Pay off Parking Citations with Cans for Citations

Students, faculty and staff have the opportunity to donate canned goods and/or non-perishable items to Montclair State University's Red Hawk Pantry through parking services and facilities to pay off parking citations. Scott Nayda Sr., director of parking services, explained the purpose of the program.

"Cans for citations is a way for parking services and facilities services to give back to the campus community," Nayda Sr. said. "For each one item donation it's worth 10 dollars towards a citation. So you bring in five cans of non-perishable food it's able to take care of one open citation."

While sharing the means of the program, Nayda Sr. shares that parking services are not there to take money from those who have open citations, which is why the Cans for Citations program was put in place.

"It's kind of a two fold, we take care of open citations, we're not here just to make money" Nayda Sr. said. "We want to be punitive here but part of the process is we have to provide parking for everybody. So we understand, you know, a parking ticket and a fine is a hardship, so we decided to partner with the Red Hawk Pantry to take care of open citations and try to make a donation."

Nayda Sr. also shared how Cans for Citations benefits the Montclair State community, including those battling hunger.

"Well I believe the Red Hawk Pantry's open to all students and faculty and staff so that's one way," Nayda Sr. said. "The other way is that students, faculty and staff [can pay off] citations so you can take care of a citation by making a donation."

Melissa Bush, a sophomore education major, would utilize the program due to financial reasons.

"Well I feel like [Cans for Citations] could benefit me in terms of money," Bush said. "I feel like for me I've gotten ten tickets before and they're extremely expensive so I feel like that would definitely benefit me in terms of paying for the ticket."

Ariel Balcacer, a freshman computer science major, shares how he and others will benefit from the program.

"Me personally, I've never gotten a citation or any of that stuff but I've known people who've gotten citations before for probably parking in the wrong spot or you know just for not realizing where they are," Balcacer said. "I think it's a nice way to like kind of help both the students and the community, you're helping one the students like you know get the citation waived off by [parking services] by them donating a canned good to someone who may desperately need it and what benefits the community is receiving these canned goods and you know it's a win-win situation at the end of the day for these people."

Balcacer shared how this program allows students and staff to do good for the community while also making up for mistakes when receiving the citation.

"So I think it's very beneficial in that fact where you can do good for the community and make up for your own mistakes," Balcacer said. "At the end of the day you'll feel a lot better than you were moments before when you're given the citation you're like 'Oh gosh now I gotta go handle this citation' and now you're like 'You know what I could amend for these mistakes' and one of those ways is by giving that canned good to the pantry and [parking services] resolve[s] the issue for you."

Joanna Data, a sophomore education major, shared her thoughts on the program.

"I mean I feel like I see a lot of people get tickets," Data said. "I feel like it would help them pay off because I was sitting once in my car and someone got ticketed and I felt bad because they just left and not many people have enough money to pay for it so it would benefit them."

Data explained that she would use the program in the future if she ever received a parking citation.

"You can't cause everyone here has a lot of money, and college costs a lot so it would help me a lot," Data said.

Bush suggested another way to relieve parking citations could be by hosting a clothing drive.

"I mean there's always like donating clothes or things like that," Bush said.

Nayda Sr. says parking services is in the works of potentially creating a coat drive for Rocky's Closet.

"We are looking to right now kind of see if we can expedite it but I don't know how successful we're going to be 'cause we don't wanna launch a program that it's kind of haphazard right, so we're trying to do a coat drive," Nayda Sr. said. "Especially you know we've heard that some international students aren't really used to the weather here in New Jersey and you know it's getting colder out now so we're trying to figure out how we can do that and still take care of a citation for it. We don't want to just run a coat drive, we want to be able to accept any donation and address an open citation. So we're just trying to figure out the nuances in that so we're working on that now to try to help out Rocky's Closet."

The goal for parking services and facilities is to resume the Cans for Citations program, starting it back up in the spring semester. Nayda Sr. also shared the success of the recent donations prior to Thanksgiving.

"For any future considerations, yeah we're probably going to do this again in the spring," Nayda Sr. said. "So we did one back in the spring for two full weeks, we decided to do this one right before Thanksgiving in an effort to make a donation to the [Red Hawk Pantry] prior to the holiday and that was pretty successful."
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New Approach to Addressing the Teacher Shortage

President Koppell addresses questions about the teacher apprenticeship program.

On Nov. 14, Montclair State University became the first university in New Jersey to launch a teacher certification apprenticeship program. The program is a new approach to the teacher shortage that is plaguing the United States. It creates a “Paraprofessional to Teacher Pathway” which allows individuals to pursue a bachelor’s degree and teacher certification simultaneously, according to the most recent press release from Montclair State. Those who use this pathway will be able to teach any grade level and it is not limited according to one’s mastery of a specific field. It is planned to welcome students for the fall 2024 semester.

President Jonathan Koppell provided a statement in a recent meeting with Montclair State’s media organizations pertaining to this program. “A lot of [paraprofessionals] want to be teachers but they don’t have a way to do it and also keep their job,” Koppell said. “And they have to feed their family, little things like that. So the apprenticeship program model is something where you get the opportunity to pursue qualifications, degrees [and] credentials while working and getting credit for the work that’s relevant to the certification that you’re teaching.”

Juliana Velasquez, a senior psychology major, explained that this approach is beneficial in terms of addressing the issue at hand. “It’s a good way to combat the situation at hand, this is the first time I’m hearing about it,” Velasquez said. “This is affecting so many students and teachers even so I feel like this is a good way to start getting to the root of the problem.”

Anabelle Rosario, an undeclared freshman, also expressed her thoughts on the matter when asked whether she would feel more or less comfortable with people gaining teaching experience while they are pursuing their degree.

“I feel like maybe more comfortable because like, I guess they would be closer to our age and then they could give new perspectives on said subject,” Rosario said. “Everybody has different experiences so it would be cool to learn from them as well.”

Marcos Santos, a junior illustration major, commented on how this approach makes it more cost effective for those who have the goal of becoming a teacher. They acknowledge that the teaching profession does not yield a large income, so the more time people spend in the workforce instead of just training is worthwhile.

“I feel like it would help with people who are investing in trying to become a teacher because it doesn’t make sense to like pour money into school and then become a teacher afterwards,” Santos said. “I know teachers don’t really get paid that well so I feel like it would be very worth it.”
Wake Up in Montclair With These Five Coffee Shops

Roxxane Gribbin
Assistant Feature Editor

One of my favorite things to do in Montclair is wander around searching for the best cup of coffee. Montclair offers a variety of unique coffee experiences. A cafe to your liking can be sought out in every corner of the town. I have learned every cafe is different with its own history and culture. As a barista myself, I pay attention to the worker’s attitudes and the different aesthetics I have witnessed. Here are some of the best places I have found.

