin-crawling experience. The film’s ending, which would be bleak under any other circumstances, is almost a sigh of relief here. It’s terrifying, well-acted and emotionally satisfying in a lot of unexpected ways.

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This horror film, from YouTube filmmaking duo ‘RackaRacka,’ is undeniably the most unsettling film of the year. The fear generated by ‘Talk to Me’ doesn’t come from cheap jump scares or gratuitous gore. Instead, it takes a much more insidious approach of making you care deeply about each character and then raising the stakes in such a shocking way that even looking at the screen becomes a skin-crawling experience. The film’s ending, which would be bleak under any other circumstances, is almost a sigh of relief here. It’s terrifying, well-acted and emotionally satisfying in a lot of unexpected ways.

2. "Transformers: Rise of the Beasts" (dir. Stephen Caple, Jr.)

Set in the 90’s and fueled by a soundtrack of East Coast hip-hop classics, ‘Rise of the Beasts’ is a reboot that brings an element that the previous mainline ‘Transformers’ films have been sorely lacking: heart. While Caple lacks the same explosive panache as previous franchise director Michael Bay, the film’s solid script and well-paced action sequences still spring to life with a sense of undemanding fun. The film’s cast brings their A-game as well- Emmy nominees Anthony Ramos and Dominique Fishback lead the human cast, while veteran Optimus Prime voice actor Peter Cullen lends his gravelly tones to the Autobot leader once more. The film’s biggest surprise is SNL alum Pete Davidson as Mirage, who does far more than just cash a check- he ends up being the soul of the film. Overall, ‘Rise of the Beasts’ is a tight, wildly fun installment in this oft-bloated saga.

1. "Joy Ride" (dir. Adele Lim)

This side-splitting road comedy from first-time director Adele Lim assembles an impressive cast led by Ashley Park, Sherry Cola, Sabrina Wu, and Academy Award nominee Stephanie Hsu on a wildly raunchy journey across China that finds some serious emotion between its prolonged sequences of booting cocaine and tattooed vulvas. Park’s character, Audrey, goes on a journey of self-realization that is both culturally unique and universally relatable and plays a brilliant straight man to the more wacky antics of her cohorts. ‘Joy Ride’ was criminally overlooked this summer and absolutely deserves a streaming renaissance.

Summer 2023 was an unprecedented time for the film industry. It was home to some of the wildest box-office successes of all time and some of the biggest box-office bombs of all time (Looking at you, Flash). But this article is not about money; it is about quality. Out of the many, many films that were released this summer, what were the best? Now, that is all subjective - a couple of films on this list probably are not on many others - but in any sense, it gives credence to how there was really something for everyone in this historic summer. So without further ado, here are the top 10 films of summer 2023!
1. ‘Barbie’ (dir. Greta Gerwig)

‘Barbie’ is the definitive film of summer 2023. Maybe the definitive film of 2023 as a whole. Maybe the definitive film of the decade. Only time will tell on the latter two, but no other film this summer had multiplexes swimming in pink the way ‘Barbie’ did. Gerwig took on the Herculean task of taking such a divisive icon and building a story that strengthened the brand image without cow-towing Mattel and made it look easy. Margot Robbie delivers a typically smashing performance, wearing her heart on her sleeve and bringing Barbie to life in a vibrant and vulnerable manner. Ryan Gosling as Ken is about as pitch-perfect as casting can get, letting the Kenergy flow in ways that were previously thought impossible. And clearly, the storytelling has resonated with audiences in a myriad of ways. Women feel seen by the film’s feminist themes, and men find themselves comforted by the idea they are Kenough. ‘Barbie’ is lightning in a bottle that studios will be chasing the success of for years to come, but until the concept has been run into the ground, we can revel in its freshness.

2. ‘Oppenheimer’ (dir. Christopher Nolan)

Anyone reading this list undeniably knew what the endgame would be. Picking between these top two films was a struggle, but ultimately came down to personal preference and overall cultural impact. That being said, ‘Oppenheimer’ is the artistic zenith of Christopher Nolan; a lengthy, fast-paced, timeline-jumping thriller that brings the story of one of the most important figures in human history to life with an unexpected sense of spectacle. Cillian Murphy delivers the most brilliant performance of his career here, but giving any other actors a shoutout would be worthy of its own article because every single performance in this film is tuned to perfection. Admittedly, the film has a sour moment here and there (Oppenheimer gets his own Avengers-style suit up scene, and John F. Kennedy gets a similarly Marvel-esque name drop) but on the whole, ‘Oppenheimer’ is one of the best directors alive at the height of his style and craft. But one cannot mention ‘Oppenheimer’ without also mentioning…