1. Trend Coffee & Tea House
   Built in 1860, Trend Coffee & Tea House offers a unique and beautiful experience. The walls are covered in intricate artwork with a timeless feeling. Upon walking in, this cafe encapsulates you within its beauty and culture. The work of local artists is featured on the walls throughout. The cafe hosts open mic nights and live performances. They showcase local musicians during jam sessions. Trend also specializes in vegan pastries. Can I just move in?
   Address: 411 Bloomfield Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043

2. Jayce Baudry French Pastry
   This hidden gem features pastry chef Jayce Baudry’s culinary creations. He worked as a Demi Chef de Partie at a 3-star Michelin palace Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris, France.
   “My mother was a hardworking single parent. She rarely had time for cooking, and even less for baking cakes. So, I think it was this lack of sweets in my childhood that inspired me to begin baking my first cakes, using store-bought cake mixes,” Baudry said, according to the cafe’s website.
   Make sure to try one of the elegant pastries when visiting this spot!
   Address: 17 Church Street, Montclair, New Jersey 07043

3. Paper Plane
   Despite only opening in 2019, Paper Plane has won four awards in The Golden Bean Competition. At the shop, they have a wide variety of beans up for purchase. On their website, you can find more information about the specific flavor notes in the brews.
   Address: 61 N Fullerton Ave, Montclair, New Jersey 07042

4. Java Love
   If you are looking for a trip to France without the airfare, head over to Jayce Baudry French Pastry. This cafe and bakery offers gourmet pastries that will not break your bank account. This cafe is attached to a Plaza featuring The Clairidge Theatre and other attractions. Because of this, you can visit a few other places without having to step outside in the cold December weather.
   This hidden gem features pastry chef Jayce Baudry’s culinary creations. He worked as a Demi Chef de Partie at a 3-star Michelin palace Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris, France.
   “My mother was a hardworking single parent. She rarely had time for cooking, and even less for baking cakes. So, I think it was this lack of sweets in my childhood that inspired me to begin baking my first cakes, using store-bought cake mixes,” Baudry said, according to the cafe’s website.
   Make sure to try one of the elegant pastries when visiting this spot!
   Address: 61 N Fullerton Ave, Montclair, New Jersey 07042

5. Eagle Rock Cafe
   There is something in the air at Eagle Rock Cafe that helps me get my work done. Their exquisite cold brew can help anyone power through their school or homework. This cafe is often busy and has both indoor and outdoor seating. Even though it has a “hustle” vibe, it is also a great spot to rewind with a friend. This spot is very homey and has different nooks to explore. It is only an eleven-minute drive from Montclair State University. Due to its small size, it can fill up quickly so make sure to get a seat early on!
   Address: 202 Bellevue Ave, Montclair, New Jersey 07043
NAIS major who were interested in Indigenous studies. The Native American and Indigenous Studies club (NAIS) was started to involve students outside the work with people into a student-run make connections and transform their able to dive into local communities, that says a lot more than just doing the required work for your major or minor,” Fornarotto said. The primary focuses of the club include food sovereignty and environmental justice, which are topics explored in the minor, and are often executed through volunteer trips. Within a few months of activity, the club had conversations with Chief Vincent Mann of the Ramapough Lenape Turtle Clan and language revitalization experts through relations with the university.

The head of Montclair State’s anthropology department, Dr. Christopher N. Matthews, had met Mann about seven years prior, back when the minor was only an idea. His current research is partly focused on a collaborative heritage project with the Ramapough Lenape Turtle Clan. These long-standing relationships with local tribes help the club and professors facilitate similar events and cultivate those interested.

The club’s vice-president is A.J. Gervasi Humenik, a junior anthropology major, who was introduced to Indigenous studies through these trips. As someone who is not in the minor sequence, he recommends jumping into the club by attending meetings and having an open ear for learning. “We’re not asking you to come in and be perfect, and to know all the terminology, and to know all the issues and the history of the issues,” Humenik said. “If you just come and want to learn that’s really just enough.”

Kate Kilroy, a junior anthropology major, is the club’s treasurer. She got involved in the NAIS club through her interests in archaeology museums and NAGPRA, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act. Kilroy found that Indigenous rights are often violated against this act, creating great ills that are perpetrated in museums with thousands of stolen artifacts.

Knowledge of these legislative issues motivated the executive board to work towards the vocality of Indigenous communities. This initiative not only attracts attention but also aligns with the club’s core mission of centering Indigenous voices. “The ultimate goal is for us to be able to build a platform for Indigenous voices and not for us to be the ones up there speaking as much,” Humenik said.

In explaining the challenges in creating a new student organization, Fornarotto highlighted issues in the need for overall exposure often seen through social media. The club’s official Instagram promotes Indigenous media, authors and music as a common way to entice more members. National holidays such as the observance of Native American Heritage annually in November provide room for the club’s member growth. Through its curated information, the executive board makes itself available to all individuals interested in learning throughout the semester.

“The only two things you need to join the club are enthusiasm and a willingness to listen and learn,” Kilroy said.

Whether you’re a seasoned advocate or just beginning your exploration of Indigenous studies, you can find your place in a club dedicated to amplifying Indigenous voices and fostering meaningful change.

The Native and Indigenous Studies Club holds its meetings every other Wednesday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at The Coder House located at 10 Normal Ave.
Students Are Revved Up for Montclair State Car Club

Allen Macaraeg  
Assistant News Editor

On Nov. 27, the Montclair State University Car Club lined up some of their cars on the Student Center Quad and hosted a canned food drive. In collaboration with the Dominican Student Organization, they collected non-perishable food donations that went to Toni’s Kitchen in the town of Montclair.

Founded in 2018 by Omar Zadeh and originally under the name “MSU Modified,” the club is a registered student organization of the Student Government Association (SGA). The club is dedicated to creating a safe place for those interested in cars and other motor vehicles while also giving back to the community.

They host various types of events to give back, including the Cars For A Cause event. The first Cars For A Cause event was dedicated to foster and adoptive services. A majority of their events are dedicated to charitable causes like this one.

Additionally, the club provides car enthusiasts with multiple opportunities to display their cars. Throughout the year, they promote different car shows that students can participate in or visit. However, they do not only have charity events or auto shows.

The club also offers ways for members to connect and create long-lasting friendships. One way is through car cruises, where club members meet and then drive together to a venue such as a restaurant. Some of the venues include Chick-fil-A and Shake Shack.

Cristofer Belen, a senior computer science major, emphasized how inclusive the club is and how everyone is welcome to join no matter how much experience or knowledge they have about cars.

“The moment you join the club, it’s very welcoming. We welcome everybody that comes in with open arms. We try to treat them as family,” Belen said. “It’s open to pretty much everybody, we’re just trying to demonstrate to people what the car community actually is about. It’s about kindness, it’s not about just showing off your car.”

Jess Titterington, a graduate English student, acknowledged that a common misconception of the club is that one needs to have a certain type of car to be a part of it.

“A common misconception about the car club is that you have to have a cool or modified car to be part of it when that’s not the case,” Titterington said. “Anyone can join even if they don’t have a car, they can still join. Cars just tend to be the central talking point of interest that brings us together but our community goes beyond that.”