3. ‘Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse’
(dir. Joaquim Dos Santos, Kemp Powers, Justin K. Thompson)

The soul-crushing cliffhanger at the end of ‘Across the Spider-Verse’ makes it hard to judge the film solely on its own merits, however, it cannot be denied that it is one of the sharpest, smartest, most well-crafted blockbusters of the year. In the incredibly unlikely event that ‘Beyond the Spider-Verse’ does not stick the landing, audiences will still be left with a first half that tackles young love, heartbreak, betrayal, destiny and forging your own path. Plus, it gave us “canon event” as a term for the lexicon. What’s not to love?

4. ‘Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning: Part One’ (dir. Christopher McQuarrie)

Despite having 12 syllables in its title and 163 minutes in its runtime, ‘Dead Reckoning’ is one of the tightest, most thrilling action movies of the year. Star Tom Cruise and writer/director McQuarrie are at the top of their game here, delivering a heart-pounding, poignant and timely stunt showcase, making it clearer than ever that Tom Cruise would not hesitate to die in the name of cinema (He rode a motorcycle off a cliff and parachuted onto a train. During a pandemic). Not to mention, despite the ‘Part One’ moniker in its title, the ending of the film feels less like a soul-crushing cliffhanger, and instead like a proper ending with another thrill ride teed up. Which is a pretty great transition into number 3 on this list...

5. ‘Nimona’ (dir. Troy Quane and Nick Bruno)

Before Blue Sky Studios was shuttered, they were nearing completion of “Nimona,” an adaptation of JD Stevenson’s graphic novel of the same name, but it was ultimately canceled following their closure at the hands of Disney. Thankfully, Netflix ended up acquiring and finishing the film, and it’s a blessing that they did, because it’s one of the best films Blue Sky, Netflix, or Annapurna have ever produced. Beautiful animation paired with a knockout voice cast makes for a brilliantly well-rounded action comedy that has amazing LGBTQ+ representation, both in its subtext and just straight-up text. It’s unfortunate the film didn’t get a theatrical release, but audiences are still beyond lucky to have it at all.
Editors’ Choice

Back to School Edition

“The Freshman” Available to Rent

For upperclassmen film students, “The Freshman” will be a hilariously accurate portrait of the experiences of a first-year film student. For any freshman film student, let it serve as a hilariously dark omen. Andrew Bergman’s 1990 crime comedy features the legendary Marlon Brando as Carmine Sabatini, whom the film alleges Vito Corleone from “The Godfather” was based upon, who gets college freshman Clark Kellogg, played by Matthew Broderick, wrapped up in his family’s crime ring; smuggling exotic animals.

“The Freshman” is an easy, breezy watch, but an especially rewarding one for fans of “The Godfather” or film in general. Brando is completely game to poke fun at his iconic, Oscar-winning role, and Broderick as charming as ever as the straight man to the wacky crime-drama antics of the Sabatini family. (Plus, the film makes for a great crash-course on rooming with student-run organisations on campus. As of 2023, Players has roughly 800 members, and the numbers are constantly growing. Some well-known Players alumni include Drag Race star Olivia Lux and everyone’s favorite action star Bruce Willis, for whom the Players’ annual banquet “The Bruces” is named after. Players creates incredible opportunities for new and returning students every year, so here is a sneak peek at the exciting lineup Players has to offer this year!

In 1937, a student-run theatre organization was founded at Montclair State University, under the title, “Normal School Theatre Group” to give Montclair State students the opportunity to create theatre. This group was the very first form of theatre to be offered on campus, even before Montclair’s College of the Arts existed. Normal School Theatre Group (NSTG) had a founding membership of 17 students, which produced two full-scale plays each year with a self-funded budget. This organization grew to incredible heights and has become what is now known as Players: A Programming Board of the Student Government Association (SGA). Players has a long way in recent years, eventually advancing from a registered student organization (RSO) to a programming board of the Student Government Association (SGA). Players is one of the largest organizations on campus, offering student-run theatre to students of all grades and majors on campus. As of 2023, Players has roughly 800 members, and the numbers are constantly growing. Some well-known Players alumni include Drag Race star Olivia Lux and everyone’s favorite action star Bruce Willis, for whom the Players’ annual banquet “The Bruces” is named after. Players creates incredible opportunities for new and returning students every year, so here is a sneak peek at the exciting lineup Players has to offer this year!