For more information on the club and how to be a part of it, follow @msu_carclub on Instagram.
WRITERS WANTED
FOR:
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ENTERTAINMENT
OPINION
SPORTS

Come Help Us Out!

Room 2035 School of Communication and Media in Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

Phone 973.655.5230
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What makes a photo timeless?
By Dani Mazariegos and Angel Santos
Assistant Director of Photography and Guest Photographer

“I think it is the environment, what you were doing at that moment. Or I feel the moment that you are in and the vibe, the energy that was there. I think those kinds of aspects and the people you are around are a big part of making that picture memorable.”

“I think something that makes a photo timeless is something that can be understood and appreciated for decades. I think when you still look at those pictures from like the 1910’s of like all of those people, those are timeless photos because you can still understand the suffering and the turmoil all those people were going through and the thing they were living through.”

“I guess something that has meaning to me. I like to take pictures of my friends and family members, people that are close to me. Seeing people when they are happy, capturing that emotion.”
“Composition is really good for a photo. Also, I think the memories of the photo I took, and the friends and the people that are in it.”

Caryn Clark
Senior
Animation and Illustration

“I think what makes a photo timeless is like they said a picture is worth a thousand words, so it kind of captures a still of that time. If you think about significant photos like Ruby Bridges going to school. You know, that photo just speaks volumes as to what was happening at the time and the context of that.”

Phillip Pettiford
Senior
Dance

“I think taking a photo from an interesting perspective and I think capturing a moment, a candid photo.”

Gabriella Larosa
Senior
Psychology
Capricorn
Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
I’m really happy that the “Grand Theft Auto VI” trailer got you excited and all, but be honest with yourself. When are you going to have time to play it? You’ll probably be renovating an overpriced house by then.

Aquarius
Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
Now’s as good a time as any to start planning your New Year’s resolutions! Why don’t you start with hygiene? Or basic professionalism? Some decorum would be nice.

Pisces
Feb. 19 – Mar. 20
Happy holidays, Pisces! The “I’m broke and I can’t afford to buy you Christmas presents” excuse only goes so far when you buy a flat screen on Black Friday.

Aries
Mar. 21 – Apr. 19
Listen jabroni, go back to your hidey-hole. Now is not the time for your chicanery. The world has enough going on. Do you even watch the news? Come on.

Taurus
Apr. 20 – May 20
Been binging a new show? A show about 30 year old women playing 13 year olds in the year 2000? What’s wrong with you?

Gemini
May 21 – Jun. 20
It’s Christmastime baby. But it’s also time for the most grueling part of the semester where you’re unsure if you’re going to pass or not. Good luck soldier.

Cancer
Jun. 21 – Jul. 22
Just realized you had 120 meal swipes during the last week of November and now you have to spend it before the semester ends? Try buying everyone in your office some acai bowls from freshens and then not realize they don’t give you bags and you carry them all back yourself and spill it all over your Michael Kors coat and boots.

Leo
Jul. 23 – Aug. 22
You can download Sims 4 on your work computer. Trust me, your boss won’t yell at you.

Virgo
Aug. 23 – Sep. 22
Virgo, your responsibility this week is to bring back “wizard” as an adjective to describe cool things. It would be totally wizard if you did that.

Libra
Sep. 23 – Oct. 22
Humbled by the Birds losing this week? Yeah, me too. Especially when your Kelce jersey is your only clean shirt.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 – Nov. 21
Sous vide a steak in Hawaiian Punch over winter break. It’s probably less disrespectful to a good cut of meat than air frying it.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
Are you a wizened sailor in need of a holiday list to provide your fair maiden? Look no further than a pack of hardback (to keep the starvation away), a new swab (to clean the poop deck), and a handy bottle of rum (to quell the extreme terror and rough seas).
The Montclarion Crossword Puzzle and More!

Movie Quotes Edition

By Sekhena Sembenu

Across
4. “It’s all humbug, I tell you.”
6. “Merry Christamas, ya filthy animals!”
7. “Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”
9. “The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.”

Down
1. “Christmas is getting all you can get while the getting is good.”
2. “Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings.”
3. “Just remember, the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.”
5. “Son of a nutcracker!”

Sudoku

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Milk                              Santa                           Sleigh
Cookies                       Candle                        Chimney
Presents                   Ornament                   Jingle Bells

H B T Z Z I Q R E L K B C N X J A E J P
Another semester in the books. This school year we were gifted with a Starbucks truck named Teresa and still did not get our insane traffic handled. But that is all in the past. Now, it is time to have some time to focus on ourselves.

It is no surprise that a few of us have struggled throughout the semester. A lot of students have a deteriorating mental health. CNN reported, “An estimated 1 in 5 adults in the United States lives with a mental illness, and young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are disproportionately affected. The share of college students reporting anxiety and depression has been growing for years, and it has only gotten worse during the Covid-19 pandemic.”

College can be rough. It is one of the most taxing experiences of our lives. The transition into adulthood can be a challenge. This is why we need breaks.

Winter break is our time to relax, recuperate and take time to care for ourselves because we were not able to during school.

There are so many different reasons as to why focusing on mental health is essential. For starters, improved mental health can be the key to academic success, which all students should be striving for. TimelyCare reports, “Campus-wide mental health resources for students to seek support could be the key to their academic success. A national survey found that 66% of college students felt counseling services improved their academic performance.”

Good mental health can help us take on battles such as stress and being overwhelmed with schoolwork. It is crucial that we take this break to improve our well-being not only for ourselves but our futures.

And speaking of our future selves, it is important that we take care of our mental health because of how it translates to our physical health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, “Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. For example, depression increases the risk for many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.”

Good mental health has many benefits, and we must take the time to take care of ourselves so we can have the best future possible.

Now that we have established how good mental health is essential to our college experience and life moving forward, how should we be spending our winter break?

First of all, we need to relax. School is finally done and now we need to make the most out of the next month. This could be practicing self-care, reading a new book, picking up a new relaxing hobby such as knitting or even trying physical activities such as yoga.

It is also important that we cut out any unhealthy habits that may be contributing to our debilitating mental health. Mayo Clinic reports these unhealthy habits “may include drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, smoking, eating too much, or using illegal substances. These habits can harm your health and increase your stress levels.”

We should be practicing healthy habits such as getting on a good sleep schedule, eating healthy and socializing with our loved ones.

Mental health is one of the most important things for college students. So please, take this break and make time for yourself so you can be the best you can be.

“Every weekend I’m going to have a little movie night with my friends. I’m gonna have a self care day just to myself in order to make sure I’m okay, make sure that I’m spending time thinking about my decisions and the way that I want to go about life.”

- Helshy Matos
Freshman
Business Administration

“During this break I’m going to work on fixing my sleeping routine and really prioritize my health. I’m going to take a break from studies and enjoy my vacation.”

- Sofia Hammache
Freshman
Biology

“Td probably be hanging out with mostly family and friends, [I’m] very excited for New Year’s and Christmas, and for the Giants to play.”

- Gio Carluccio
Sophomore
Advertising
Colin Luderitz
Entertainment Editor

I think that is ridiculous. If “Passion of the Christ” and “Hop” can both be considered Easter movies, what’s keeping “Die Hard” from being an excellent double feature with “Elf”?

But how do we define a Christmas movie, aside from just being set at Christmas time?

Because really, the definition is pretty loose. Nobody will deny that “It’s A Wonderful Life” is a Christmas movie, but only the last 30 minutes or so actually have anything to do with Christmas. And the ending is the cast singing “Auld Lang Syne,” which is a New Year’s song! Wake up, people!

But you could argue the core of a true Christmas movie is all about the themes. “It’s A Wonderful Life” may not be fully set at Christmas, but the themes of community, doing the right thing and being there for your family make it right at home with the best Christmas movies.

“Die Hard” fills several of the most important thematic nipples of Christmas movies, though. It is about community. McClane is not the only hero, he could not save the day without the help of Sergeant Powell. It is about doing the right thing: snuffing out a bunch of snobby European robbers. And most importantly, it is about family, because what’s more Christmas than trying to win back your estranged wife?

An estranged wife whose name is Holly, no less.

“Colon, you are grasping at straws.”

Oh yeah? Well you must be under the drugged impression that you are the most important virgin on Christmas Day.

Almost the entire plot is pushed forward by Christmas. McClane is in Los Angeles, because it is Christmas. He is attempting to repair his relationship with his wife, because it is Christmas. The robbery is taking place that day because of the Christmas party making it easier to take hostages. You simply cannot remove the Yuletide spirit from the film.

The film’s soundtrack is populated with holiday hits. “Ode to Joy,” “Winter Wonderland,” “Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!” and “Christmas in Hollis” are all Christmas classics, and they set the rhythm and tone of the film. That alone should end the debate, but some people are just so stubborn.

But no matter what your (wrong) opinion on “Die Hard” is, it’s important to know that everyone celebrates Christmas in their own way. Some people celebrate with their families. Some people celebrate with their friends. Some people don’t celebrate at all. And every single one of those is valid. The only truly invalid way to spend the season is with a stick up your butt claiming that “Die Hard” isn’t a Christmas movie. Touch grass. Happy Holidays!

Colin Luderitz, a junior filmmaking major, is in his first year as an entertainment editor for The Montclarion.

‘Die Hard’ Is A Christmas Movie, And I Will Come To Blows For That

Colin Luderitz
Entertainment Editor

The opinion pieces expressed in this publication are those of the author(s). They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the The Montclarion, other than Editorials written by The Montclarion on Editorial Board staff.

E
evry year, some shmuck thinks they are some masterful, highbrow contrarian because they claim that John McTiernan’s 1988 masterpiece “Die Hard,” starring Montclair State University alumnus Bruce Willis as everyday action hero John McClane, is not a Christmas movie. And every year it is our duty as American citizens to put those nerds in their place. “Die Hard” is a Christmas movie, whether or not you like it, buster.

“Wah, what makes it a Christmas movie, Colos?” Do you have eyes, loser? It’s set at Christmas time.

“But it came out in July 1988!”

Guess what? Jesus was born in March, and this opinion is being written by an atheist. The rules of Christmas are our own destiny, so why get hung up on deciding something is not Christmas?

Some may say that “Die Hard” is too violent to be a Christmas movie.

Popular Western Depictions of Muslims are Improving: Here’s How It Can Be Even Better

Talal Awad
Guest Writer

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A while back, a Muslim acquaintance of mine conversed about the show “Ramy” with pride when it first launched. Although I never watched “Ramy,” I heard it provided an authentic deep dive into a Muslim struggling with his faith that resonated with many. I heard how it touched upon taboo topics, such as how cultures can impose double standards with religious practices for men and women, with authenticity.

To see a show receive so much praise from many Western Muslims at the time was unfathomable. Many of us grew up watching Muslims depicted as violent terrorists or characters riddled with Islamophobic tropes.

Since then, Muslim representation allowed to be shown by Western corporations has steadily been improving. “Ms. Marvel” is a prominent example that has been referenced by some Muslims as a hallmark of good representation.

Despite the genuine advances in Muslim representation recently, I have noticed that popular Muslim portrayal is still limited and lacking in creativity. The reason appears to be clear. The central problem I have noticed is that popular examples of Muslim representation engage with the religion of Islam in a limited capacity. This places a constraint on Muslim diversity because it shapes their perceptions, struggle and navigate through their religion and portraying Islam without even directly mentioning Islam from a popular scale?

The reality is, however, that Islam goes beyond an identity. It defines their existence. It shapes their perceptions, intuitions, thoughts, behaviors and the structures they engage with. To expand upon existing representation, that should be reflected in how Muslim characters are written. Not all Muslims need to be ethical exemplars of their faith. That would also be restricting and would contribute to the romanticization of the past.

The reality is, however, that Islam plays a far more significant role in the lives of many Muslims than what is communicated through popular entertainment.

Muslims practice Islam all over the world. It is practiced in Bosnia, China, Indonesia, Morocco, Somalia and many other locations. They each practice, struggle and navigate through Islam in different ways. This global religion offers so many unique opportunities to have these diverse realities portrayed. Why don’t those diverse realities have a chance to be reflected on a popular scale?

Some people may not even be needed at all to tell a story that involves Islam. In both the past and the present, art references the concepts and contributions of other religions or philosophies, like that of the Greeks and Christians. The same inspiration can be taken from Islam. Audiences can be exposed to Islam through concepts, stories and vivid imagery. This would be a clever way to expose audiences to Islam without even directly mentioning it, so long as it is done respectfully.

Yes, Muslim representation is better than it used to be, but it is time to set the bar even higher. Allowing for more diverse interactions of Muslims with their religion and portraying Islam more conceptually would be reflective of the realities of a global religion that has existed for over a millennium, and it would provide more opportunities for artists to tell stories that are creative and unexpected.

Talal Awad, a senior public and professional writing major, is in his first year as a guest writer for The Montclarion.
“Tragedy”  
by Keith Burton | Contributing Writer

set the stage  
cue the applause  
the characters dance  
around their flaws

bite your nails  
with hunger and hope  
you’ll see them trip  
and swallow whole

their poisoned fate  
they were born to eat  
that’s tragedy, baby  
blame the greeks  
while you remain  
on luxury seating  
starved for drama  
dying for feeling

so long as it doesn’t  
touch you where you sle
“Tomato Filling”

by Olivia Yayla | Assistant-Fiction Editor

Kimberly has always had a sophisticated palate, and she has always known what she wants. She’s loved raw sushi since the early age of 5, discriminating against anyone who dares to order a California roll at Nobu. By 9 she’s been able to tell the difference between a strawberry Moscato and a rose champagne with a single swirl of the glass. And by 13, Kimberly has traveled through the villages of France and sampled hundreds of handmade pastries and foreign delicacies that most teenagers would pass up for a simple slice of pizza.