The next audition opportunity for “Lemonade MILF,” a fun spin on the horrific yet brilliant Disney Channel musical “9 to 5,” will be held on Sept. 11. The first round of MILF will be held on Sept. 12 and 13 at 6 p.m., with a MILF workshop being held at 6 p.m. on Sept. 11. The first round’s theme is “Lemonade MILF;” a fun spin on the horrific yet brilliant Disney Channel original movie “Lemonade Mouth.”

The next audition opportunity for Players is auditions for their annual “shadow cast” of the 1975 cult classic, The Rocky Horror Picture Show. For those unaware, a shadow cast is a cast of actors who act out a film in front of the film as it plays, lip-syncing all of the words and songs. This year’s Rocky theme is “Old Hollywood,” full of vintage glitz and glam. Auditions for Rocky Horror will be held on Sept. 13 and 14 at 6 p.m., with callbacks being held on Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. If you are not a fan of lip-syncing or improvisation, there are still plenty more opportunities to audition. In the fall semester, Players will also be holding auditions for their Comedy, “She Kills Monsters,” on Sept. 18 and 19 at 6 p.m. with callbacks being held on Sept. 20 at 6 p.m. While the shows have not yet been announced, Players will also be performing a classical play and their miscellaneous show, a piece chosen by a student director. Both shows will be announced as the school year further commences. Auditions for Miscellaneous will be held on Sept. 25 and 26 and auditions for the Classical will be held on Oct. 9 and 10. To stay updated on all things Players, you can follow them on Instagram, @Montclair_Players. Make sure to get involved!

A Preview of the Upcoming Players Season

Jenna Wilkinson
Guest Writer

Photo courtesy of Tri-Star Pictures

'Pitch Perfect' on Amazon Prime Video

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

For any freshman film students, “The Freshman” will be a hilariously accurate portrait of the experiences of a first-year film student. For any freshman film student, let it serve as a hilariously dark omen. Andrew Bergman’s 1990 crime comedy features the legendary Marlon Brando as Carmine Sabatini, whom the film alleges Vito Corleone from “The Godfather” was based upon, who gets college freshman Clark Kellogg, played by Matthew Broderick, wrapped up in his family’s crime ring; smuggling exotic animals. “The Freshman” is an easy, breezy watch, but an especially rewarding one for fans of “The Godfather” or film in general. Brando is completely game to poke fun at his iconic, Oscar-winning role, and Broderick is as charming as ever as the straight man to the wacky crime-drama antics of the Sabatini family. (Plus, the film makes for a great crash-course on rooming with student-run organisations on campus. As of 2023, Players has roughly 800 members, and the numbers are constantly growing. Some well-known Players alumni include Drag Race star Olivia Lux and everyone’s favorite action star Bruce Willis, for whom the Players’ annual banquet “The Bruces” is named after. Players creates incredible opportunities for new and returning students every year, so here is a sneak peek at the exciting lineup Players has to offer this year!

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Why is Hollywood On Hold?

Colin Luderitz
Entertainment Editor

For the past four months, the Hollywood film industry has been at an unprecedented turning point. On May 2, 2023, the Writers Guild of America (WGA) went on strike, refusing to write, promote or pitch anything to the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), a trade association which makes up many of Hollywood’s biggest studios and production companies, such as Walt Disney Studios, Warner Bros. Pictures, Universal Pictures, Netflix and so on and so forth. On July 14, 2023, the Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) followed suit by refusing to perform, promote or audition, making the first dual Hollywood strike in over 60 years. But the question is, why?

What is at stake for over 180,000 workers to go on strike for as long as they have?

One major issue for both the WGA and SAG-AFTRA is the rise in use of artificial intelligence in the film industry. With the advent of tools such as ChatGPT, screenwriters fear that generative language models could be used to replace screenwriters entirely, and as such, they hope to negotiate against studios using AI to write or rewrite screenplays.

For SAG-AFTRA, the primary fear comes in the form of generating digital performances, much like what has been seen in recent Lucasfilm productions such as “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny” and the second season of “The Mandalorian.” Those were both cases of de-aging with the actors’ explicit consent, but there are far more extreme uses allegedly in the works.