By 20 years old, Kimberly had transformed her love of extravagant sweets into a world renowned online dessert franchise, sending a sugar craze throughout the chasms of Pinterest and the For You pages of every New York City inhabitant. She bakes Ube Matcha macarons, Pineapple Coconut Crème Brulees, and invents twists of American classics that even the French Pastry Chefs she had previously insulted with her brutal blog critiques can not resist.

Her exquisite taste has spread through all aspects of her life, including her choice of men. Carlyle was an extremely sought after bachelor in the high-end restaurant scene of New York City. His suits were always freshly pressed, and his cufflinks changed with the seasons, but never touched the same suit twice. His hair was always perfectly gelled and combed to the side, and his food blog impresses even the most cynical of food creators. She’s visited every one of his 5 star rated restaurants, ordered every item off the menu, all for the small chance that he would make an appearance. She studied his blogs, noting his favorite flavor combinations, and most importantly, his least. She’s tailored her recipe book to his liking, regardless of the fact that they have never spoken in person. But in her eyes, Carlyle was Kimberly’s favorite flavor.

She’s reimagined their wedding cake dozens of times. Imagining what it would be like to spend hours together whisking meringues, and pan searing fresh filets, constructing the most magnificent wedding menu imaginable.

A girl can dream, but Kimberly doesn’t dream.

Kimberly schemes.

Her single storefront and baking facility, Kake, neighbors Billionaire’s Row in the most prestigious street of Manhattan, offering luxury on a plate for customers of all walks of life. Through the eyes of the world, Kimberly has a flavorful life. But through her own, it has never been more bland. And ever since her most recent wedding cake order, her mood has almost completely soiled.

She thought she was hallucinating the moment she glanced up from the stove and saw Carlyle waiting to be served at a single table just minutes before closing time. She turned off the stove, destroying her raspberry coulis, before whisking through the kitchen’s doors and seating herself in the single seat before him.

“I thought I’d never be served….Wait I know you,” he said. Through every one of her fantasies, his voice was always a mystery. Not anymore.

“Do you?” her grin stretched from ear to ear.

“You’re that woman from my restaurant. You ordered…everything, am I correct?”

Her cheeks flushed, her words were stolen from her mind, and she suddenly found it hard to focus on his eyes.

“Yes, that’s it,” he nodded, leaning back in the seats she bought according to his How-to Design A Restaurant article. “Don’t worry, I was flattered. It’s rare to find a woman with good taste, nowadays.”

Her breath hitched in her throat, “So, um, would you like my sampling menu, one of everything? Or are you a man who knows what he wants?”

“Normally, I am, but my fiancé is a bit of a picky eater, so our wedding cake might need to be a little more simple than I would like.”

Everything he said after that was muffled over the brutal screams of her fantasies dying. His lips were moving, her right hand was taking notes, but she wasn’t there. How could this happen, she thought. How could he do this to me, to us?

“Any allergies?” she interrupted, the ringing in her ears pausing for just a moment.

“Ah, not for me. My fiancé, however, is deathly allergic to tomatoes, so I think we’re safe,” he laughed. But if only he knew.

They sat for hours, sketching cake designs, arguing about the clichés of vanilla wedding cakes, before deciding on a double dark chocolate cake with raspberry filling.

From the moment he left to the second the morning sun lit the dining room in golden light, Kimberly was baking. As the mashed raspberries bubbled in the sauce pot, she grabbed 10 baby tomatoes from the fridge, tossing them into the concoction. After a taste test, she tossed the whole pot into the sink. The tomato flavor was too strong, onto the next. By the time the doors were open to customers, 7 sauce pots were bubbled in the sauce pot, she grabbed 10 baby tomatoes from the fridge, tossing them into the concoction. After a taste test, she tossed the whole pot into the sink. The tomato flavor was too strong, onto the next. By the time the doors were open to customers, 7 sauce pots were ready to be served.

By nightfall, Kimberly found herself in the elevator of Carlyle’s apartment complex with a box of freshly baked double dark chocolate cupcakes with raspberry filling, and a secret dose of lectin. She never made house deliveries before, but for her future husband? As the elevator dinged for each floor, her heart raced, but not out of the excitement she had been feeling all day. Kimberly felt guilt.

But by the time she reached his floor and heard the shouting from behind his door, she loosened her tight shoulders. A woman’s voice shrieked, but she couldn’t tell whether it was out of frustration, or if it was her normal tone. My God, he must be miserable, she thought. And with that, she knocked on the door, and left the cupcakes for the very woman she was about to assassinate. Kimberly knew that death by any means was no joke. However, death by cupcake never sounded so sweet.
Photos of life by
Karsten Englander
Bleeding Print
Olivia Yayla
Campy Thrills and Heartfelt Humanity Bring ‘Godzilla Minus One’ Roaring To Life

Director Takashi Yamazaki’s bold new take on the classic kaiju Godzilla has stomped its way into theaters, bringing a sobering look at post-World War II Japan that balances out what could be just another cheesy creature feature.

In the film, we meet Koichi Shikishima, a kamikaze pilot who abandons his mission in the waning days of World War II as Japan’s loss becomes certain. Following his return home to decimated Tokyo, he is shamed by his community for his cowardice, by all except for a young woman named Noriko Oishi and her adopted daughter Akiko. The three soon become a makeshift family and find some semblance of peace, until the titular Godzilla makes his way to the shores of Kyoto, leaving a trail of destruction in his wake.

One of the first things that jumps out about this film is the uneasy fact that it is a country that was part of the Axis powers reflecting on its own involvement in World War II. For a movie about a giant, fire-breathing monster, it handles the topic with a good amount of nuance, with the most direct criticism being lobbied at the Japanese government and their reckless abandon of human life.

The way American filmmakers and Japanese filmmakers handle the character of Godzilla is strikingly different. Recent American takes in Legendary Pictures’ “Monsterverse” show him as something of an ecological anti-hero, while the best Japanese films have almost always treated him like a dark reflection of humanity, which is certainly the case in “Godzilla Minus One.” Building on the themes of how Japan’s government handled World War II, the film uses the atomic monster to show the countless civilians that were put in harm’s way by the actions of the Japanese government.

The human drama on the whole is so compelling and moving, that it becomes easy not just to forgive, but to entirely forget that Godzilla himself does not have a lot of screen time. The lack of screen time for the big guy could be chalked up to budget, which ran at roughly $15 million, compared to the 2021 film “Godzilla vs. Kong,” which cost about $155-200 million. However, it never comes across as a budgetary issue and instead feels as though Yamazaki knows exactly how and when to make the monster its most terrifyingly effective.

Oh no, there goes Tokyo.

The cast is charming and witty in lower-stakes sequences.

The found family aspect makes the film infinitely more compelling.

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In an incredibly surprising move last year, three of the Philadelphia Eagles’ offensive linemen, center Jason Kelce, left tackle Jordan Mailata and right tackle Lane Johnson released a Christmas album entitled “A Philly Special Christmas,” and even more surprisingly, it was fantastic. What could have been a simple novelty is elevated by the surprising vocal talent of the trio, paired with an obvious love for the songs they were singing and the city of Philadelphia. The unprecedented success of the album left some big shoes to fill for the follow-up, “A Philly Special Christmas Special.”

Now, with something to prove, the Philly Specials come out swinging. “A Philly Special Christmas Special” is on a whole other level compared to its predecessor, with deeper cuts, better vocals and packed with more emotion than its upbeat predecessor.

While Yuletide classics like “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas” and “All I Want For Christmas Is You” are present, lesser-known songs like “Pretty Paper” and “Fairytale of New York,” presented here as “Fairytale of Philadelphia,” also appear and are some of the highlights of the album.

The vocal agility of Mailata was a stunner in the first album, and he reaches new heights, no pun intended, in this second outing. Mailata takes on the lead vocals of “All I Want For Christmas Is You,” a song known for just how difficult it is to sing between its high notes and vocal riffs, and makes it just sound easy.

Fun fact: the six foot seven inch, 366 pound Mailata had never played a snap of football in his life before getting drafted into the National Football League (NFL) and is now considered one of the best offensive linemen in the league. So he is built like a tank, freakishly talented at everything that comes his way and to top it all off, he is a pretty, pretty man. Some people are just God’s favorite.

Perhaps the most interesting track on the album is “Santa’s Night,” the lone original song, written by Kelce. It takes the point of view of Saint Nick himself (not Nick Foles, the Christmas one) and is seemingly more representative of Kelce’s own thoughts on the state of his career in football.

On the whole, the album is more somber and emotional than you would expect from a couple of football players. Tracks like “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas,” which also features defensive tackle Jordan Davis, or the aforementioned “Pretty Paper,” are quite sad, and the final song “Auld Lang Syne” being a bittersweet closer, at least when compared to the somewhat cloying finale “Santa Claus Is Comin’ To Town” from the first album.

But that is not to say there is no fun to be had here- tracks like “Dominick the Donkey” and “The Dreidel Song,” which features the Eagles’ general manager Howie Roseman, are uptempo, energetic and at times, downright silly. The latter track is particularly amusing as it is a quasi-Western take on the Hanukkah classic, certainly not what people would expect from the iconic song.

The special guests on “A Philly Special Christmas Special” are not limited to people within the Eagles’ organization, as appearances from the legendary Patti LaBelle, Taylor Swift’s boyfriend Travis Kelce and singer/songwriter Amos Lee round out the album, each bringing a unique flavor to their appearances and keeping the album from sounding too homogenous.

“A Philly Special Christmas Special” is not just great for an album recorded by football players, it is great, period, end of sentence. Kelce, Mailata and Johnson strike the perfect balance of not taking themselves too seriously, but taking the project incredibly seriously, doing everything they can to elevate each and every track and make this album a Yuletide staple, all the way from North Philly to South Jersey. Go Birds!

‘A Philly Special Christmas Special’
Lights Up Broad Street For The Holidays

Colin Luderitz
Entertainment Editor

Kelce, LaBelle and Mailata in the booth.

Photo courtesy of Vera Y Records

With something to prove, the Philly Specials come out swinging.

Photo courtesy of Vera Y Records
“SANTAaaaah, OH MY GOD!”

Is it really a real Christmas if you don’t watch “Elf?”

Released in 2003, the classic follows Buddy (Will Ferrell) who was mistakenly transported to the North Pole as a baby after Santa visited his orphanage.

His childhood consists of nap time with elves, school with elves...everything with elves. But Buddy notices that he is distinctly unique compared to the others: he is fully human sized.

After this epiphany, he sets out on an expedition to “the city that never sleeps” to seek out his biological father, Walter Hobbs (James Caan).

With this unexpected arrival, Walter withholds the truth of Buddy’s origins and skeptical, Walter eventually decides to pursue the relationship, but little does he know he is in for a ride full of excess Christmas spirit.

Festive and heartwarming, “Elf” is a timeless film that will have you, if not already, in the holiday spirit.

- Sekhena Sembenu
Managing Editor

‘The Best Man Holiday’ on Peacock

"The Best Man Holiday" is a holiday film that encapsulates a tumultuous ride of friendship, love and forgiveness. The dramedy follows college students Lance (Morris Chestnut), Harper (Taye Diggs), Regina Hall, Terrance Howard, Robin (Sanaa Lathan), Jordan (Nia Long), Har- old Perrineau, Mia (Monica Calhoun), and Shelby (Melissa De Sousa), renting for the fire time in 15 years. Director Malcolm D. Lee leaves his viewers many life lessons such as when challenges and conflicts ap- pear in friendships and relationships, it allows for the opportunity to make those relationships stronger and long-lasting. Even though there are some corny scenes, the sequel from the 1999 film, “The Best Man,” is not your typical Hallmark Christ- mas copy, but a film that will leave you laughing with tears, while also being re- minded of the importance of supportive best friends through the midst of tragedy.

It was over two decades ago when Peter Gabriel last released an album of original songs. That album, “Up,” saw the man behind “In Your Eyes” become obsessed with the concepts of death and decay. It is a difficult listen and I would not have blamed him if he chose to end his career there. Thankfully, however, he has made a return with his tenth solo album, “IO.”

Gabriel is at an interesting point in his career. He is no longer the young man wearing fox costumes and singing ten minute songs about lawn mow- ing, he is not the progressive, experi- mental, post-punk artist and he is not the shining pop star from the 1980s anymore either. “IO” falls into this odd middle ground, making it a schizophrenic album to listen to. It swings from one extreme to the other, from the bright, blaring horns of “Olive Tree” to the somber eulogy of “And Still.” It is a noticeably less weird album than “Up” was, more accessible perhaps, but this is by no means a knock towards either release.

Every track covers a completely different topic, with not much connect- ing tissue in between and somehow it all works as a complete whole, just not one that has the same consistency or flow as earlier releases. Still, some of Gabriel’s best songs are on here, ones that are destined to go down as some of his most beloved of his late period works. The only time that the album ever drags is with the melancholy “So Much.” It is by no means a bad song, but it is overshadowed by much better tracks on the album, and it simply is doing the least.

Danny Krazek
Staff Writer

IO’ Marks Peter Gabriel’s Triumphant Return

Always topical, Gabriel’s lyrics do not shy away from relevant subjects. The closing track, “Live and Let Live,” was described by Gabriel in a video message as being inspired by the war in Ukraine, while the first single and album opener, “Panopticom,” is about the interconnected nature of the 21st century.

“IO” has been defined by two incredibly interesting choices by the singer. The first was the decision to release the album’s 12 tracks one by one across the span of the year. Every full moon starting in January, a new track would be released on streaming services, with an accompanying video message from Gabriel himself posted on his YouTube channel, which out- lined his inspiration behind the song of the month. This release schedule made it easier to listen to the album across the year, as well as keeping it fresh and constant, at least for me, as the year progressed.