The BBC reported that an artificial likeness of the late James Dean had been cast in an upcoming film entitled “Back to Eden.” Dean died in a car accident in 1955, almost a year before the first ever artificial intelligence research began in 1956, so it stands to reason that Dean did not consent to his image being used in such a way. Additionally, some studios are hoping to be able to artificially generate crowds instead of hiring casts of extras and “day players.”

Another major sticking point is wages. With the advent of streaming services, residual pay for actors and writers is much different from the days of television and physical media at their peak. In the past, every time a rerun of a TV show was aired, or some- one bought a DVD of a movie or show, the actors and writers involved would get a cut, the percentage of which was based on their work and the amount of which was based on sales and viewer- ship, that gradually declined over time. While actors and writers still do get those residuals from streaming, they are much smaller than they once were and with much shorter timelines of decline.

Part of this is due to streamers not releasing any solid viewership data, instead preferring to release data based on “viewership hours.” For example, Netflix touts that the 2022 film “RRR” has over 70 million hours of viewership, however, that does not tell the full story. It could mean the three-hour film was viewed 23 million times, or the first half of the film was viewed 46 million times, or the film’s Oscar-winning “Naatu Naatu” sequence was viewed over 1.1 billion times.

As such, proper viewership statistics are yet another sticking point for the WGA and SAG-AFTRA. Other wage issues, specific to the WGA, include a minimum size for writer’s rooms and a flat minimum wage for writers across television and streaming alike.

So how does this affect films that are in production, or are completed?

As far as movies and shows that are currently unfinished, they will remain unfinished until the strikes end. There have been some workarounds, however. Studios not part of the AMPTP such as A24 and AMC, in addition to Taylor Swift’s upcoming Eras Tour concert film, have made interim agreements to film and promote upcoming projects, and Paramount Pictures has been shooting as much as they can of their upcoming “Sonic the Hedgehog” projects, as those films heavily feature fully CGI characters. But aside from that, everything is on pause.

Writing for hit shows like “Abbott Elementary” and the final season of “Stranger Things” are frozen in time, shooting on projects like Ridley Scott’s “Gladiator” sequel and Marvel Studios’ “Deadpool III” has been shut down, and actors like David Corenswet, the new Superman in James Gunn’s upcoming DCU reboot, can’t even get fitted for costumes. Additionally, finished projects such as the upcoming “Dune: Part Two” and “Kraven the Hunter” have had their release dates delayed from 2023 into 2024, due to their lead stars not being able to promote the projects, which would likely affect their box office prospects.

This dual strike will undoubtedly be a turning point in the history of the film industry, whether it ends on the terms of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA or the AMPTP, so regardless of which side you’re on, if you care about film or television in any way, keep an eye on how this shakes out.

The Montclarion pays tribute to two legendary musicians we lost this week, Jimmy Buffet and Smash Mouth frontman Steve Harwell. They may have passed, but their music and memory will live on forever.

Jimmy Buffet 1946 - 2023
Steve Harwell 1967 - 2023
The Red Hawks’ recent trip to Munich, Germany stands above all else as the most pivotal moment in the Red Hawks offseason. After a disappointing end to the previous season, the men’s soccer team enters this upcoming campaign with a lot to be excited about. The Red Hawks retained numerous key players, added a number of impactful transfer students as well as incoming freshmen, and were ranked number one in the New Jersey Athletic Conference’s preseason poll. However, the team’s recent trip to Munich, Germany stands above all else as the most pivotal moment in the Red Hawks offseason. It was initiated by head coach Todd Tumelty who believed the maturity and leadership of his roster created the right opportunity for the trip to occur.

“I just thought it was a good opportunity and the right time for these guys. So that’s how it came about,” said Tumelty. “We have a pretty substantial junior and senior class, and we thought having an opportunity to get some extra training would do the team well. Obviously, they’re a little bit older and more mature which helps when you’re taking teams overseas they understand right from wrong and how the program is run and how things need to be done.”

One player who has earned Tumelty’s trust is junior defender Ian Chesney. After a stellar season last year that included First Team All Region as well as First Team All NJAC honors, Chesney will certainly be a key factor in the Red Hawks season. Chesney spoke about the experience of traveling to Germany.

“It was definitely an awesome experience,” Chesney said. “We got to have a lot of team bonding over there. We got to play two games, train a little bit, and we got to see some sights in Munich. We got to go to a Bayern Munich game. I think it was a great experience to travel with the guys, spend some time together and help improve before we start the season.”