The second thing that makes “IO” a unique record is that there are two radically different versions of the al- bum out there – “Peter's Version,” if you will. The album features two different mixes, which each put emphasis on different parts of the songs.

Some of the tracks (such as “Play- ing For Time” and the title track) only have very subtle differences, while others (namely “Road to Joy” and “The Court”) are completely different depending on which version you listen to. Both versions were also released on vinyl. Personally, I prefer the “Dark Side” mixes done by Tchad Blake, though each version has its ups and downs to be sure.

Seeing Gabriel on tour to promote the album was a fascinating experience as well. When I saw him in September, there were still three songs from the LP yet to release. Despite that, about half the show was spent playing almost the entirety of “IO” with only “So Much” not being performed.

The performances were energetic, Gabriel’s voice (as it is on the album) still held its power and charisma, and the visuals were easily some of the best I have ever seen in a concert. With the help of multiple screens, a variety of visual wonders accompanied each and every song.

Fans can continue to rejoice, as Gabriel has also stated that his next al- bum will not take nearly as long to re- lease as “IO,” with some tracks already having been recorded apparently. It may not be the easiest decision, but “IO” is my choice for best album of the year. It is personal and deep. It is jubilant and celebratory. It is somber and emotional. It is weird. It is Gabriel.
‘Renaissance: A Film By Beyoncé’ Gives Us An Intimate Look At Her Excellence

Beyoncé on stage during the "RENAISSANCE" world tour.

Kevin Olivier
Staff Writer

Beyoncé is one of the greatest performers of the 21st century, and has been regarded as so for quite some time now. So, to be able to see her show and not only the show itself but the behind the scenes on how the tour was crafted, was truly a gift.

The film was directed, written and produced all by Beyoncé herself. An incredible feat but not surprising as she is such a master of her craft that it makes sense she would want to be the one to take control of telling her story. Family is an integral part of this film. She talks about how “RENAISSANCE” was highly inspired due to her Uncle Johnny. In a special moment during the film, Beyoncé puts on the dress her Uncle Johnny made for her when she was younger, and it looks just as good as it did back when she originally wore it.

Another important section of the film is when Beyoncé discusses her daughter Blue by joining her on stage. Beyoncé talks about how she originally did not want her on stage with her and did not know if Blue could handle it but after persuading, she let Blue join the dance rehearsals, and perform once, ultimately leading to Blue joining her mother for every show after that.

There is no denying how influential the Black, Latino and LGBTQ+ ball culture was in creating “RENAISSANCE.” With the album itself, the tour and now the film, this influence is all over. Whether its in the house music production that is on the album, or the ball inspired dance break during the tour and film, Beyoncé knows how to pay her respects.

There is a moment in the film where Beyoncé pays such dedication and time to the queer ball culture, that it feels right out of the 1990 documentary “Paris is Burning.” Many dancers are interviewed individually, and we are given a backstage look at some of their own histories and experiences with ball culture. There are countless queer icons of the ball culture in the film, including Kevin JZ Prodigy, who is the voice of “RENAISSANCE.” The film shows Beyoncé and Kevin working together as they put together the tour and you hear Kevin’s voice in many different areas during the show.

The documentary sections of the film also gives the audience a chance to get to know the other important people on the tour like the band, dancers, production workers, light crew, publicists and more. As much as Beyoncé knows her own power, she also knows how she is everything she is today because of those that came before her and those that help her. Its commendable to see her do this and you can tell its all genuine and just comes from her heart and who she truly is.

She talks about how there are three different sides or roles of herself that she has to put on: the performer, the businesswoman and the mother. It was remarkable to see her handle everything and do it all, sometimes at once. There is a moment in the film where the power goes out during “ALIEN SUPERSTAR,” and in the few moments where she had to get off stage, she decides to change outfits and surprise the crowd when she goes back out. She knows her audience and knows that her shows are a sanctuary for many of the people in the crowd and wanted to make the whole show feel like a space where anyone could be themselves and be celebrated for it.

I love how the film shows Beyoncé in a light we have not seen her in in quite some time. She talks about how the album and tour were a new chapter for her, how she was excited to not care as much and just have fun. It is nice to see Beyoncé reach a point in her career where she does not have to care anymore. She says how she has nothing left to prove anymore and she’s right. I loved seeing this side to her because over the past decade, we have really only seen Beyoncé the artist and not Beyoncé the person.

The film gives everyone the chance to see how amazing she is at her job, she knows exactly what to do and how to do it. She gets vulnerable throughout the film when talking about her knee surgery she had a month before the tour, a vocal injury she had when she was younger and being a mother.

The film is gorgeous and has everything you would want from watching a film, not just a documentary or concert film. The film sounds amazing, Beyoncé’s gorgeous clear vocals over the pumping production makes the environment come alive and was edited so well, showing her various costume changes within seconds. It has heart, laughs, tears, music, drama and much more. It feels like what a Best Picture nominee is to me.

Some of my favorite performances in the film were “ALIEN SUPERSTAR,” “PURE/HONEY” and “MOVE.” As someone who had tickets but could not go last minute to the “RENAISSANCE” World Tour, this was almost even better in a way, and I can not wait to see it again.
The Montclair State University men's soccer team completed one of their most successful seasons in recent memory, although their run to a national championship was cut short after falling in penalty kicks during the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA tournament. Nonetheless, the Red Hawks delivered plenty of magical moments in the postseason.

After finishing undefeated in New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) play, Montclair State received the regular season championship, as well as a first round bye in the NJAC Tournament. However, the semifinal round against Stockton University was no cake walk as they were shut out 3-0 at home.

This time around Montclair State quickly took care of business. The team recorded four second half goals to win the game 4-2. Junior midfielder Amer Lukovic, the leading goal scorer in the nation, left his mark on the match after scoring twice against the Prof's.

The celebration was on after the final whistle, with the Red Hawks storming the field before lifting the NJAC trophy. Junior midfielder Owen Murphy said that learning from the past is something that they've learned over the years, not just in their back days.

“I think we went through the last few years, not winning the NJAC and then not making the (NCAA) Tournament last year,” Murphy said. “We learned from those tough moments and then, yeah, I think that's what brought us through these tough moments and games.”

According to Murphy, defeatting a rival for the trophy made the victory even better. “I think Rowan is a rival,” Murphy said. “I think we both earned that right to call them a rival. We're the top two teams every year, so getting a little revenge on them just made it a little sweeter.”

The team did not have long to celebrate, because the conference title win meant that Montclair State received an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. The first two rounds were played at home on back to back days.

In the first round, fifth year goalkeeper Shane Keenan kept a clean score sheet with the help of a sturdy back line. Lukovic netted both of the game's goals to send Elmira College home 2-0.

The next day's game was a different story with Christopher Newport University as both teams were knotted at one going into overtime. With no goals in overtime one, Lukovic broke the deadlock with a goal after Mendez lobbed the ball over to him.