Strengthening the team’s bond was the focal point for the trip both on and off the field. Tumelty chose to focus on bonding and synergy over tactics.

“It was less about tactics and how we wanted to play; it was more of a bonding experience,” said Tumelty. “For some of the guys in the program it was their first opportunity to go somewhere (Internationally) and get away from the country. The reason for it was to bond, and get to know your teammates better and hope that when we step on that field guys are not only playing for the university but playing for each other.”

Senior defender Anir Radoncic, who received First Team All NJAC honors, spoke on how the team’s bond grew from a player’s perspective.

“Being together for a week straight is different because here everyone comes to practice and then they go to classes,” Radoncic said. “So being together for a week straight is different because here everyone comes to practice and then they go to classes.”

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The trip also allowed the team more time to train and practice together. The extra time has allowed the Red Hawks to focus on fine details and build chemistry.

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The trip also allowed the team more time to train and practice together. The extra time has allowed the Red Hawks to focus on fine details and build chemistry.

“I think the extra games, practice, and fitness will be a big part,” Chesney said. “I think the fitness especially because teams haven’t done training and double sessions for as long as we have. I think that will give us an edge in a lot of games when it comes down to the wire. When you need to make the 100 yard, I think we got that in our bag. Everyone on this team is fit and ready to go.”

As the Red Hawks transition from preseason towards the start of the regular season, a sense of excitement exists throughout the program because teams haven’t done training and double sessions for as long as we have. I think that will give us an edge in a lot of games when it comes down to the wire. When you need to make the 100 yard, I think we got that in our bag. Everyone on this team is fit and ready to go.”

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School is back in session for the 2023-2024 school year, and that can mean only one thing. It is field hockey time!

The Montclair State University field hockey team is back on Sprague Field and are getting back into the swing of things through both their practices and preseason games for this upcoming season.

Head Coach Eileen O’Reilly, who is now in her ninth season being in charge, reflected on what she has liked the most from this team so far.

"Yeah, it’s hard to pick one thing. Something that stood out to me during our preseason and first couple practices, I’d say is our grit, mental toughness,” O’Reilly said. "We’ve really challenged this group with some different things throughout preseason. Mental challenges, physical challenges, emotional challenges, and they’re rising to the occasion day-after-day and pushing their limits in different ways. Which tells me we are a team that’s ready to compete, ready to fight, and it’s exciting. We’re looking forward to our first game.”

Despite starting sluggish last year, the Red Hawks were able to turn the season around in a positive way. Montclair State went on to win six straight games and finished with a final record of 10-9 for the 2022 season.

The Red Hawks opened the season at home against SUNY Cortland on Friday, Sept. 1. SUNY Cortland left Sprague with the victory however, Montclair State showed their grit after falling down 3-0 in the first half and eventually lost 4-2. Senior forward Carlie Van Tassel and junior midfielder/foward Gab Maisto both got on the score sheet in the game.

"Yeah, it’s hard to pick one thing. Something that stood out to me during our preseason and first couple practices, I’d say is our grit, mental toughness,” O’Reilly said. "We’ve really challenged this group with some different things throughout preseason. Mental challenges, physical challenges, emotional challenges, and they’re rising to the occasion day-after-day and pushing their limits in different ways. Which tells me we are a team that’s ready to compete, ready to fight, and it’s exciting. We’re looking forward to our first game.”

Montclair State celebrates together after scoring a goal.

Benjamin Garfinkle
Staff Writer

midfielder Tori Sutera is also back after achieving the most assists out of anybody on the team with a total of five. Many players are also returning who received distinct honors, during the 2022 season.

Although the team brought back a lot of its players from a season ago, there are still some big shoes to fill with a handful of key losses.

Graduated players such as midfielders Lindsey Bicher and Linsey Champa along with keeper Lauren Pickul all contributed greatly to the Red Hawk’s success last season. It may take some time for the team to gel together and for O’Reilly to put the puzzle together.

The Red Hawks bounced back in a huge way the following day. Montclair State got their first victory of the new season against Gwynedd Mercy University with a final score of 4-0. Van Tassel stood out once again as she scored twice and made it her fourth multi-goal game of her career. The Red Hawks dominated much of the game as they outshot Gwynedd Mercy 26-3.

It is always a big accomplishment to get your first victory in such a young season, and Montclair State is hoping to keep the momentum going forward. Next up for the Red Hawks is a matchup against DeSales University on Wednesday, Sept. 6.
The Montclair Sports

Thursday, September 7 2023
montclarionsports@gmail.com

It's a New Era at Sprague Field with Mike Palazzo at the Helm

Matteo Macolino
Sports Editor

The fall semester has started and it’s officially time for the 2023 fall season of Montclair State University athletics. For some, this could mean getting back into the groove of things; for others, this could mean starting fresh.

The Montclair State University football team had a season to forget in 2022 finishing 2-8 and wireless against the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) at 0-6. But as before started, it is time for a fresh start.

After 40 years as the Red Hawks’ head coach, Rick Giancola hung up his headset, leaving behind a legacy no one is soon to forget. The now-former head coach left behind an overall record of 260-143-2 (.644) and was one of the winningest coaches among current coaches through all collegiate levels. He leaves the program and such a great career behind. But who better to step in than someone who has been in the program for years as both a player and a coach?

Enter Mike Palazzo.

Palazzo spent the last nine seasons as the recruiting coordinator as well as a defensive coach for the Red Hawks. But before that, Palazzo was a student athlete at Montclair State as part of the football team and track and field.

“I never would’ve thought I was going to be here,” Palazzo said. “I had no idea what I wanted to do. I chose Montclair State because they had a football team. I really wanted to go to Rowan but I got rejected. It was between Stockton and Montclair and I decided maybe I can walk on at Montclair.”

Palazzo stood at 5 foot 9 inches and was never given a second look by coaches. He decided to try out anyway and see what could happen.

“I tried out in the spring. They put me at linebacker, I never played that before and I got cut,” Palazzo said. “It was that motivation that kept building. The more people that said ‘no,’ the more I wanted to get it done. Even when I played as a freshman, I had coaches telling me I should get into coaching.”

Palazzo found his passion in coaching and never looked back. After his time as a student at Montclair State, he stayed as a part-time coach for a couple of years before eventually moving to Towson University as a defensive quality control coach for a year. But when a full-time position opened up back at his alma mater, he could not pass up the opportunity. Fast forward years later and Palazzo earned himself the highest title in the college football world.

So what can the team and its supporters expect from their new head coach? Palazzo wants to share their wealth and let the other coaches and coordinators do their thing without interruptions. He wants to act as “CEO” of the team and help as needed without getting in anyone’s way.

“Coach G was coaching the offensive line, he was a position coach. I don’t want to coach a position” Palazzo said. “Coach [Steve] Sciarappa is our OC [Offensive Coordinator], it’s his offense, it’s his show. Coach [Liam] Nelson is our defensive coordinator, it’s his show in defense, and I’m here to help out. I fill in as needed, but I’m going to let those guys do their thing. I have to do all the extra stuff that the program needs.”

There is a lot of excitement going into the new year on both sides of the ball. With a lot of new faces on the coaching staff and a new set of captains taking the reigns, expectations are high within the program. Captain and senior offensive lineman Sam Ray likes what he’s seen so far in the preseason.

“Coach Palazzo has totally changed the program,” Ray said. “I’m excited as a senior. I’m excited as a captain to be a part of this team this year. Everybody’s at the meetings, everybody is there early. It seems like a program that wants to win this year.”

When Palazzo enters the room, the room falls silent and these student-athletes are locked in and ready to go. The mindset this year is to be an elite football team and adapt to change, as things change in college football every year.

Captain and junior linebacker Nick Burgess explained how the team’s job this year is to be elite and for everyone to do their job.

“Our big thing is to adapt and advance,” Burgess said. “Coaches are going to change, that’s the nature of college football. We’re so focused on keeping the same standard we had last year. On defense and offense, we’re changing our scheme to be more aggressive this year and I look forward to that. I feel we’re a lot more aggressive on both sides of the ball and special teams. Like I said being elite at every thing we do, that’s so important to us this year.”

The biggest goal for everyone on the Red Hawks this year is of course winning the NJAC. The last time Montclair State was the sole title holder of NJAC champions was over a decade ago in 2009. After a few years of not meeting their expectations, maybe this could be the year.

“The number one goal is the NJAC,” Ray said. “This is my senior year and not just for me but for all my teammates, we need this win. There are 10 games. For me as a player my mentality is, I don’t care if we’re 6-4, I want to win this NJAC.”

The Red Hawks open the season on the road in Gettysburg, PA to face Gettysburg College on Saturday, Sept. 9. All the support, hype, and optimism expressed throughout the team this offseason is SUPR to bring excitement to the regular season for this Montclair State team.