The Red Hawks were able to seal the deal after Lukovic scored again minutes later. Mendez said that his team's age and experience kept them in the game.

“I think the experience of going up and the composure that they have is something that they've learned over time,” Tumelty said. “And it's something that is what keeps them in games late and what keeps them going.”

Montclair State's 19 win season was the fourth time they have reached that number under Head coach Todd Tumelty.
Montclair State Grinds Out a Victory on the Road

The Red Hawks flew past Rutgers-Camden 72-70.

Montclair State University won a tough matchup against Rutgers-Camden on Saturday, Dec. 2. The final score of the game was 72-70 as it came down to the very last second to close out the victory.

The Red Hawks were extremely confident out of the gate and went on an offensive tear to start the game. They went on a 10-3 run, taking Rutgers-Camden by surprise and forcing them to focus on a way to slow Montclair State down.

The visiting Montclair State Red Hawks took control for a majority of the first half until Rutgers-Camden closed out the half on a 10-2 run to even the score at halftime. Junior guard Kyree Henry and sophomore guard Samar Abdullah had it going early from deep range.

The score was even at 32 a piece heading into the back half of this one, and at this point it was anyone's game. Montclair State shot pretty well from the field, going a calm 13-33 which was about 40% in the first half.

Even though Rutgers-Camden was down for the majority of the half, they still ended up shooting better from the field than Montclair State. However, it was not a significant difference as they shot 48% from the field.

The matchup was quickly turning into a classic New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) game, it was fast pace and very exciting. Rutgers-Camden took an early five point lead at the beginning of the second half, but this would not last for long as the Red Hawks would not take this lying down.

Both teams were going shot for shot, possession by possession for about six minutes. Defense was not a factor until Rutgers-Camden got their largest lead of seven points with 11:15 remaining on the clock.

Then, the home team found themselves up by 10 at the 5:43 mark. Montclair State had a mountain to climb and time was not exactly on their side.

The Red Hawks responded. They brought a new level of energy and bounced back in dramatic fashion. They would go on 12-0 run just as they did to open up the game, and it was closed out by a Henry three pointer which gave Montclair State the lead at 63-61.

Rutgers-Camden would not go away easy, tying the game at 63 a piece with just under two minutes left. Montclair State needed something big again and they got it from junior guard Mike Jackson with a dagger three pointer that proved to be the difference down the stretch.

Montclair State would never give up this lead and would claim yet another win improving to 4-2 on the season. It was a great effort but there needs to be a few things highlighted that was key in the team's success on Saturday.

Henry set a new career-high with 23 points and led all the scorers in the game, including seven three pointers. Jackson tallied 17 points and six boards leaving his imprint on the game as well. He has had double-digit points in every game thus far in the year.

Lastly, Montclair State forced a high amount of turnovers, recording 24 and those turnovers led to 24 points on the other end. Overall, it was a massive win for the team and they are looking to keep the momentum going heading back home to play William Paterson University on Wednesday, Dec. 6.
Sophomore Kunga Tsering has scored 10+ points in three of six games with Montclair State.

Tsering finished with 22 points including the game winner in his second game with the program.

Kunga Tsering’s Soaring Journey from Adelphi to Montclair State

Adonis Jones  Staff Writer

After losing senior NJAC player of the year Steven Breeman, the Montclair State University men’s basketball team has gotten off to a 4-2 start to the season. With returning faces such as Mike Jackson and Kieran Flanagan raising their level of play in Breeman’s absence, a few new faces have stepped up to fill the void – one of those faces is Kunga Tsering.

Tsering is a 6’7 sophomore forward from Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Tsering, a 1000-point scorer in high school, played at Hasbrouck Heights and Roselle Catholic High School before committing to Adelphi University in 2022.

The following year, Tsering transferred from Adelphi, a Division II athletic program in Long Island, New York which is a division above the NJAC conference (Division III) to Montclair State after his freshman season.

Tsering highlighted how he embraced his time at Adelphi, and how he brings that experience to the Red Hawks.

“Overall, the experience was a real eye opener,” Tsering said. “I didn’t play much, but when I did, you could just see the levels in the game when it comes to the frames of players. Guards in NE10 (Northeast Conference) were maybe 6’3 to 6’5, as opposed to where they’re a lot shorter here (NJAC). In terms of effort and overall competition, I believe the divisions are almost exactly the same, and I am playing here as hard as I was over there.”

Despite Adelphi being a Division II school that went to the NCAA tournament during his tenure, Tsering felt that he needed to transfer because the school did not fit his style of play.

“I decided to hit the transfer portal because as a big man, I only set screens and that’s not my style,” Tsering said. “I like to shoot, I like to drive, and sometimes post up if I have mismatches.”

At Tsering’s size, this unique skill set intrigued associate head coach Sean Rossi.

“On the court he’s very versatile, he’s obviously big at 6’7, but you can do a lot of things with him,” Rossi said. “You can put him on the perimeter and take advantage of bigger slower defenders, or put him on the post and take advantage of smaller guards.”

In addition to the fit schematically, Tsering’s ability on the court. Rossi alluded to Tsering’s versatility off the court, and how it coincides with Tsering’s ability on the court.

“Outside of basketball, he is into a lot of different things and has a lot of stuff going for him,” Rossi said. “He’s studying accounting and also has an interest in finance and real estate, so he’s pretty versatile in that area as well which goes hand in hand with the way he is on the court and what he offers off the court as well.”

In terms of his career goals, Tsering simply said, “I want to win the NCAA title and go pro in basketball.”

If Tsering continues his level of play, the sky’s the limit not only for himself, but for the Red Hawks as a team.

“I didn’t have good relationships with the coaches at Adelphi. I get along with the coaches here (Montclair State) a lot more,” Tsering said. “They listen to everything I have to say when I need help. I also can come to them without having any second thoughts or doubts, which is highly different from when I was at Adelphi.”

Along with the relationship with the coaches, Tsering articulated how he has been able to mesh seamlessly with his Red Hawk teammates.

“I get along with everybody, but I really get along with this team because everyone is funny which makes it easy to get along,” Tsering said.

In a short period of time, Tsering has shown the impact that he could bring to the team. Tsering has started in every game so far for the Red Hawks. He is averaging 8.8 points per game and shooting 48% from the field. His best outing came against Penn College in Pennsylvania, where he scored 22 points and a game winner at the buzzer.

“That whole game I was kind of hot. Their big man could not guard me, and I knew that,” Tsering said. “We have a play called, “you me”. “Me” means the ball is going back to the in-bounder, and “you” means the ball is going to me on the post. After I saw a shorter man on me, I screamed “you” and Flanagan somehow squeezed the ball into me and I made the layup.”

Off the court, Tsering is a proud Tibetan and a huge anime guy. He credits watching anime for helping him build character and learn valuable lessons.

“I learned a lot of lessons and values through the actions and sayings of strong hearted characters,” Tsering said.

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